



# **The Future of Onchan Park:**

## ***Report on the future provision of community services at Onchan Park***

This report has been prepared for

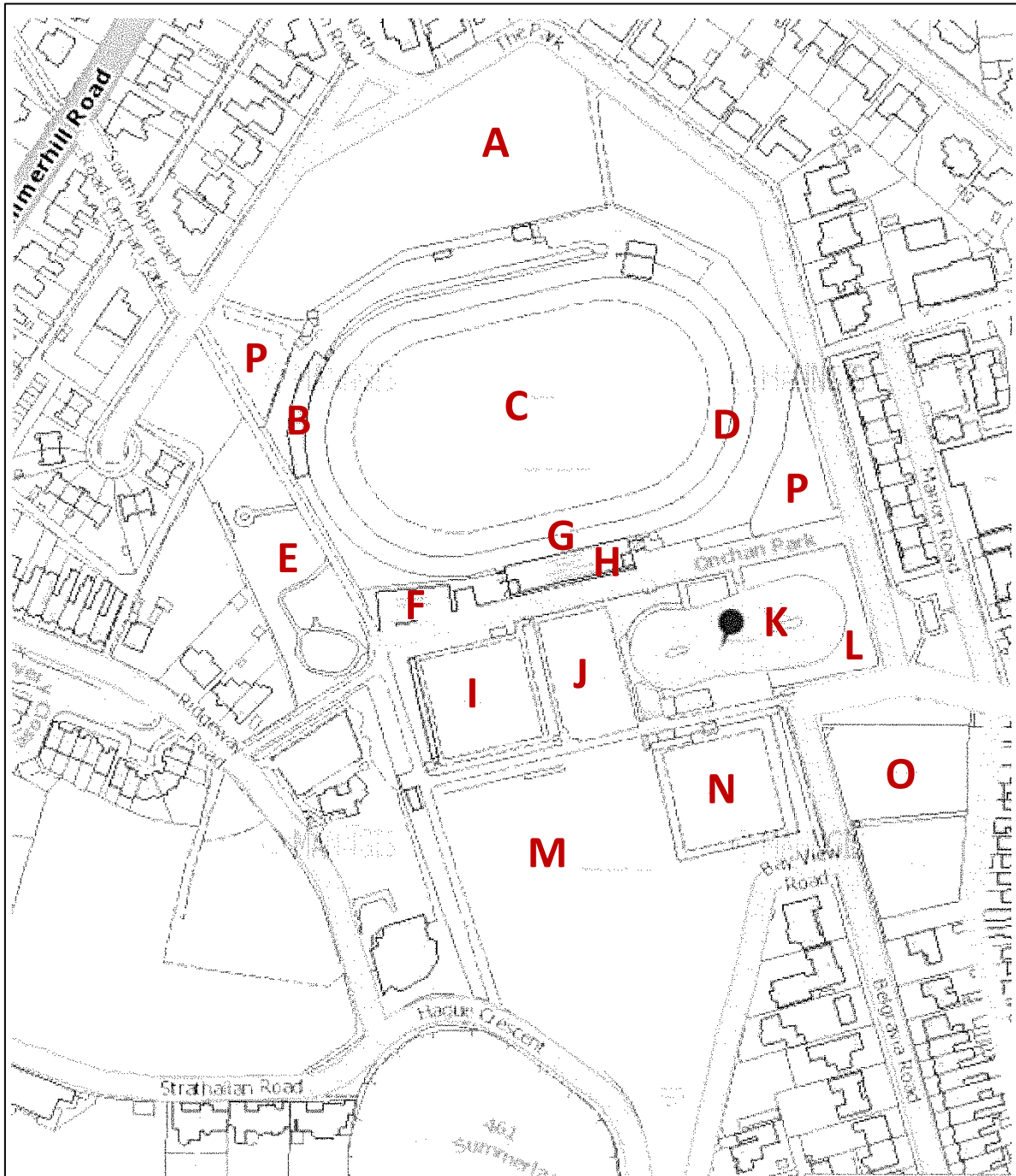
**The Board of Onchan District  
Commissioners**

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STEP Scheme Student

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## Map of Onchan Park



- **A** – Park Fields
- **B** – Secondary Grandstand
- **C** – Football Pitch
- **D** – Motorsport Tracks
- **E** – Children’s Play Park
- **F** – Fun Factory and Dance Studio
- **G** – Main Grandstand
- **H** – Café and Restaurant
- **I** – Crown Green
- **J** – Park Lawn
- **K** – Boating Lake
- **L** – Crazy Golf
- **M** – Pitch & Putt
- **N** – Flat Green
- **O** – Tennis Courts
- **P** – Car Parking

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## Executive Summary

Feedback and correspondence from the public following the Authority's initial 'Call for Ideas' raised the following key points:

- The Park Fields are should retain its present open and green character.
- The Pleasure Park is running well and people are enjoying the facility
- The children's play area is popular and generally well maintained
- Removal of the tennis courts are generally opposed
- There are mixed opinions around the events and usage of the Nivison Stadium
- Improvements and change are generally welcomed and looked forward to

This report consulted the stakeholders and tenants of Onchan in order to ascertain what their views are about what direction the park should take. There are many views and points included in the substantive of this document however the key point(s) of each are listed below:

- Onchan Raceway – The operators of the raceway are keen to remain in the Nivison Stadium and state that they offer a unique attraction to the Park. They cite their long-standing operation in the Nivison Stadium and the large amounts of spectators that they attract to their meets
- Onchan AFC – There are a number of issues regarding damage to the football pitch as a result of vehicles from motorsport events encroaching onto the grass. They believe a community sports facility that could improve footballing facilities alongside recreational facilities that the community would benefit from would be a good way to increase the usage of the stadium. This would also ease pressure on other facilities which are in extremely high demand
- Onchan Crown Green Bowling – There are a small number of minor adjustments they would like to see made to their facility however are generally content. They suggest that any events that could increase footfall in the Park would be highly beneficial. They also believe that a community sports & recreation facility would be of more financial sense and community benefit
- Onchan Park Café – There are a number of improvements that could be made to their building. They believe that events in the Park would improve the footfall and success of associated businesses. Additionally, advertisement and marketing for the Park is in need of improvement. The motorsport facility in the stadium is perceived positively as a unique attraction
- Pay Hut Operator – The Pleasure Park is generally running well however more needs to be done to market the Park as it appears that there is little advertising at present. It is also believed that the Park should host more events or corporate days to increase interest throughout the season

- Isle of Man Flat Green Bowling – They are generally content with the current situation and are grateful for the maintenance of the green. They would support any development that would encourage increased sporting or physical recreation around the Park area.
- Fun Factory and Dance Studio – There were a number of issues regarding accessibility and windows however these are being looked into. A suggestion was made that an outdoor area would be appreciated; this would likely mean expansion over the current banked track. The hosting of special events is believed to have the potential to benefit the park a good deal
- “The Views” Restaurant – A priority issue in regards to accessibility was identified as the only access at present is via stairs. Increased special events in the park would be perceived to have positive effect on associated businesses. The introduction of a sport and recreation facility is believed by the restaurant to have the potential for benefit to the year round use of the park

This report also consulted a number of other organisations and agencies for their opinions on the suggested developments. For the sake of brevity, their accounts have not been included in this summary however they can be found, in full, in the substantive document.

This report then goes on to make a number of recommendations based on the evidence gathered. They are as follows however explanations, debate and justification can be found in full in the substantive of this document.

- The crazy golf course should be replaced with new obstacles to make it a more attractive feature of the park
- The battery powered kiddie-cars should be replaced and the track extended
- The Park Lawn should be covered with a soft play surface which could facilitate year round, versatile play as well as acting as a hard standing for special events
- The Nivison Stadium should be converted to a community based sports and recreation facility that can cater for a variety of leisure and sporting activities both indoors and outdoors
- Lighting and decoration around the park should be improved so to increase the attractiveness and safety of the area
- Efforts should be made to facilitate physical activity and active journeys
- The Park should host a greater number and wide variety of special events to boost interest and footfall to the park

The overarching aim of Onchan Park should be to serve the local community; any development should therefore be designed with the community interest at its heart.

## Background

Onchan Park has been an integral part of life in Onchan as well as the entire island since 1951 when it opened its gates for the first time. From its beginning, Onchan Park was revered for its cycling track and as such a great number of prestigious cycling events were held there. The Park was also complemented by a series of attractive additions such as the bowling greens, miniature and putting golf attractions and a children's play area. The Park saw further developments in the form of eateries and the boating lake which are well known to all who have visited the Park. Many of these facilities and attractions are in the very same place as they were initially developed and so the Park is steeped in its own heritage. This heritage is an integral part of island life and local residents should quite rightly be proud of such history. It has however been recognised that Onchan Park has seen better years causing certain areas of the Park to look worn and old. The wants and needs of the community today are considerably different to those of today and so the Park is in need of some attention in order to align the services and entertainment it can offer to the requirements of the community, stakeholders, local clubs and interested organisations. There have been a number of refurbishment developments to the Park in the past few years however Onchan District Commissioners ("the Authority") are considering a larger scale development to the Park

The Authority are seeking to develop Onchan Park to enhance its ability to serve and entertain the community and also facilitate the clubs, businesses and societies associated with the Park. As such, between the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and the 30<sup>th</sup> March, the Authority launched an informal public consultation in the form of a "call for ideas" with the aim of collecting a wide range of views and opinions regarding the Park from all persons interested. In this, the Authority made clear that the overarching aims of any development would be to meet the needs of the community, ensure easy access to all members of the community and maintain Onchan Park as a safe, attractive and enjoyable leisure space that the residents of Onchan and the Isle of Man could be proud of.

In this initial consultation document (attached as Annex A), respondents were asked to consider how best the Park could progress in its four key areas of function:

- Community Sports – Nivison Stadium, sports grounds, motorsport facility, grandstands and associated facilities
- Pleasure Park – Boating lake, golfing attractions, bowling facilities and other associated attractions and rides
- Central Facilities – Onchan Park Café, "The Views" Restaurant, indoor soft play area, dance studio and the former arcade
- Children's Play Park – Area to the west of the Nivison Stadium containing children's play equipment, climbing frames, slides etc.

## Introduction

This report into the future provision of community services at Onchan Park has been requested by the Chief Executive Officer of Onchan District Commissioners, Mr M. Morrison with the following objectives:

- Collate existing information and decisions into a report to be provided to the Board of Onchan District Commissioners including a proposed action plan
- Understand the views of existing users of the Park
- Engage with national bodies who have an interest in the future of the Park
- Provide a vision for the Park area over the next 5 years and beyond

In order to meet the objectives prescribed by the Chief Executive, Mr Morrison, this report will seek to approach the issues and options regarding the Park from a number of angles. First of all, this report will collate the feedback received from members of the public as part of the aforementioned consultation. In this, any repeated points will be identified as too will any significant remarks. Consideration will be given to the viability of identified suggestions which will then be fed into later recommendations.

As part of this study into the future of Onchan Park, the author has interviewed relevant and interested stakeholders that currently operate within Onchan Park or have a vested interest in its facilities. The views of each interviewee will be recorded as part of this report including not only their suggestions for development but their opinions as to how specific developments that have been proposed by either the initial consultation document or those proposed by members of the public from the consultation itself. Interviews have also been conducted with relevant agencies and organisations that have an interest in the future of the Park and any potential developments therein.

Following the discussions mentioned above and examination of the options identified, this report will go on to make a series of recommendation which the author intends to present to the Board of Onchan District Commissioners for their consideration alongside a proposed plan of action



## SECTION ONE – FEEDBACK FROM THE PUBLIC

Following the “call for ideas” consultation, the Authority received a large number of responses from a wide variety of concerned persons through numerous means; conventional letters, emails, Facebook comments and open meetings where members of the public could discuss ideas with Commissioners in person. The Authority also received an excellent input from Onchan Primary School when members of the Board visited the school. This consultation, even in its infancy, has therefore aimed to include as many people, and as broad a range of opinions as possible. As one might expect therefore, there have been many ideas brought forward which have made for interesting reading. Whilst there have been great variety in suggestions, the author of this report has noticed a number of points raised by several respondents, some with great concern and so it would only be appropriate to highlight these for consideration.

### Repeated Points

#### Tennis Courts

Prior to the launch of the consultation document on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2017, the Authority submitted a request for planning permission to convert the 5 tennis courts at the top of Belgravia Road which sit within the Park area into both public and private car parking to serve the Park and surrounding area. Anticipating that further developments to the Park to attract a greater number of visitors and subsequently a greater number of vehicles.

This application was disclosed in the consultation document alongside the consideration that monies raised from parking would assist in funding further developments within the Park. This was then followed by the mention of a possible medium term plan in which the renovated tennis courts could be turned into car parking and then subsequently into housing with the income from the property sale being used to fund larger scale community sports investment.

This point was met by considerable resistance from quite a number of protesting respondents. At least 8 responses were received by the Authority in which members of the community expressed deep concern at the thought of losing a communal sporting asset which is enjoyed by many parts of the community. Such responses were received in various forms however it was mainly by letter or by email that such objections were raised. In most instances, objections were raised by a single respondent (some alluded to others feeling a similar way however provided no further detail).

One response which was received by the Authority as a letter was signed by 11 signatories from the Onchan and Douglas area all of whom are reported to be regular users of the court. This letter expressed deep concern and “outrage” that there have been plans to remove a community sports asset.

Another response received as a letter protesting the application was received with a screenshot of a facebook status with several comments relating to the originator learning of a plan to close the tennis courts and convert them to paid car parking. A total of 7 comments (excluding originator as they wrote the attached letter) were posted which expressed negative feelings towards such a development.

It appeared to be the primary concern of such respondents that there would be a loss of a facility to the community rather than adverse objection to additional parking. That is not to say however that there is no objection to car parking at the top of Belgravia Road. A smaller number of respondents expressed unfavourable opinions about having additional parking created where the Belgravia Road tennis courts are currently situated. The general feeling of such respondents was that there was not a need for additional dedicated parking and that it would be an unwise development as there was a significant amount of free on street parking that would be used before any paid option is utilised. It was also expressed that the Park Fields were an adequate site for any overflow parking for special events; a later paragraph will however show that there are conflicting views within the community over this issue.

A considerable amount of correspondence was received in regard to the tennis courts and car parking proposal with very few if any responses showing support for the idea. Whilst one cannot say that this is the consensus within the community, it cannot be ignored that a large proportion of responses received in this consultation relate to the issue.

### **Park Fields**

The Fields on the North side of the Stadium was also the subject of a considerable amount of responses despite not being mentioned as a potential site of development. Around 5 responses vehemently opposed any development to the Park Fields; a significant proportion of such comments came from residents of The Park who overlook the Fields. Several commented that they felt that it was one of few green open spaces left in Onchan and that over development on the Fields would not only be detrimental to the aesthetic of the green and spacious area but also to the value of the area. Claims were made that any development on the Fields that would negate the open, natural character of the area would have a negative impact on the value of their homes.

In addition to the above, nearly all comments about this area considered the Fields to be a social hub to residents of Lower Onchan especially in regard to people going walking together, young people undertaking informal sporting activity and people exercising dogs.

Comments were received saying that some work may be welcome on the Park Fields provided the general character is maintained. More specifically, it was mentioned that some work to level off the grass area to make it more accessible for informal games to be played.

Some correspondence received in regard to the tennis courts/car parking made mention of the Park Fields as a site for overflow car parking at peak times or for special events. There would appear to be a conflict of opinion in this regard. Whilst some suggest the area be overflow parking, others oppose strongly the notion of it being developed for permanent parking. It is not perfectly clear as to whether those who oppose development on the Fields object to any parking whatsoever, including occasional overflow parking, or whether such occasional use would be tolerated. It must be considered however that should the Fields be dedicated as an informal sports area/social hub then use as car parking must be a regulated and uncommon function.

### **Open Space and Walkways**

A number of responses were received showing support for utilising open space for additional seating (picnic style benches) and an all-weather seating area/event venue which could be in the form of a marquee or permanent covered area in front of the café.

Concerns were also raised about the lighting around the Park by a small number of respondents. Comments have been received stating that there is inadequate lighting around the Park's walkways, especially the path way running adjacent to the children's play area to the West of the stadium. This has deterred people from walking through the Park during darker hours of the day. Therefore, it must be considered that lighting around the Park may be in need of improvement if the Park is to try and attract people all year round and outside daylight hours. Throughout this report, a number of mentions of ASB are made; it is considered a logical step to install improved lighting as a means to mitigate this issue.

### **Community Sports**

There appears to be support for development that would increase sporting activity within the community. A number of responses expressed disappointment at the squash courts being converted as it meant the loss of an asset to local residents.

A considerable number of responses showed support of an all-weather pitch within the Nivison Stadium which could benefit not just Onchan AFC who call the stadium their home

but also members of the community who wish to play sport for leisure. Many of these however do not currently have adequate facilities in Onchan, causing many to go to sports facilities in Douglas or beyond. As such, respondents feel as though increased provision of sporting facilities in Onchan would promote sport and healthy lifestyles across all ages. In addition, there appears to be support for provision of an indoor sporting facility that can accommodate those wishing to play sports such as badminton, basketball and other sports suited to an indoor environment.

A small number of responses expressed support for improved changing facilities and a community club house that could be utilised by local sports teams and by the community for various functions. Similarly, there has been very little, if any, support to retain the second grandstand which was earmarked as a potential site for a clubhouse.

A good number of respondents expressed a want for provision in the Park and surrounding area for walking, running and cycling paths; a considerable proportion highlighting the stadium as a potential site for a circuit especially for cyclists. Others suggested a longer track that went around the Park which would be more suited to leisurely cycling, walking and running. Similarly, a small number of responses suggested a fitness trail that went around the Park or partially used the Park and linked to other open spaces around the area. In this, there were suggestions that outdoor gyms could be installed, in a similar style to the open use equipment in Noble's Park. Suggestions made around this commented on a lack of fitness facilities around Onchan and that such developments could promote more physical activity and healthy lifestyles around the district.

### **Motorsport Facilities in Nivison Stadium**

There appears to some conflicting opinion received from the consultation at this time in regards to whether or not the motorsport track should be retained as a central feature of the Nivison Stadium.

Few responses included support for the go-kart attraction currently run on the motorsport facility.

A number of respondents commented on the suggestion in the consultation document for the stadium to be transformed into a community sports centre stating that they could see that the motorsport facility and its associated function was hindering the smooth operation of the football pitch. At present, Onchan AFC can be required to move their home games at certain points of their season to accommodate motorsport events. As such, there have been a small number of responses suggesting that the motorsport facility be removed to so allow an expansion within the stadium that can accommodate the community sports centre.

In addition, respondents commented on the fact that the track is only used for a fairly small proportion of the year however the setup of motorsport track can be a barrier for other sporting uses all year round. More specifically, respondents commented on the poor access to the pitch in the middle which is blocked by not only the track but also several locked access points.

Comments received by the Authority also expressed concerns over the accessibility of the stadium due to a large number of steps and restricted access into the grandstand.

Conversely, a number of responses showed great support for the motorsport facility, more specifically the "Stock Cars" that appear on the motorsport facility during the summer months. The Authority received a number of correspondences from interested parties by letter, email and by facebook, including one letter of support from a representative of Hogg Rescue who provide medical support for motorsport events.

One letter received by the Authority commented that the "Stock Cars" racing was a source of tourist attraction to Onchan and that it has brought significant numbers to the area from around the island and the UK both to race and to spectate. This letter also hailed the racing as being a family orientated attraction that was enjoyed by all. Additionally, the history of motorsport in the Nivison Stadium was cited as the "Stock Cars" have been running for nearly 50 years.

The above correspondence was found attached to several screen shots of Facebook comments from 2011 up to earlier this year. A total of 18 comments were seen that showed support for the stock car racing again being cited as a family orientated attraction that has attracted people from outside the Isle of Man. Other responses commented on the centrality of the "Stock Cars" to their lives and how it is enjoyed by all ages.

The above shows that there may be considerable debate around any development to the stadium and so the effect that either option might have on the community must be a central consideration of any development as this project must put the needs of the community first and foremost.

### **Boating Lake**

A significant number of responses supported and appreciated the boating lake in the Park and were quite insistent on it being left alone as it added a unique attraction to the Park. A small number of comments were made in which respondents said they were not particularly keen on the new boats as they were too slow and too quiet; stating that they enjoyed the "putt-putt" sound of the old petrol engines.

There also appears to be significant support for the bumper boats as an exciting activity enjoyed in the summer months.

There have been several suggestions in regard to the boating lake during the winter months when the water is drained and the lake unused. Respondents considered the lack of use over the winter months to be a missed opportunity not just for the Park but also for young people in the area. As such, two main suggestions were raised as to what to do with the drained lake:

- Bike/Skate Park – Around 5 responses suggested that the Park include an area in which people (respondents considered it mainly to be a development for younger visitors) could skate and/or ride bikes. A smaller number to this suggested the emptied lake to be an appropriate site during winter months. In this, respondents suggested that temporary ramps and jumps be introduced to the area to form an appropriate attraction for skaters and BMX riders.

Whilst this is certainly an imaginative and excellent potential use of space that could entertain the young people of Onchan during the off season there are a number of factors that must be considered by the Authority if they are to consider this option:

- Access – The physical nature of the boat lake does not offer any natural access points. As such, access would need to be via a shallow ramp from ground level down into the drained area
- Maintenance – Any maintenance work required to the floor and walls of the lake may be hindered by the presence of users and equipment.
- Safety – As such a development would be used during the winter months, inclement weather must be considered carefully. Should there be rainfall then the water would be retained at the bottom surface by the very nature of the lake. As such, there would have to be occasions wherein the area be closed to drain excess water so to prevent an undue slip hazard

A second, particularly community orientated option was raised by respondents considering a use for the drained boat lake:

- Ice rink – This was only suggested by a small number of respondents in relation to the boat lake however was suggested by others as an attraction that they would like to see at the Park. During the winter months on the Isle of Man, ice skating rinks have proven to be rather popular attractions with *Tynwald Mills* most recently enjoying an ice rink over the Christmas Period in association with *Ice Skate Isle of Man*. The idea of introducing a seasonal ice rink to Onchan Park over the winter months therefore has the potential to continue attracting visitors, predominantly families, to the Park all year round. The Park has also successfully enjoyed similar

attractions in the summer months such as the Roller Rink which provided a unique attraction to the Park.

The above two suggestions are by no means the only ones available for the lake during the winter months however they are what have been raised by the public at this stage of the consultation.

### **Golfing attractions**

There appears to be considerable support for both the pitch and putt and the crazy golf attractions in the Park as simple, old-fashioned fun accessible to all ages. Whilst there is support for them to be kept in the Park, there has been little support shown by respondents to invest heavily in these attractions.

A small number of respondents also mentioned that they would not be overly objecting to the pitch and putt being reduced in size to a 9-hole course to make way for other projects.

### **Bowling**

Few responses mentioned the bowling facilities however there appears to be no objection to retaining the two greens. Reports also show great appreciation for the condition of these greens.

### **Café and Restaurant**

The café and Restaurant facilities are provided by tenants of the Authority.

Many respondents appear quite content with the Onchan Park Café and “The Views” Restaurant in the central area of the Park and there have only been a small number of responses suggesting change. Mention was made within the responses that the Café provides a limited menu which deterred them from using the facility.

Others commented that the façade of the café looked quite worn and so some refurbishment to make it more visually appealing would be welcomed. Furthermore, comments were received concerning the opening hours of the Café with special reference to opening hours in the off season/winter months. It is reported to have been quite a disappointment to some visitors that the café has not been open during their visit and so they have not used the Park for as long as they might have if the café were open.

Conversely, others claimed that they felt nothing was wrong with the café and so the Authority should “not fix what isn’t broken”.

“The Views” restaurant received resounding praise in the consultation and many respondents said that they have enjoyed their experiences there. Several respondents did however mention the poor access to the restaurant, stating that it was difficult for those with impaired movement, disability or children’s pushchairs to get to the restaurant.

As such, suggestions were made that a lift be installed to grant equal and easy access to a central part of the Park. It must be considered that upcoming legislation (namely the Disability Discrimination Act) will **require** provision to be made to ensure all parts of the Park are accessible by all members of the community by January 2020.

### **Dance Studio/Indoor Play Area**

There were few, if any, responses that concerned the dance studio or the indoor soft play area. A very small number of comments were made however stating that they wished the squash courts were retained.

### ***Children’s Play Area***

There is resounding support for the children’s play area to the West of the Park and is cited as a major attraction of the Park for families with young children. As such there is support to retain the play Park in its current position.

Some responses, including those received from Onchan Primary school have made suggested introducing a wider variety of play equipment so that the area can appeal to a broader range of ages. Such suggestions have included larger climbing frame similar to the ‘rocket’ that can be found in Noble’s Park which is more suitable for older children. It has been highlighted that the play area is most suited to younger children and so older children can become disinterested. It has therefore been suggested that informal play or ‘hangout’ areas be introduced so to give older children a place to go within the safety of the Park.

### **Wet Play Area**

There is considerable support for a wet play area within the Park, it being highlighted as a potential major attraction to the Park for young families during the summer months. Respondents compared the idea to a present attraction at Mooragh Park in Ramsey which has appeared to be a very popular and successful attraction.

A small number of responses did however oppose such an idea.



## Other Suggestions/Points

Many suggestions were received by the Authority as part of this stage of the consultation. The above outlines those points which were repeated a number of times by different respondents however that is not to say that these are the only suggestions that should be considered. The following is a brief list of other suggestions and points raised by respondents that were not significantly repeated:

- An outdoor cinema
- Area in which children can play with large Lego style equipment
- Renovation of the arcade area
- Children's Zip Wire (Already in place in play area)
- Trampoline zone (suggested despite Jump Zone already being in place)
- Giant Pillow similar to the one at the Curragh's Wildlife Park
- Bowling Alley
- Climbing Wall
- Allotments
- Wishing Well
- Tree House
- Big Slides
- Flow-rider inland surfing machine
- Dry Ski Slope
- Science Garden
- Sculpture Garden

This section has summarised the opinions and feedback received following the initial call for ideas in February – March 2017. Please note that correspondence from businesses, clubs and societies associated or interested in the Park will be considered in the next section alongside notes from interviews with vendors, club representatives and other relevant persons. The viability of suggestions and the number of similar suggestions from respondents will be considered in later sections of this report and later stages of the consultation and development process.

## SECTION TWO: ASSOCIATED BUSINESSES, CLUBS & SOCIETIES

This section will report the views and opinions of the various businesses, clubs and societies that routinely occupy, use or are associated with Onchan Park. These views have been received by means of an interview between the author and representatives from the identified businesses and clubs with a focus on what developments would benefit them, how suggested developments might impact upon them and their vision for the direction of their business/club and the Park as a whole. The interviews used the initial consultation document (Annex A) and the suggested developments therein as a standard list of

suggestions put to interviewees, alongside any other suggestions from public correspondence that were of relevance to the interviewee. Please note that the order in which the interviewees appear in the following has no significant meaning, they are listed in the order in which they were interviewed. The following sets out the summative responses of each interviewee followed by a list of their key points.

## **Onchan Raceway**

Onchan Raceway was represented by Mr P Fearn and Mrs A Goody in lieu of Mr J Whitehead who was off Island at the time of the meeting. Mr Fearn and Mrs Goody are both key figures in the operation and maintenance of the motorsport facility and so were content to represent Mr Whitehead's views in his absence.

The main topic discussed within the interview was the suggestion in the initial consultation document that the Nivison Stadium might be converted into a community sports facility. Understandably, both were fairly objecting to the proposal as it might mean the closure of the motorsport track and the associated operations ("Stock Cars", go karts, monster truck rides & mini motos).

They made the argument that motorsport operations in the stadium are a unique and exciting attraction which adds "a buzz" to Onchan and that the only other suitable location on Island would be in Jurby. However, they argued that if they had to move their business to Jurby to make way for a community sports centre then there would be additional business to them to lay a new track and they perceived that business would suffer as fewer people would be willing to travel to Jurby.

A significant argument from both interviewees was the impact that the motorsport facilities and more specifically the "Stock Cars" had on the local community and beyond. They argued that during the summer months they get a large number of visitors to the "Stock Cars" from all over the Island many of whom are regular visitors and feel like the "Stock Cars" are an integral part of their social lives. In a similar sense, they cited the large number of young people who regularly spectate or compete in the "Stock Cars" to whom the motorsport events held at Onchan Park are a central aspect of their lives and was a greatly appreciated asset. Mr Fearn mentioned a number of young people struggling at school to whom the "Stock Cars" were a means of encouragement to maximise their effort in education. He argued that to remove their passion would be detrimental to their education and later development. Mrs Goody then added that she, alongside many others, felt that young people had limited leisure opportunities on the Isle of Man and that the motorsport facility offered a routinely available motor sporting hobby. Mr Fearn commented later that the

Raceway was not necessarily a money maker for those who work there, however he found reward in seeing young people being entertained by the unique attraction.

A considerable amount of discussion related to the impact that closing the motorsport facility might have on young people on the island. The interviewees reported that not only are around half of the spectators young people but that a considerable amount of young people and their families invest a considerable amount of money into building and maintaining "Stock Cars". Mr Fearn went on to say that the "Stock Cars" gave a good introduction to driving from an early age as they were able to understand the basic interface with a vehicle and were eventually taught more about mechanics and skid control. As such, when young drivers have come of age to legally drive on public roads, they have been better prepared.

The benefits from beyond the Islands borders were also discussed. Both Mr Fearn and Mrs Goody commented that during the summer meetings, they have a significant number of teams coming from the UK to both spectate and compete in the "Stock Cars". Mrs Goody reported that she was anticipating around 19 ministox teams and 8 F2 teams to come to the Island during the summer to compete, in this she said that around 80-100 people could be expected to form these teams. Both Mr Fearn and Mrs Goody commented that these visitors can do a great deal for local business as they all need considerable amounts of fuel for their cars as well as purchasing accommodation and refreshments from local businesses. Not only did they argue that removing the "Stock Cars" would detract from this additional source of tourism that the Isle of Man Government is keen to attract, but it will have a negative impact on marketing for the Island. The context in which this was considered was visitors who have later moved to the Island as a result of seeing the Island during their holiday for the "Stock Cars". As such, closure of the motorsport facilities would not only have a negative impact on the visitors and users from the local community, but it would also reduce the amount of tourism to Onchan during the summer months.

Questions were posed to Mr Fearn and Mrs Goody around some of the suggestions initially published in the consultation document (Annex A) focusing on the community sports centre, the concrete grandstand and general attractions to the Park.

Mrs Goody made comment that she did not see how demand for sporting facilities could be as high as there were a number in close proximity, namely the National Sports Centre and St. Ninian's Lower School. As such she argued that to introduce another sports centre would not only remove a unique attraction to bring in a commonplace one, but also that the sports centre may not attract as many people as anticipated. Mr Fearn then went on to argue that he has often seen sports facilities such as astroturf pitches empty for long periods and that they are only usually busy on Friday evenings and weekends. When questioned as to how he believed the state of demand on indoor facilities Mr Fearn stated that he was not sure however claimed that demand for indoor facilities cannot have been particularly high when

the squash courts were closed a few years ago. In summary, they did not agree that there was the demand to warrant construction of sports centre in Onchan.

The question of the use of space that was raised in public correspondence was posed to the interviewees. They agreed that more could be done throughout the winter months when motor racing was very occasional however believed that there may be a barrier to this as the stadium is often used for football fixtures and training as the season runs through the winter. Mr Fearn said that he would not object to the track/the stadium being used through their off-season and that the stadium could host a number of special events including a concert venue if the opportunity arose. He did however state that whilst he would be happy for the track to have an alternative use throughout the winter and used all year round, he did mention that he would expect a reduction in rent as he would consider it unfair for the income from Onchan Raceway to be used to fund other uses for the Stadium which will not benefit them in turn. Mrs Goody echoed her support for sharing the track during their off season on the basis that they did not have to pay for another's use.

Discussion around this topic developed into one surrounding the relationship with other users of the Stadium. Mr Fearn mentioned that a considerable amount of work is required to get the track ready for use following the use by other users including mud left on the track and litter in the grandstand which needs removing before any motorsport operations for safety reasons. Mr Fearn stated that this problem is becoming less of an issue and his liaison with other users asking them to tidy up has helped, however he still occasionally finds litter and mud about the track and grandstand.

Mr Fearn also raised concerns that Onchan Raceway had to undertake maintenance work to the grandstand at their own expense and they received no assistance from the Authority despite the damage not being from Raceway use. Mr Fearn went on to claim that he felt that the Authority was doing little to help maintain the stadium and in particular the motorsport facilities despite a significant amount of money being paid in rent, whereas it was his view that other users paid very little and were afforded a great deal of support to maintain their facilities.

The question was posed to both Mr Fearn and Mrs Goody around any encroachment onto the pitch by cars from the track. They replied that it was not common practice for them to take vehicles onto the grassed area and that this was only done in the case of an accident that posed undue risk to other racers (i.e. oil spills). Mrs Goody went on to say that when this is necessary; they make every effort to keep the cars to the edge of the grassed area so to not go onto the actual football pitch. Mrs Goody did however state there have been, and will be, incidents beyond reasonable control where cars can spin off onto the grass. In order to mitigate this they have put in some basic tyre barriers to slow cars down. Mr Fearn also said that it is made clear to drivers that any undue encroachment onto the pitch would not be tolerated and that drivers risk disciplinary measures if they do so. *(A visit to a stock car*

*meet however showed that there were a number of vehicles, including two tractors, stationed on the centre of the pitch which were often moving about. There also appeared to be a good amount of encroachment onto the pitch).*

It was added by Mrs Goody that the motorsport facility is limited in its development by the presence of the pitch as they are unable to do anything but use the oval circuit. She stated that if the pitch was not there then the track could be altered to make it more exciting and attractive.

Mr Fearn and Mrs Goody were also asked about the concrete grandstand which was highlighted in the consultation document as being in need of considerable repair or demolition and is suggested as a potential site for a community clubhouse. They did not believe that there were any urgent structural issues with the grandstand and that the issues with it have been overstated, and that they were not aware of any structural report on the grandstand. Mr Fearn also pointed out that if the grandstand was in such a dire state of disrepair then they would not still be allowed to use it. However, both he and Mrs Goody stated that this was the main grandstand used by spectators for the "Stock Cars" as it was situated by the most exciting corner. It is also the seating area closest to their toilets, disabled access and refreshments area. As such, Mr Fearn stated that if that were to be brought down then it would be particularly damaging to the number of spectators that came to the Raceway, however did say that many may move to the main wooden grandstand.

Similarly, whilst a clubhouse was not objectively opposed, misgivings were raised about the encroachment this may mean onto the banked track which would then require the cessation of the monster truck ride. Mr Fearn stated that the monster truck ride was only really usable on the banked track and so if this were to be removed or renovated, then the monster truck would not be a viable.

Mrs Goody commented on the focus of developments requiring provision of increased accessibility for the Nivison Stadium. She argued that there are two wheelchair friendly access points to the stadium via the northern side of the stadium. Mrs Goody did however state that sheltered seating was not particularly accessible as the grandstand had steps all around. As such she suggested that an area be constructed off to one side of the grandstand that could provide a sheltered area for people with disability. This does however raise concerns around segregation.

When asked about the general operation of the Park and what could be done to improve overall, Mrs Goody expressed concerns at the introduction of the "day pass" wristbands. Not only did she raise her doubts about the financial viability of this scheme but said that parents were only spending money for their children to get a wristband however were not willing to pay for them to use other paid facilities such as the go karts. Mr Fearn added that the Park had been receiving more visitors however the Onchan Raceway has seen a decline.

He stated that the Park was in need of more attractions and needed to have a focal point of such attractions. He was very keen at the idea of more seasonal and special events taking place around the Park as these would create fresh interest in visiting the Park rather than just for the regular amenities. He also stated that he would be willing to co-operate in any special events where possible and that the stadium could be a prime locations for certain temporary attractions.

At the closing stages of the interview, Mrs Goody expressed concerns that the Park was slowly losing its atmosphere and so was keen for development that would reinvigorate the area.

The below is a summary of the points raised in this interview:

- Raceway is an important part of many people's lives – especially young people
- Raceway is a strong source of tourism to Onchan
- Both grandstands are routinely used
- More special events to renew interest in the Park
- Compromise with Onchan AFC
- Disable access already in however efforts could be made for shelter
- Willing to share track in off season provided rent is reduced pro rata
- Development on banked track would mean cessation of monster truck.

A later conversation with Mr J Whitehead, the leaseholder of the Raceway confirmed many of the above points. He stressed his belief that the Park is in need of more attractions and so to remove the motorsport facility which offers another unique attraction to the Park would be an unwise decision. Mr Whitehead went on to comment that motorsport events facilitate tourism, demonstrating this point by pointing out the visiting teams that had travelled from the UK specifically for the event.

Mr Whitehead was then asked about the potential damage that was caused to the football pitch by encroachment of vehicles. He stated that they took steps to try and limit the amount of encroachment that occurred however also commented that sometimes it was inevitable. Mr Whitehead was then asked about the number of vehicles that were situated on the pitch. He stated that these did not damage the turf and that he has not seen any damage caused by broken down "Stock Cars" being moved over the grass. Mr Whitehead appeared positive at the suggestion of there being an internal barrier that separated the pitch and the track. He stated that this would be a good compromise between the two operations and that he has seen a similar set up at a track in Scotland. Mr Whitehead went on to say that he would be happy to share the space dedicated to the motorsports facilities, especially during the winter months, however he would expect the cost of the lease to be renegotiated if this were to happen.

## Onchan AFC

Mr J Duddy, the Chairman of Onchan AFC, represented the football club in this consultation. He began the meeting by describing to the interviewer some of the history and current situation of the club. He stated that Onchan AFC and football in general have a long and proud history of being homed at the Nivison Stadium with the first football game being played there in 1952. He therefore categorically states that he, and the club, wish to continue to use the stadium as their home pitch for their senior games for many years to come and that it would be a great shame to them if they were required to move. Mr Duddy commented that arguments have been posed to him in regard to Onchan AFC's leasehold on land situated on Blackberry Lane on which there is consideration to create two pitches. He said that the facilities they are developing there are simply a measure to assist the club's demand for training and youth facilities and that the conditions of the lease only allow for junior matches and training sessions as there are up to 120 young players who cannot regularly be accommodated within the Nivison Stadium. As such, the senior teams of the club still require a ground on which to play their home games. Mr Duddy stressed that he did not wish for the club's lease on Blackberry Lane to cause anyone to believe that the club could move in its entirety to Blackberry Lane.

Mr Duddy commented that there were a number of issues currently faced by the club within the stadium. He stated that due to sharing the area with the motorsport facilities, there was often debris, oil, glass and track marks across the pitch. Mr Duddy accepted that this is almost an inevitability when a grass open area and a motorsport track openly border one another however stated that it was not only a considerable frustration to have to clear debris from the pitch before play but a health and safety risk to players as there can be sharp and dangerous items concealed by the grass which could cause injury if a player were to fall or slide onto such debris. As such, he suggested that, should the status quo remain in terms of the pitch and the motorsport facility, then there should be an internal crash barrier dividing the pitch and the track so to prevent any vehicles going onto the grass area and damaging the pitch. Mr Duddy said that he would anticipate some protest to this from the users of the motorsport facility as they currently require the grass as a run-off and somewhere to place seriously damaged vehicles that pose a risk to other racers. He therefore suggested that small areas of the grass area could be reclaimed to act as abandonment areas. He appeared to be quite content with this idea provided that the pitch remained the same size and there was ample space around the pitch.

Mr Duddy also mentioned an issue that the club was facing in regard to their access to the pitch during the summer. He states that as part of licence issued to the club, it has the ability to use of the football pitch in the stadium on Tuesday evenings during the summer months for pre-season training. He however stated that he has been asked by the Authority's staff to stay off the pitch for a short period of time whilst reseeding of the grass

takes place and so training has been moved to the Park Fields at times. Mr Duddy accepts that players running all over the pitch will interfere with the seeds germinating and so the quality of the pitch come the beginning of the season would not be at its best. Mr Duddy does report however that it is very frustrating not being able to use the pitch because it appears that work has taken place later than it should have. He therefore suggests that reseeded take place earlier in the summer, possibly soon after the special events on the pitch during TT week, so that the grass may be ready for their pre-season training; therefore allowing the players the pitch when they have been told they can have it.

Whilst considering the terms under which Onchan AFC use the pitch, Mr Duddy outlined the issues that were caused by the current length of the agreement. He stated that under the current terms, the club was restricted in its use of the pitch with preference given to the use of the motorsport facilities between April and September each year. He said that this was particularly problematic as the club is then required, at considerable difficulty and expense, to rent other pitches on which their seniors may play their matches. As such, he would like to see the agreement period extended so that the stadium could be the club's home all throughout the season.

The interview with Mr Duddy then went on to consider the prospect of future developments to the Park. Mr Duddy stated that whilst he would certainly support any sporting developments in the Park, the stadium was the club's, main focus. He in fact commented that he felt the Park outside the stadium was a nice amenity for the people of Onchan and that operations were generally going well. The only general improvement he suggested was to update and refresh the buildings within the Park as parts were looking particularly worn and dated.

Mr Duddy expressed that he would be, as one might expect, particularly supportive of any development within the stadium that may provide improved or extra provision of sporting facilities that could be used both by Onchan AFC, other sporting clubs and the community in general. He stated that his ideal vision in this regard would be to rotate the existing pitch through 90 degrees and over to one side of the stadium which would then leave ample room for a second full size, or ¾ size sports pitch to be created. Mr Duddy suggested that the football club would be fairly insistent on their home pitch to be a full sized grass pitch no matter the outcome of any developments. He suggested that if funding allowed, the second pitch could be an all-weather/4G surface which would be a highly attractive prospect for other sports such as hockey. In addition, Mr Duddy mentioned the successes of other all-weather pitches around the island in terms of letting out space for clubs and members of the public to hire. He stated that he has had great difficulty trying to hire such pitches for the club's winter training as they are often booked up, suggesting that demand far outweighs supply. Mr Duddy commented that he would not want for Onchan AFC to manage the lettings of all-weather facilities as not only would it require a volunteer to spend a large amount of time doing so, but it would mean that any return on investment is



not seen by the Authority themselves. Mr Duddy did however state that if two pitches was a possibility, then he would like for one to be dedicated to Onchan AFC. Mr Duddy balanced that such a development would likely require changes to the motorsport track and so challenges would certainly arise.

Mr Duddy went on to discuss the facilities that the club currently have access to, and use thereof. He showed the interviewer around the present changing facilities that are situated below the seating of the main grandstand. During this he suggested that these facilities were particularly worn and dated as was the grandstand as a whole. He mentioned that the club has undertaken some minor refurbishment work themselves however this has done little to detract from the issue. Furthermore, the ablutions within the facility are at present not up to standard and that it was not uncommon for showers to be cold after games and training.

As such, Mr Duddy suggested that development to the stadium should include an improved provision of changing, toilet and showering facilities. He also commented that the club rarely uses the main grandstand for spectators and so would not be overly objecting to any developments to this provided they do not negatively impact on their playing facility or any changing facility or ablutions

Mr Duddy was aware of the consultation document in which the secondary grandstand was highlighted as a possible site for redevelopment into a community clubhouse. He also mentioned that he was aware of structural issues with the secondary grandstand which posed a risk. As such, he suggested that it would be of great benefit to Onchan AFC for the redevelopment of this site to include modern changing facilities and ablutions. Mr Duddy said that he was well aware, however, of the high cost that such a development may incur and so said that if this was not a viable project then the club would be more than happy for refurbishment to focus upon the existing facilities.

The question regarding the prospect of a community clubhouse was posed to Mr Duddy and he responded quite positively to the idea. He stated that such a development would be of service to the surrounding community as it may have quite a versatile function and if the aforementioned facilities were included then it would be massively appreciated by Onchan AFC. In terms of clubhouse use by Onchan AFC, Mr Duddy referred to their developments on Blackberry Lane in which there has been progress in constructing a small clubhouse. Once again Mr Duddy stressed that development on Blackberry Lane was not an indication from the club that they were intending on moving totally. However it was stated that Onchan AFC would likely use their facility on Blackberry Lane as a clubhouse before moving into such a facility in the stadium. He went on to comment that should major developments take place within the stadium to change its use to a community sports facility which would enable the club to base the majority of its games and training there, then the prospect of a clubhouse shared with the community would be of more interest to the club. It therefore appears that

Onchan AFC are interested in redevelopment of basic facilities however if the status quo is to largely remain in the stadium then they would likely keep their social hub to Blackberry Lane.

Mr Duddy closed the interview by discussing potential uses for the banked track of the stadium. He suggested that this area was underused and could be put to better use. Initially he suggested that parts of it could be reclaimed in order to extend the parking area on the north side of the stadium as it was often the case that players and spectators had to overflow onto the Park Fields. It was also suggested however that use of this track could serve a sporting purpose and that should the bank be reclaimed then there could be an outdoor velodrome. Mr Duddy mentioned that he was aware of previous plans to install a velodrome and that this was generally well received due to the cycling prowess that has come from the Isle of Man. He did however comment that there would be some logistical issues in this regard if changing facilities were to be outside the velodrome as it would be difficult for people to come and go from the facility onto the pitch. The below is a summary of points taken from the interview with Mr Duddy:

- Onchan AFC would like a grass pitch to call their home ground
- New changing, toilet and showering facilities would be very welcome, wherever they may be
- Ideal development would be to introduce a second all-weather pitch however cost is anticipated to be a barrier to this
- If status quo is to remain; internal barrier to prevent encroachment onto the pitch from motorsport facility
- Clubhouse unlikely to be used by Onchan AFC if only one pitch is to remain
- Banked track could be reclaimed for parking or other sporting provision

## **Onchan Crown Green Bowling Club**

Mr R Cowley represented the Crown Green Bowling Club, he opened the interview by praising the move taken by the Authority in recent weeks to purchase new equipment for use on the crown green in the form of new bowls, jacks and mats. Within this, he was especially pleased to see some colourful junior bowls included as the club is very keen to attract younger players to the green.

As a result of the Authority's expenditure, the crown green club has agreed to put on weekly training sessions in order to provide a new opportunity for young people in Onchan and hopefully bring more people into the Park. Mr Cowley went on to mention the possibility of an all-island event run by Manx Sport & Recreation in which new players who may have wellbeing issues are introduced to bowls around varying clubs. As such, Mr Cowley believed

that the expenditure on new bowls was a very good move as it promotes Onchan Park as a potential hub for bowling. Mr Cowley also made the comment that this investment was the main thing the Authority could have done to improve the club and so states that the club is very happy with the current situation. Similarly, he expressed his appreciation for the ever improving condition of the green and passes his thanks to all relevant people who play a part in green keeping.

Mr Cowley did say, in relation to the above, that whilst he was very happy that the investment was made, he felt it was imperative that every effort is made to advertise and promote the summer event; else the scheme may prove unsuccessful. He also stated that the club would be more than willing to co-operate with any other events that would have mutual benefit such as open days or corporate events that may want use of the green.

Similarly, he states that the club is always happy to complement any special events in the Park. The example he uses is the upcoming (at time of writing) Summer Fayre. Mr Cowley predicts that that the large numbers of people around the green for an Open Competition will work nicely alongside the increased footfall in the Park for the fayre and make the Park appear a very busy and vibrant place. As such he appears happy with any increased provision of special events in the Park.

Mr Cowley did give a number of suggestions that might improve the club:

Mr Cowley mentioned two large bowling festivals that are hosted on the Isle of Man and use Onchan Park's facilities. In this, he states that these are the largest of their kind in the UK and Isle of Man and not only do they attract the top bowlers but also attract arguably the largest amount of revenue of any other bowling event in the British Isles. As such, he perceives such an event to be a fantastic opportunity for the club and the Park alike. The suggestion lies in the services provided to visiting bowlers. Mr Cowley stated that a good number of the visitors who number over one hundred were keen to have a couple of alcoholic drinks around the green whilst spectating. Initially, these visitors tried to buy their drinks from "The Views" Restaurant however were unable to do so under the terms of their license. Consequently, these visitors would buy their food and drink from local shops and bring them to the Park. Mr Cowley acknowledges the current alcohol-free policy currently in place in the Park and fully appreciates the rationale behind it. However he believes that the terms of the restaurant's license and said policy had led to a missed opportunity for revenue income. If, he suggests, the restaurant was granted a temporary license to allow drinks outside of the restaurant during these festivals then there is a significant likelihood that they will reap considerable financial reward. Additionally, he states that if the restaurant was the main supplier of drinks to visiting bowlers, then any drinking could be more controlled and so prevent any alcohol related issues. He says that he never anticipates any trouble; however by controlling the drinking then issues can be easier prevented.

Mr Cowley also mentioned that the club would like to have some additional benching around the green as spectators at larger competitions are often required to sit on the surrounding banks. Furthermore, he stated that any addition of colour to the area, especially referencing the benches would make the area more vibrant and inviting and as such would be appreciated by the club and visiting players.

Mr Cowley did also give some comments on other areas of the Park:

Mr Cowley stated that he believed that relocating the tennis courts in order to provide increased parking and introducing new tennis courts at the top of the pitch and putt would be a particularly smart move. He said that he has noticed the declining state of the Belgravia Road tennis courts and the position that they are in does not facilitate easy supervision (for payment etc.).

Mr Cowley made additional comments in regard to the pitch and putt. He stated that he believed the 18-hole course to not only be of poor quality but also quite dull. As such, combining with above suggestion, he proposed that the pitch and putt be reduced to a 9-hole course which could be made more interesting. The reclaimed land at the top of the pitch and putt closest to the pay hut could be the revised site for around 3 tennis courts. Similarly, he stated that the crazy golf attraction appeared quite dated and lacks interest. He therefore suggested that nothing drastic need be done to improve it; however the introduction of some new, more exciting obstacles could generate more interest in the attraction. One idea Mr Cowley put forward, which he added could be done for the pitch and putt course also, was to try and attract some external sponsorship from Manx businesses who could assist in creating a course that takes the player on 'a trip around the Island'. He believes that this would be an attractive game for many people and also allows for Manx life to be at the fore.

Mr Cowley also provided an input into the proposed developments to the stadium. He suggested that it would an outstanding idea to lay an AstroTurf pitch within the stadium. He cited his experience in the development of St Ninian's Lower School at Bemahague whilst he was a senior teacher at the school. He recalled that when it was announce that there would be an all-weather pitch available for hire outside of school hours, the school was inundated with bookings beyond what they could provide. As such, he suggested that there would be a good amount of demand for such a facility and that it would be well used. Additionally, he commented that such a facility would be particularly expensive to install however it would likely see a return in a relatively short period due to the extensive use. The revenue raised from such a facility could then be used to finance further developments around the Park.

Mr Cowley closed the interview by reaffirming that he and the club were particularly happy with their current situation in the Park and that he believed the Park to be a very nice place to regularly visit; and that it was a credit to Onchan. The following is a summary of points from the interview with Mr Cowley:

- Appreciative of maintenance of the greens and purchase of new equipment
- Glad to provide youth training sessions however the Authority need to generate interest
- Temporary extension of “The Views” license would be beneficial during festival times
- More seating and more colourful surroundings to the green
- Supportive of moving tennis courts
- Pitch and putt should be reduced and refurbished
- Crazy golf should be more exciting – idea of a ‘trip around the Island’
- All-weather pitch in stadium would be well used and generate good revenue

## **Onchan Park Café**

Mr N Edge was interviewed as the general manager of Onchan Park Café.

Mr Edge opened the interview by expressing his concerns at the current situation in regards to deliveries into the Park. He states that by and large, his deliveries are able to arrive prior to 10am which is currently the set time at which no unauthorised vehicles may be in the Park. However, he mentioned that at times he has struggled to receive deliveries of large kitchen equipment as the couriers are often unable to make it before 10am. He therefore asked that any redevelopment of the Park, with special reference to the side car Park (East of stadium), try to improve delivery links to the businesses in the centre of the Park. He suggested the possibility of a delivery zone which was easily accessible by goods vehicle and vendors.

Mr Edge then informed the interviewer of a current (at time of writing) development which he is undertaking in the former arcade area of the building, adjoining the café. Previously, this area consisted of large store rooms for the café however Mr Edge judged this to be a poor use of valuable space. As such, he intends to remove the contents of the store and utilise the area that will be enjoyed by a family orientated audience and be usable all year round. At this time, Mr Edge is still in the early stages of developing this project and so does not wish for too much information about it to be shared at present.

Mr Edge reports that he looks forward to the introduction of free WiFi in the Park and that this will have a positive impact on both his business and the use of the Park in general. He commented that he would expect more young people to be attracted to the area at off-peak times (i.e. after school) as a hangout area. He states that this will be a step in the right direction as it appears to him that the Park can be unappealing to young people who are perhaps too old for some of the present attractions. He expands on this by saying there is little there for them if they are unable to ride bikes, play football or use mobile devices. As such, by introducing a modern factor, it may bring more interest, especially to the café. Mr

Edge gave significant emphasis on the importance of any developments including provision for young people as at present there was little for them to do.

The focus of the interview then moved onto how certain developments suggested in the consultation document might impact on Mr Edge and the café.

Mr Edge expressed his support for the motorsport facility. He stated that, whilst it was not a massive amount, the motorsport events did bring in business for the café as “The Views” Restaurant is closed on Mondays when the “Stock Cars” usually meet. Mr Edge states that he serves a number of regular customers from motorsport events and values this custom greatly. As such, he believes that his business would suffer if the motorsport facility were to close.

Mr Edge also stated that the motorsport facilities held a certain nostalgic value which many Island residents cherish. Similarly he sees the motorsport facilities as a unique attraction to the Park, the likes of which are ever declining in the UK. Therefore not only would it be a shame to contribute to the trend of declining amateur motorsport, but it would mean the removal of a popular attraction which many people value greatly. Mr Edge went on to comment on the fact that the “Stock Cars” are a unique attraction for young people and that it may be unwise to remove such pastimes when there is already so little for young people to do. He also stated that removal of the motorsport facility would take away much of the character of the Park as the stadium is somewhat of a focal point. As such, Mr Edge said that he would anticipate a decline in the overall use of the Park as the go karts and monster truck rides are an exciting attraction for young people.

Conversely, Mr Edge would not expect the introduction of another sports pitch at the expense of the motorsport facility to be of any benefit to the Park as the business would not transfer over into the Park area and so ticket sales would decline. Mr Edge acknowledges that there may be fiscal benefit to an all-weather pitch however states that he believes there are plenty of similar resources that are underused and so to remove a unique attraction to make way for a common one would not only reduce the appeal of the Park but also reduce overall footfall through the Park which would harm his business and that of the restaurant. Therefore, Mr Edge would suggest that the status quo remain in regard to the stadium and that sports developments, if they are deemed to be in demand, should be considered in the other open, unused spaces of the area.

Mr Edge was then asked to consider developments to his premises that would improve his operation and the appeal of the Park as a whole. He quickly responded that he believes that an awning on the front of the café would be both aesthetically pleasing and functionally beneficial. He stated that the façade of the building appeared to be dated and in need of modernising so to improve the visual appeal of the central facilities and that an awning would be an appealing feature to the café. Functionally, Mr Edge mentioned a recurring problem of seagulls flying down from the roof trying to get at customers’ food. Mr Edge

therefore believes that an awning will allow customers to eat outside without the risk of seagulls attempting to take their food. As well as trying to improve the aesthetics of the façade, Mr Edge claimed that renovation that could reduce the amount of glass on the façade would be of benefit to inside. He states that in summer months, the heat of the sun coming through the large glass panes can cause significant heat to the interior which not only causes discomfort but at times it can get so hot that the freezers can struggle to work to their best and so the quality of ice cream is reduced.

As the café faces onto the central green area, Mr Edge is keen to see the space used more. Whilst he appreciates that the Park needs to have an open feel about it and that the green provides a natural feel, he believes that the use of the green for special events on temporary bases would encourage continual fresh interest to the Park. His perception of this is that by attracting people to a special event in the centre of the Park then there will be natural footfall through the other attractions and businesses and so it would be of great benefit to all associated to the Park. Mr Edge mentioned events such as concerts from sound check, ice skating and roller skating as just a few initial ideas however there is no end to the type of events that could be hosted. Whilst on the subject of attracting more people to the Park, Mr Edge commented on the limited amount of advertising for the Park. He mentioned that he has seen a number of signs around Onchan which are quite good however outside of this there is very little drawing attention to the Park. As such, he suggested that more promotion of the Park by way of social media, radio and newspaper would improve the situation.

Mr Edge also wished to give his opinions on the children's play area toward the end of the interview. He stated that he felt that the Park was quite dated and that there was nothing unique or exciting about the play area to appeal to children. As such, he suggested that development take place in order to modernise the play area and install some high quality play equipment which is unique to the Park. He specified that he believed that a theme to the play area would make the Park stand out in children's memories and so make them want to visit more.

Mr Edge closed the interview with comments relating to the view over Douglas Bay from the Park. He stated that it would be a shame for a development at the top of the pitch and putt to block the view from the Park and instead suggested that it would be an idyllic picnic spot. The following is a summary of points from Mr N Edge's interview:

- Motorsport facility is of significant value to both the café and the Park in general
- Central green is underused and would be an ideal spot to hold seasonal events
- Play Park is in need of renovation to make it more modern and more attractive
- Park is in need of more advertising
- Improvement to façade of building would make central area more inviting
- Improved situation in terms of deliveries to central facilities

A further conversation with Mr Edge raised an interesting proposal in regard to a special event that could be held in the Park. Mr Edge had reportedly been discussing the consultation wherein the idea of an 'Onchan Park Weekend' event was suggested. In this, a list of possible attractions were given however the landmark suggestion was the return of an It's a Knock Out event in which an inflatable course alongside low-cost, possibly recycled obstacles was set up in the Park or the stadium. Teams from around the Island could enter including public services, private companies and youth groups. Mr Edge anticipated that there would be significant spectatorship for the event which would mean a greater number of visitors to the Park. If the Park is showcased in such a positive light to these visitors then it increases the likelihood of them returning. Additionally, the potentially high volume of visitors would be of significant benefit to businesses in the Park and the Authority as more people would be using the facilities and attractions. As such, the cost incurred for setting up such an event would see a return, especially in the long term. It was also suggested that cost could be offset by acquiring private sponsorship. Examples given in the regard were large companies that have considerable standings on the Island. The weekend event could also include a number of other attractions listed below, as provided to the author of this report:

- Crazy golf or bowling competitions
- Tug of war
- Raffles
- Stalls
- Beer tent/Food stands
- Bouncy castles
- Monster truck/Go karts
- Zorbz on the lake
- Demo Derby/Bike shows

The above attractions were perceived to have great potential for the Park and it was reaffirmed that a wider variety of events need to occur at the Park throughout the season as the interest was not as high as it could be. The issue of advertisement was revisited, and it was commented that there is no advertisement in locations where visitors to the Island are likely to be. Not only is advertisement currently inadequate, but it is in the wrong place. A prime example of this is the positioning of a large sign for the Park on Hague Crescent, where few people, of which the vast majority live nearby, are likely to see it. As such, it was suggested that advertisement be focused on areas of high tourist footfall such as the Sea Terminal and the Airport.

Mr Edge also responded positively to the prospect of a committee made up of stakeholders as he believes it will be an effective medium by which ideas and concerns can be discussed.



## Pay Hut Operator

Mr K Bragg is the contracted operator for the Park's pay hut in which sales for individual tickets and day pass wristbands are sold and relevant equipment (e.g. putters, bowls, tennis racquets) are stored and dispensed. He has the unique advantage of being able to observe quite comprehensively the nature of visits to Onchan Park especially for its recreational attractions. Interviewed alongside Mr Bragg was Mr M Kelly, the Park's senior boatman. In this joint interview, a number of issues and suggestions were raised.

Both Mr Bragg and Mr Kelly responded quite positively around the general running of the Park and commented that they were seeing a good amount of business coming through the Park since the weather was getting warmer; they also anticipate this to increase significantly once the schools cease for the summer. Both were asked to comment on the popularity of the various attractions with the hope that an opinion could be formed as to which attractions were most and least popular. This was not possible however as Mr Kelly stated that visitor use of attractions vary from day to day. The example posed to the interviewer was that on one day the boating lake was particularly popular and very few people used the golfing attractions. However on the following day, the vast majority of visitors were booking out golf clubs whereas the boats were not used until around 1300hrs by a small number of visitors. As such, they suggested, the attractions in the Park cannot be judged for their value in terms of popularity with any real empiricism. Mr Bragg commented that he believed that the new system of ticket sales was going particularly well and as a result were seeing increased business.

Mr Bragg stated that he has seen a good number of people using the pitch and putt this season and so said he would disagree with reducing the course down to just 9 holes. He justified this by stating that people pay a reasonable amount of money to play and so would expect to get commensurate value which 9 holes would not offer. Mr Kelly added that a longer course kept people in the Park for longer which would be beneficial to all operations ongoing in the Park. Mr Bragg replied positively to the suggestion that the top two or three holes (closest to the crown green) were removed in order to create a larger green open space. He stated that this would still provide a good sized course which would satisfy most players. Mr Bragg was also quite keen on the idea of open, multi-functional space in the Park.

Mr Bragg also commented on the current state of the crazy golf attraction. He stated that, in general, the crazy golf was proving quite popular with many visitors; however said that the current obstacles were considerably dated and were showing their age. As they were such an integral part of the Park's attractions, Mr Bragg suggested that it would be highly beneficial to refurbish or replace the crazy golf course in order to make it appear more 'cutting edge' and attractive. He suggested that new obstacles retain a Manx feel to them

wherever possible however be made of a 'zero maintenance' material such as recycled plastic or fibre glass. Additionally, Mr Bragg suggested that new equipment for the 'kiddie cars' attraction adjacent to the pay hut required investment as the current cars, whilst popular, were also of quite significant age and difficult and expensive to maintain.

Mr Kelly gave his opinions in regard to the children's play Park to the West of the stadium. He stated that it was generally in a very good state and has been maintained well. However, he commented that there appeared to be little for the older children who may still use that area of the Park as much of the frames/play equipment are quite small. Therefore, Mr Kelly suggested that some larger, more exciting play equipment be installed, possibly including a system of tunnels through which children can crawl or some wire walks.

Mr Bragg and Mr Kelly both commented on the popularity of the boating lake throughout the summer months however were aware that it was an underused space during the winter. As such, they agreed that the emptied boat lake could potentially be utilised during the winter however were not entirely sure what usage would be appropriate. Mr Kelly suggested allowing use to remote control car enthusiasts however concerns over pricings were raised by Mr Bragg.

The interview went on to discuss the use of the Nivison Stadium. Both interviewees agreed that the stadium and its associated attractions were a great facility for the Park. They did however comment that they saw the stadium as being in a less than attractive state and as such it was not an inviting venue for people to visit. Therefore, they suggested that the stadium and especially the grandstand were subjected to a refurbishment to make it more aesthetically pleasing and improve the overall character of the area. Mr Kelly went on to place special reference on the toilet facilities situated around the stadium as they appeared to be in a state of disrepair and unfit for purpose. Mr Kelly also mentioned a number of issues regarding responsibility for gateways and access around the stadium outside of Park operating hours. He stated that gates were often not opened for motorsport events as there was insufficient staff for each of the gates. He also agreed that the locked gates may pose a fire safety risk as they are designated fire escapes. Suggestions were raised by Mr Bragg around better use of the stadium, in order to make it serve the Park's character more. He suggested that appropriate special events be held in the stadium in order to attract a greater number to the stadium as the "Stock Cars" are not an attraction for a significant number of local residents and visitors. Mr Bragg mentioned a selection of past events that the stadium has held such as *It's a Knock Out*, and suggested that similar events would be particularly in the summer alongside other types of event such as concerts.

Mr Bragg highlighted his two main suggestions for improvement to the Park; special events and advertising.

Mr Bragg praised the ability that special, seasonal events had to reinvigorate interest in the Park. He stated that by providing a fresh source of attraction to the Park, they would see a

greater amount of footfall through the Park. Whilst the majority of this would be to visit the externally provided attraction, the increased number of visitors would undoubtedly benefit the other attractions and facilities in the Park as they would use these facilities whilst they are already at the Park. As such, Mr Bragg suggested an increased temporary/seasonal use of the central green, and if it is converted, the top of the pitch and putt. In this regard, Mr Bragg made mention of an operator of bouncy castle attractions enquiring as to whether it would be possible to obtain a regular spot within the Park. Mr Bragg commented that this would not cost the Authority anything however there would be considerable benefit to all based at the Park.

In a similar sense, Mr Bragg suggested that the Park is offered more as a potential site for corporate days and charity events which could act not only as increased attraction to the Park but also a form of advertising as people may visit and the return in the future with their families/friends.

Leading from this, Mr Bragg expressed his considerable concern around the lack of advertising for the Park. He stated that he has seen a number of signs around Onchan however he was not aware of any such signage outside of the village. Similarly, he suggested that the Park should be promoted more on both the radio and social media platforms as at present there was little, if any, advertisement and as such the Park was not attracting as many visitors as it potentially could. Mr Bragg cited the success of Onchan Raceway's efforts to advertise on the radio and that such effort had seen reward.

Mr Kelly then closed the interview by suggesting that new means of gaining public feedback be introduced to the Park. He suggested that the Authority could set up a web form which visitors could be signposted to following their visit and leave comments. Through this, Mr Kelly suggested, the Authority would be able to more accurately gauge what was going well in the Park and what was in need of improvement, and so demand could be met in a more effective and timely manner.

The following is a summary of points from the comments made by Mr Bragg and Mr Kelly:

- More special events in the Park to increase fresh attraction
- More advertising required for the Park
- Stadium needs refurbishment
- Crazy golf in need of improvement
- Pitch and putt could be reduced by two or three holes if required
- Play area required some larger items of equipment
- Park generally proving quite popular however it cannot be accurately gauged which attractions are most or least popular

## Isle of Man Flat Green Bowling Club

The Isle of Man Flat Green Bowling Club, which is based at Onchan Park, was represented by Mr C McGreal and Mrs W Kewley; the treasurer and secretary.

Mr McGreal opened the interview by giving some background to the club and its recent successes. He stated that the club at Onchan Park was the only flat green on the Island with the exception of a temporary indoor green that is occasionally set up at the National Sports Centre. Mr McGreal went on to comment that the club has enjoyed significant recent success, most recently with a competition with other British Islands in which the Isle of Man side took a number of gold and silver places. As such, the Isle of Man Flat Green Bowling Club has availed itself as a successful international side despite its singular green and small membership. Both interviewees wished to express their gratitude to the Authority for the support given in order to help this occur.

Mr McGreal then went on to commend the current condition of the green on which they play, stating that it was immaculately maintained and holds its own against greens owned by large clubs in the UK. Mrs Kewley did however comment that the borders were prone to being chipped by newer bowlers or non-members of the club who played on the green. She said that this incurred increased maintenance and also that it was causing the surroundings of the green to look dated and worn. As such, she suggested that the white boarding be replaced with an AstroTurf border so that bowls can be cushioned at the end of the green and also it can enhance the green aesthetic of the area. Mr McGreal added that this was a common practice in UK clubs and that the ones he has observed appear very good. It was also considered by both interviewees that the possibility of a synthetic green could be a viable option. Mrs Kewley stated that it would mean that the season could be extended as inclement weather would be less of a risk to the green and so they could extend their player base and practice time for international competitions. Mr McGreal went on to discuss that whilst it would be a fairly costly investment to lay a synthetic that would compare to the current green, however he stated that this could pay for itself in a relatively short amount of time as maintenance could be carried out by members quite easily. Mr McGreal did state that this was not necessarily a wish that the club had as they appreciated the natural green, however posed it as a possibility should the need arise to cut costs in the long term.

It was then raised by Mrs Kewley that the club required increased youth interest and that they were taking steps to do so as a club. As such, it was stated that emphasis should be on attracting families to the Park who will then be likely to try the bowls and potentially develop a taste for it. It was also considered that events should be put on in which visitors could specifically come to the Park to play bowls with some form of coaching involved with a view to retaining a number of these visitors in the club. Mrs Kewley stated that the current ticket sales system with the all-day wristbands were of particular benefit as it enabled

people to play bowls freely, whereas previously it was less likely that people would purchase a ticket purposefully to play bowls.

This comment led on to discussion around the use of the Park for special seasonal events. Mr McGreal said that he would wholly support any event that would attract greater numbers to the Park as it would be of benefit to all. He stated that the central facilities would profit from the greater footfall and that the pleasure Park attractions would see increased use by virtue of the greater number of people already in the area. Similarly, he said that he would hope that the bowling greens would see similar benefit as people may wish to have a game whilst on a family day out. Mr McGreal reiterated the value of family attractions to the Park as he recalls seeing a good number of families, crossing several generations, all on the green playing bowls. Mr McGreal did however mention an issue that the club has faced a number of times with increased amounts of people using the attractions. He said that in the past it has not been uncommon for golf balls and other debris to be hit or thrown over the hedge from the pitch and putt onto the green. Mrs Kewley stated that this was a safety risk to users of the green and could damage the green. As such, Mr McGreal suggested that there be an element of stewardship within the Park during the summer season to ensure that the Park can be enjoyed by all without any unruly behaviour. He did however state that this issue was not particularly persistent, but nonetheless believed some more staff supervision would make certain that all users could enjoy the Park to the fullest possible extent. The general opinion of the interviewees however was that any initiative that could attract more people to the Park would be of great benefit to all involved.

Mr McGreal commented on the club's desire to extend their clubhouse which is currently a small wooden cabin with limited facilities. It was mentioned that within a new development, the club would be able to have a small kitchen area to accommodate better for larger competitions and increased locker space as members were struggling for storage. Mr McGreal also stated that if the cabin were extended then they could introduce a short mat indoors so that practice could continue during inclement weather. Additionally, it was commented on that the current cabin does not have access to the mains drain and instead uses an alternative drainage system which is reportedly not sufficient for regular use by members, however can cope with rain water run off just fine. As such, it was asked that consideration be made to enable access to the mains drain to improve the facility in quite a simple way. In regards to extending the cabin, Mr McGreal eluded to a grant request from the Manx Lottery Fund. He also asked that consideration be given to a joint application being entered by the club and the Authority in order to gain funding for such an undertaking which would allow for the accommodation of an increased membership.

Mrs Kewley went on to comment on the current state of the Park's facilities. She stated that she believed the Park is a valuable and well-kept amenity and that the central facilities were to be admired. She did however express concern over the current state of the Park's public

toilets. She stated that the toilets provided in the Park were in poor condition and that the state of such a central and commonly used feature left an impression on visitors to the Park. As such, she suggested that repair and refurbishment of the toilets is undertaken as a matter of priority. Additionally, she commented on the access issues to the public toilets as they are locked outside of Park operating hours; however members who are playing in the evening are still requiring their use. As such, Mr McGreal stated that members often have to use the toilets at “The Views” Restaurant which, whilst not a major issue, was not ideal to either party.

Mr McGreal went on to comment on the provision of car parking around the Park. He suggested that there was not enough to cope on peak times when the Park experiences increased visitor numbers. He foresaw a future problem if the Park were to aim to attract more people but car parking was not increased. As such, Mr McGreal believed that the idea to convert the tennis courts on Belgravia Road into car parking was a sensible option however accepted that there may be other issues associated. He did however state that if the courts were converted, there was plenty of space inside the main Park area to replace them, identifying the Park Fields as a possibility of a multi-functional site. Mr McGreal also suggested that a semi-permanent development be made on a section of the Park Fields to make overflow parking more accessible. He suggested that a plastic mesh be laid over the grass so that vehicles could easier move on the surface and damage the turf less, whilst keeping the general aesthetic.

Discussion then moved onto the proposals made in regard to the stadium. Mr McGreal stated that he was not aware of any strong feelings neither in support nor against the motorsport facility. As such, he suggested that the club in general would support redevelopment of the stadium into a community sports centre as it would make the Park more of a focal point for physical activity. Therefore, it would be of benefit to the club but more generally it would benefit the wider community as an area for recreational physical activity; thus promoting a healthy lifestyle. He stated that he believed such a facility would be optimised by the presence of an indoor facility as it would promote usage throughout winter months when recreational participants may be less inclined to play outdoors. Mr McGreal considered the introduction of a skate park however said that he would be unsure as to how that could fit into the character of the Park and where it could be situated. Mrs Kewley added that by developing a multi-sport facility, it may be of benefit to local schools as they would be able to hold multi-sport events which might afford children the opportunity to find which sport they might wish to pursue more regularly. Within this she would hope that bowls might be included.

Mr McGreal further considered the potential use of the pitch and putt course. He believes that an 18-hole may be too large for an attraction which does not bring in any serious play. As such he suggested that it be retained, as he saw the value in it for visitors, however that

it be reduced in size so to accommodate further development at the top of the green. He then considered this to be an appropriate site for replacement tennis courts.

The interview was then closed by a discussion around the advertising the club undertook, and the extent to which the Park in general was advertised. Mrs Kewley stated that the club regularly use their website as a form of advertising and often post articles and adverts in local newspapers to promote upcoming competitions. It was suggested that Onchan Park does not have a great enough basis in local media outlets and as such many did not think about it when deciding what to do on a family day out. Similarly, Mrs Kewley mentioned that she has spoken to visitors who were not aware of the Park whatsoever as they had not heard anything until they had seen posts from friends on social media. As such, Mrs Kewley suggested that the Authority advertise the Park and its attractions more on social media as this is a far reaching and inexpensive base. Mr McGreal closed with the comment that it is likely the case that most residents are aware of the Park as the Island is small and close-knit, however many of these people have almost forgotten the Park as a family attraction.

The following is a summary of points from the interview with members of the Isle of Man Flat Green Bowling Club:

- Green is in immaculate condition however astroturf borders would reduce maintenance
- Toilet facilities are in need of improvement
- A community sports facility would be of great value to the Park, the club and Onchan as a whole
- Special events that attract greater numbers of visitors will be highly beneficial
- Pitch and Putt could be reduced to make more green informal use space
- Car parking must be improved if the Park is to attract more people
- Advertising needs to be improved

## **Fun Factory & Dance Studio**

Ms Sharon Rye, the manager and owner of the Fun Factory & Dance Studio, was interviewed for this report.

Ms Rye started by describing the variation in business which she sees over the year. She stated that she does not tend to get a great deal of business throughout the summer months as most people want to be outside, and her establishment is indoors. She stated that during the winter months she is busier as people are seeking activities that are indoors so to avoid being outside in poor weather. Ms Rye commented that she receives a small number of customers who walk in without reservations however the majority of customers

are either regular members of her dance school or have made reservations for a children's party. She also mentioned that schools and other relevant organisations occasionally bring children who have learning difficulties down to use the soft play area.

Ms Rye then went on to mention a number of developments that she feels are necessary to the business. She stated that she is still without appropriate ramp access to the building which is a particular hindrance as many customers require pushchair access. Additionally, she states that the lack of windows in the building appears to do little to attract customers who do not have reservations as they are not aware of anything being in the building. Ms Rye did however say that these developments had already been suggested to the Authority and that they were under consideration.

Mrs Rye described the developments that she would like to see made to her premises. The most pressing of these being an extension of the outside area so that customers might be more attracted to the venue over summer as they would be able to enjoy the outdoors whilst their children play inside. Ms Rye stated that for this to be a viable option, then the banked track of the stadium would need to be encroached upon. As such, Ms Rye would support any development that could allow development onto the banked track area.

Ms Rye was then asked about how she perceived the motorsport facility to contribute to the value of the Park. She stated that she saw it as a different sort of attraction which would be of great value, however the track is underused. She questioned the reason for why the motorsport facility, other than the go-karts, was only normally operating on Monday evenings during the summer. She went on to give her opinion that the motorsport facility and especially the "Stock Cars" did not have a big enough following at present to justify the total use of such a large space. As such, Ms Rye suggested that if the decision is made to retain the motorsport facility, it should host a greater variety of events so to make it a more diverse and well used attraction that would be of greater benefit to the Park. Ms Rye commented that it would neither of detriment nor benefit to her business if the motorsport facility were redeveloped or improved and suggested that its removal would serve to the attractiveness of the Park as a whole.

Ms Rye was then asked for her opinions on the proposal to convert the stadium into a sports facility. She did not believe this would have any significant impact, be it positive or negative, to her business. Ms Rye did however comment that such a sports facility might be too similar to others around the Island if there is not the addition of facilities that are not commonly available. As such, she suggested that the provision of an additional all-weather pitch will do little to attract people to the Park. The only benefit that she perceived such a development to have on her would be the availability to expand onto the banked track area.

Discussion moved onto the current provision of play equipment in the children's play park. She regards this area of the Park to generally contain a good variety of equipment. However, she did comment on the condition of some of the equipment and stated that the



acquisition of such play equipment was short-sighted. Ms Rye stated that the Authority would have benefited from consulting herself prior to purchasing new equipment as children and play equipment are part of her field of expertise. She would have suggested that a selection of play equipment made of a hardier material that would be less susceptible to wear and tear. She also suggests that a selection of play equipment that would be better suited to an older age bracket of child. The examples Ms Rye used in this regard was larger climbing frames/walls and a smaller scale version of a low ropes course such as that at Ape Mann. Ms Rye also commented on the proposed idea in the consultation document of a kid's water park/wet play area. She suggested that this would be a unique and appealing attraction for many children around the East of the Island as the only similar development is in the Mooragh Park. Ms Rye believes that such an attraction would greatly serve the footfall through the Park in the summer months as a large amount of families would visit for the water park and then likely use the other attractions and facilities. Once again, Ms Rye does not anticipate that this would significantly benefit her business; however it would benefit the Park. Ms Rye identified the top of the children's play park as a potential site for such a development as it would keep the majority of children's play in one area that could be easily supervised and also it appears that the top area is quite sparsely populated with equipment and so an addition could make the Park look fuller and more enticing.

The topic of the interview then moved on to the idea of the Park hosting a greater number of special events. Ms Rye reiterated her point regarding the stadium that any event that would attract greater numbers to the Park would not necessarily make money for her; however it would benefit the other businesses in the Park. She went on to state that the hosting of special events is not necessarily a directly profitable exercise however the increased attraction to the Park will have a ripple effect throughout the Park.

Ms Rye suggested that a great variety of events could be hosted; in this she mentioned previous proposals that she has given in regard to a temporary bandstand or a marquee. She stated that within this the Park could host band nights for young artists, social dance events for the elderly in the area and an outside disco for children. Ms Rye went on to propose the introduction of more private sponsorships into these events. She said that this would enable a reduced cost to the Authority to host such events and would also grant local businesses an opportunity to engage more with the community. The example that Ms Rye gave here was a reported interest from large businesses to hold a competitive event such as a Nerf League. This would bring in a greater variety of people to the Park and be of minimal cost to the Authority. Ms Rye stated that should such an undertaking be allowed then she would be happy to organise the event with any associated business. Ms Rye was also asked to consider how she thinks the Park might be able to continue to draw visitors during winter months. She stated that whilst this is generally her busiest time, she would expect that a winter themed event such as an ice rink or a 'Winter Wonderland' attraction to be of particular appeal, even if they were only open for 2 or 3 weeks.

Ms Rye then continued to state that she would be very happy to be a driving force in organising such events in the Park as it appears that all businesses except hers would benefit from the increased footfall. She commented that people visiting the area for the Park's attractions are unlikely to visit the Fun Factory unless the weather is poor. As such, by being involved in the organisation, Ms Rye and the Fun Factory would have more involvement in the activities ongoing in the Park. From this point, Ms Rye posed the idea of forming a Park committee which is formed of the stakeholders in the Park with a representative of the Authority. This committee would not focus on the day-to-day running of the Park but instead would organise the events calendar for the Park so that collaboration for such special events could take place and a wider variety of ideas be proposed. She believed this would work positively to ensure that all stakeholders could regularly have a say as to what happens in the Park, and organisation can work to benefit all.

Ms Rye closed the interview with a request that lighting be improved in the Park with special reference to the walkway from The Park alongside the children's play park. She stated that she often leaves the Park during dark hours and in the winter months the area does appear to be extremely dark. This not only poses a safety risk but Ms Rye is also concerns about the risk of ASB as a result of an under lit and generally unsupervised area. She therefore suggests that some functional, but also aesthetically pleasing lamps be installed throughout the Park to keep it well lit. She also suggested the installation of some decorative 'fairy lights' that might make the Park more appealing to those leaving her establishment and the restaurant after dark.

The following is a summary of points from the interview with Ms S Rye from the Fun Factory & Dance Studio:

- Ramp access and windows are required for the building
- Expansion onto banked track area for outdoor seating area would be ideal
- Motorsport facility is underused – if it is to remain open then more needs to be done there
- More play equipment for older children is required
- Water play area at top of Park would be great attraction
- Special events to area would benefit the Park as a whole
- Park Committee made up of stakeholders could organise a calendar of events
- More lighting required around Park

## The Views Restaurant

Mrs P Sutton was interviewed on behalf of “The Views” Restaurant situated in the central building of the Park.

Mrs Sutton opened the interview by reaffirming previous, and highly necessary, points around the installation of a lift for the restaurant. She stated that her current situation whereby all customers were required to walk up the stairs to the restaurant was not only a future legal issue with the Disability Discrimination Act, but it is also a considerable hindrance to her business. Mrs Sutton claims that her lunch time trade predominantly consists of an older generation of customer who are more likely to require lift access as the stairs can be too much of a physical challenge. She then went on to state that recently she has been losing such business as people are going elsewhere where access is easier. Mrs Sutton therefore says that the installation of a lift is rather a significant priority to her so that her business can operate to its fullest potential.

Mrs Sutton then went on to comment on the poor lighting in the Park. She stated that the Park’s darkness in the late evening is of particular concern to her as she is one of the only businesses that operate after dark. Mrs Sutton described how the poor lighting around the walkways can be of concern to her customers coming and going from the restaurant as the walkways can appear pitch black. This is compounded by issues which Mrs Sutton reports in regard to groups of people, who she believes to be young people, loitering in the darkened play Park. This can cause additional concern to customers walking around the Park for the restaurant. As such, Mrs Sutton suggests that some additional lights are installed on the main walkways around the Park so that ASB might be deterred and people feel safer walking around the Park after dark but also so access is improved and the Park is not avoided during dark hours. In a similar regard, Mrs Sutton suggested the installation of some decorative lighting around the Park, such as some small lanterns or fairy lights hung in the trees. Mrs Sutton believes that this would boost the attractiveness of the Park during the evening and would attract more people to the restaurant as the area is more aesthetically pleasant. She went on to say that any addition that could make the Park look more inviting would be welcomed as the Park appears to look quite drab. This could include the introduction of more colour or more decorative features.

Leading from her point on decoration, Mrs Sutton expressed her desire for the façade of the building to be updated. She states that she believes the current frontage to look dated and unwelcoming, also stating that the outside does not signpost the warm and modern décor of the inside of the restaurant. Mrs Sutton stated that she is not sure exactly what design she would prefer the façade to be, however any improvement that would improve the general aesthetic would be a good development. Moreover, Mrs Sutton mentioned that more decorative lighting on the front of the building would be beneficial as the current ones

are akin to 'toilet lights'. She did pose the idea of totally replacing the building so that all necessary additions could be made to make it a more modern looking facility. This would also stop the current idea of continually adding to the building which could prove more expensive in the long term. Mrs Sutton also supported the proposals to install central heating in the café but went on to request the installation of insulation to the building, as the cost of heating the restaurant during the winter was extremely high, but avoidable if insulation were put in place.

In addition to her point of access to the area, Mrs Sutton mentioned that she believed there to be some issues with the car parking around the Park. She mentioned that she has seen some mismanaged parking in the car park to the East of the stadium which could be easily rectified by painting some bay lines on the ground. Additionally she expressed support for the idea of additional car parking and was not averse to the idea of converting the tennis courts into car parking, with the replacement courts potentially being an interesting addition to the Park Fields, which is currently just an underused space. Mrs Sutton's main concern however was the distance from the car park to the door of the restaurant. She stated that it is not a great distance however, as previously mentioned; she has a large number of elderly customers who may struggle to walk such a distance. As such, she discussed the idea of allowing vehicular access beyond the barrier after Park operating hours so that those with mobility issues would not have to move quite so far. The vehicles could then turn around after dropping off their passengers and return to the car park.

The interview then progressed to consider the prospect of special events in the Park. Mrs Sutton strongly advocated any event that would draw positive attention and attract people to the Park. She stated that at present there was not enough going on at the Park and as such people were not remembering it as a place to take the family on a day out. As such, more needs to go on within the Park. Mrs Sutton stated that there was no end to the possibilities that could go on, however they could quite easily benefit all stakeholders in the Park. She went on to suggest how such events could be run by a stakeholder and then the others could support with provision of catering, entertainment or hot drinks. One example that was of great interest to Mrs Sutton was that of an ice rink alongside other winter themed attractions around the Christmas Period. She identified the boating lake as a fantastic site for an ice rink which she believed would be a major attraction. Mrs Sutton showed great support for any collaboration and cooperative working between the various stakeholders in the Park as it would allow for events to benefit all. When suggested to Mrs Sutton, she wholeheartedly agreed with the idea of a Park committee which could be used not only to confer ideas but also ensure harmonious working relationships within the Park.

Mrs Sutton went on to say how she believes that the Park has been forgotten by many or is not known at all, which then leads to fewer visitors than there potentially could be. As such, Mrs Sutton suggested that the above events would go some way to put Onchan Park on the map however there also needs to be more advertisement for the Park.

Discussion then progressed to consider the future of various attractions around the Park; beginning with the crazy golf. Mrs Sutton believes that the current crazy golf course lacks an entertaining value and appears aesthetically unattractive. She suggests that the course be replaced with a far more exciting and engaging course which could incorporate lights and memorable obstacles that could resemble characters or landmarks.

Mrs Sutton was then asked to consider the use of the Nivison stadium. She states that the motorsport events in the stadium do bring some benefit to her from functions and special events however these are not particularly frequent. The restaurant is also normally closed on Mondays when most stock car meets take place. As such Mrs Sutton does not have any major interest in the motorsport facilities remaining, however she does appreciate that they have a significant following. Mrs Sutton went on to state how she believes that the wooden grandstand is not fit for purpose and appears highly dated, she also expressed some safety concerns around the grandstand. When asked what she would perceive to be the best course of action to rectify these issues, Mrs Sutton was not too sure as to whether the grandstand should be repaired or replaced. She did however state that she would be highly interested in expanding the restaurant out into the grandstand to include a windowed area. She states that this would be particularly appealing if the area were to be converted into a sports facility.

Mrs Sutton believes that she may profit from the introduction of more sports clubs to the area as she could be asked to host various events relating to such clubs. Additionally, she believes that an increased sports presence would work significantly to attract a greater number of young visitors to play said sports. Mrs Sutton did however express concern about the potential range of facilities that would be available. She stated that unless there were a significant variety of sports available then the idea may not bring the anticipated benefit.

Mrs Sutton went on to discuss the situation should the motorsport facility remain. She believes that more needs to be done as it appears that the area is largely blocked off and is underused, therefore a greater variety of events would be beneficial. Mrs Sutton also discussed the benefit that an extended alcohol licence would bring to her business. She considered the idea of working alongside other tenants so that the restaurant might be able to serve a range of alcoholic drinks to motorsport spectators, as well as any special events elsewhere in the Park. If she were allowed to do this, Mrs Sutton reports that she would likely open on Mondays purposefully to accommodate this development.

The interview with Mrs Sutton was closed with a question regarding the potential development of a skate park in the Park area. Mrs Sutton strongly opposed this idea, especially the suggested site of the green strip next to the gate to the Nivison Stadium adjacent to the restaurant. Mrs Sutton believes that this would have a detrimental effect on her business as customers would be deterred from visiting the restaurant by the presence of large groups of youths outside the restaurant door. She also expressed concerns at the risk

of ASB that such a development may bring to the area. She was sympathetic to the idea of providing legitimate skateboarders an appropriate facility however proposed that a more supervised, possibly indoor facility would be more appropriate.

The below is a summary of points from the interview with Mrs P Sutton from “The Views” Restaurant:

- Restaurant requires a lift as a matter of urgency
- Park is in need of more lighting
- Park is in need of more decoration and aesthetic improvement
- Advertising needs to be increased
- Park and stakeholders would benefit from various special events
- Significant benefit would be seen from stakeholder collaboration
- Skate park should not be developed within Park area
- Access around Park requires improvement
- If motorsport facility is to remain then a greater variety of events need to be held there
- An indoor sports centre would be potentially attractive however would require a wider variety of sports
- Crazy golf needs to be renovated
- There are various aspects of the building that could be improved

### **SECTION THREE: AGENCIES AND ORGANISATIONS**

This section of the report has sought the advice of various organisations, agencies and individuals that would be interested in the development of the Park. They have been consulted on a variety of different factors of which they specialise.

#### **Julie Edge, MHK for Onchan**

Mrs Edge has had previous contact with the Authority in regard to her work with ISB Skateboarding the introduction of a skate park to Onchan and is a Director of Onchan Park Cafe. In this contact, ISB have presented ideas to the Board for the potential site of a new skate park being within the fold of Onchan Park. The initial presentation highlighted the

Park Lawn in front of the café as a potential site, however it has since been mentioned that this may not be the most appropriate location of any such development.

Mrs Edge has since spoken with the author of this report in regard to the possibility of a skate park within Onchan Park. Mrs Edge explained how ISB have created a number of designs for a skate park and that such designs are rather flexible so that work does not need to be totally redone to consider a different site. She went on to give reason as to why she felt a skate park in the Onchan area would be an appropriate amenity. Mrs Edge explained that at present, there is only one skate park in the Eastern area which is situated in Braddan and so is not readily accessible to skaters residing further away. Furthermore, Mrs Edge reiterated common opinions that there is little for older children/teenagers to do around the Onchan area and that skateboarding/BMX bike riding was an increasingly popular activity among this age group. Therefore a skate park would be a space that such young people could socialise in a dedicated area with a legitimate use. Mrs Edge specified that Onchan Park was the most suitable site for such a development as it was already a recreational area that was a suitable distance away from residential properties and so disruption to residents could be kept to a minimum.

Mrs Edge explained some further points around the physical nature of a skate park. She explained that due to the structure being made of hardy concrete, there would be little maintenance needed as damage will be an unlikely and only occasional occurrence. She went on to discuss the possible impacts of a skate park in the Park and near residences. Mrs Edge stated that there would be a possibility of increased noise in the area, especially after Park operating hours. However she also commented that the bowl design of the skate park works to mitigate the amount of noise that comes from the boards landing on the concrete. As such, the majority of noise will come from users' voices and any music. Mrs Edge therefore considered that there may be disapproval from any residents closest to the skate park and possibly the View's restaurant if the skating area would be situated near the centre of the Park.

Mrs Edge discussed the possibility for a new skate park incorporating a Manx twist. The presentation to the Board made mention of a central feature of the skate park being in the form of Tynwald Hill.

Mrs Edge acknowledged that there may be limited space around the Park that could be suitable for a skate park however identified a number of spaces in which the development could work. Mrs Edge initially suggested the Park Fields as a possible site for either a skate park or replacement tennis courts, however accepted that the residents of The Park wish to keep a green open space. Mrs Edge therefore suggested the possibility of the green space immediately adjacent to the children's play park near the cul-de-sac section of The Park. She stated that there was the potential for an issue in regards to noise however suggested that there was already considerable noise coming from the play area by children. Mrs Edge

accepted the response that the noise would likely cause disturbance out of Park hours when the skate park is most likely to be used. However she replied stating that due to the bowl shape of the park, this noise would be mitigated. Her final and preferred proposed site was the green area in between the central building and the car park to the east of the stadium. She stated that this was an area of considerable size that was not particularly well used. Additionally, she stated that some of the area beyond the fence could be included to so better use that space also. Mrs Edge suggested that if the fence line could be adjusted and the associated vegetation removed then the skate park could be of reasonable size and could use the natural elevation from the bank, which would therefore reduce construction costs.

Mrs Edge commented that she is considering undertaking attempts to raise funds to help with the costs of a skate park, possibly through use of the upcoming (at time of writing) marquee on the Park Lawn at Onchan Park. She is also considering the prospect of obtaining sponsorships for the development with the hope that the centrality of Manx culture will be an enticing factor for companies.

### **Robert Callister, MHK for Onchan**

Mr Callister was asked to comment on some of the suggested developments.

He stated that he was supportive of a community sports facility which was able to cater for the sporting and recreational needs of local residents. As such, he advocated the inclusion of an indoor facility as this would likely make the area more accessible for more members of the community.

Mr Callister made a further suggestion which he believes would increase the footfall to the Park and to the sports facility. He suggested that, as part of the construction of the indoor facility, that office space is created. This office space could then possibly be occupied by the Authority, allowing the release of the existing office accommodation for development in the centre of Onchan. This relocation would then require more people to walk through the Park so that they can access the Authority to conduct their business and create another reason to visit the throughout the year. Mr Callister believes that this increased footfall would be of benefit to the Authority and to the Park in general.

Mr Callister was also supportive of developments suggested to Onchan Park and advocated any developments that would mean Onchan Park and its tenants would be able to comply with upcoming legislation in regards to accessibility.



## Onchan Heritage

Mr P Kelly, the Captain of the Parish and Committee Member of Onchan Heritage, was consulted as part of this report around the heritage and history around the Park. The Park has a significant nostalgic value and so this report believes it to be a prudent step to consider in what ways this can be preserved and utilised so to be in-keeping with the Island-wide effort to embrace our heritage.

Mr Kelly opened the interview by giving a sequential history of the Park using photographs as a point of reference. Mr Kelly described the first uses of the Park and the foundation of the Nivison Stadium in the 1950s. He described how the banked track in the stadium was used primarily for cycling however this was stopped when motorised entertainment came to the stadium. He went on to discuss the wide variety of events that would take place within the stadium such as motorcycle shows, community-involved dog races and spectacles such as *It's a Knock Out*. He stated that the variety of shows and entertainment was a major draw to the Park. Whilst the municipal function of the Park was popular, the main attraction to visit the Park was the special events. Mr Kelly did however counter this by commenting on the significantly fewer visitors that the Island receives; a reduced amount of tourism will inevitably reduce the number coming to the Park. As such, Mr Kelly suggested that the stadium's use be diversified to accommodate a wider variety of attractions and shows. The current, occasional usage of the motorsport facilities by the "Stock Cars" do not do the stadium justice and it should be occupied more frequently to provide continuous draw to it. Mr Kelly suggested that this might be a profitable endeavour for the current tenants of the facility

Mr Kelly went on to describe how the underlying principle of the Park was always to provide pleasure and recreation to both local residents and attract something tourists to the area with unique entertainment. Mr Kelly states that the Park has always generally done well to be a site of recreation however its unique selling points appear to be declining. Mr Kelly's primary example of this was the replacement of the boats from motor engine vessels to the current battery powered boats. He argues that the putt-putt sound of the engines was an attraction in itself and the idea of controlling an engine powered boat was a particular draw to young people. Mr Kelly's negative perspective on the replacement boats were compounded by the loss of heritage value that was held in the traditional style boats.

Mr Kelly was then asked if there was anything in Onchan Park that he believed to be of particular historic value. He replied that most of such value has already been removed. Mr Kelly detailed some specifics. He stated that the current use of the banked track relates little to the original usage of the track (i.e. cycling) and so some of the sporting heritage of the Park has been lost. He also commented that the replacement of the boats removed another nostalgic aspect of the Park. He also identified the loss of the aviary as another historic

aspect of the Park that was removed from the Park. Mr Kelly did pose the idea that the wooden grandstand was principally the same and so could be perceived to be of historic value to the stadium, however was not in great condition

In summary therefore, Mr Kelly could not identify any specific part of the Park that was of heritage value, as such, he did not anticipate that any developments to the Park could be of detriment to the area's history. Mr Kelly did however state that the general character of the Park has remained, but it has evolved to such an extent that there was no nostalgic feeling to the Park.

Mr Kelly was then asked to consider the impact on the proposals to convert the stadium into a sports facility. He stated that he believed this would have no significant negative impact on the heritage of the Park as the stadium has already evolved beyond its original form. Mr Kelly believes that the motorsport facilities hold limited nostalgic value to the wider community, instead only holds such value among the followers and supporters of the motorsport facility. However, Mr Kelly did cite the go-karts and "Stock Cars" as a keystone development in the Park's history. Moreover, Mr Kelly suggested that it may not be a particularly viable option for the Authority as there would be considerable expenditure in order to convert the area and complete the regular maintenance that sports facilities require; citing the current increase in charges at the NSC in order to compensate for cost. Mr Kelly also suggested that the current tenants of the motorsport facility are paying a considerable amount to the Authority and conversion would not only mean significant expenditure but he also anticipated a lesser income from the new facility, which would require compensation from the rates. Mr Kelly finalised his argument by stating that Onchan Park is in need of unique attractions rather than a copy of aspects of the National Sports Centre.

Mr Kelly recalled the past endeavours to advertise the Park to attract visitors, especially those not from the Island. He stated that the Park has previously been widely advertised all across the Island in various forms, the example he used most was the use of fliers targeted to tourists coming to the Island. He went on to comment on the success of such endeavours, claiming that a great number of people were attracted as a result of learning about the attractions on offer. However he says that he has noticed a distinct lack of any such advertisement recently.

The interview with Mr Kelly was closed with his consideration as to whether any development to the Park might be possible in order to promote or showcase the heritage of the Park, the Onchan area, or the Island as a whole. In response, Mr Kelly reiterated his point that much of the heritage value has already been lost and so without reinstating certain features, which would now be inviable, there is little to do to showcase specific historic aspects.

Based on Mr Kelly's earlier comments, it might appear that an observation of the Park's history might be possible if some of the original events and entertainment were seen in the stadium. The interview concluded with Mr Kelly's reiteration that the Park requires unique selling points in order to serve as an attractive leisure facility.

## **Commissioners Officers**

Two officers of the Authority were consulted on various issues and solutions in regard to Onchan Park and asked for their opinions on how best the Park should go forward

### **Mr B Price, District Surveyor**

The District Surveyor, Mr B Price was consulted in regard to the structural and safety issues that the Park may have, with special reference on the Nivison Stadium. Mr Price confirmed that there had been an issue in regards to obtaining a fire safety certificate from IOM Fire & Rescue Service for the Stadium and adjoining buildings. He then went on however to state that these issues, which mainly involved exit signage and locked gates, had been resolved and the certificate awarded. This was corroborated by the Fire Safety Inspecting Officer who confirmed that the authority held a valid certificate was held and that there were no major concerns about the safety of the stadium and adjoining buildings provided the terms of the certificate are met.

Mr Price did however express concerns that the main grandstand could constitute a fire risk by virtue of it being heavily clad in wood. He stated that such a risk had to be considered as any fire could spread across the grandstand. Mr Price however expressed no concerns as to the structural integrity of the main grandstand however that it would require routine maintenance if it were to be retained. The District Surveyor added that the damage to the grandstand often comes down to the users of it not being totally responsible. When asked how any issues could be best addressed or what the best course of action for the grandstand would be, Mr Price stated that it would depend on the future of the stadium. If it were to have a new use then the requirement of such a grandstand would be questioned. If it is deemed that a grandstand is not needed then it could be demolished or redeveloped.

Mr Price was then asked about the concrete, secondary grandstand within the stadium. He stated that there were doubts over the structural integrity of that grandstand. Mr Price informed the author of a structural engineer's report from around 10 years ago which found that there was evidence of concrete spalling (degradation) of the back of the grandstand which was damaging the integrity of the back wall. This spalling will have continued since the report was created and so Mr Price would suggest that the issue has progressed. Mr

Price went on to describe how the back wall and the roof were connected as one structural component, meaning that if the back wall were to fail as a result of the spalling then the roof would fall too. This is compounded by Mr Price's statement that the roof was also leaking. When asked how this issue could best be resolved, Mr Price once again asserted that it would depend on the future use of the stadium. If the motorsport facility were to remain, then the back wall and roof could be removed so to remove the structural risk and create an open seating area. However, if the stadium were to be turned into a sports facility then the grandstand should be removed and a new development such be put in its place.

Mr Price stated that he believed that the most effective use of the space which the stadium contained was to turn the grass pitch 90 degrees and move it over to one side. This would leave room to add a second pitch which could be of an all-weather surface; however the fence line to the North East of the stadium would need adjusting to allow the corner of the second pitch to fit in. Mr Price stated that whilst motorsport was a unique attraction, they were very much seasonal and so the use of the stadium was limited to a couple of months throughout the summer. He therefore believes that the area could better serve the community if it was run as a recreational sports facility that could be run all year round.

Mr Price was then asked to consider the main Park area and its suitability as a municipal pleasure park. Mr Price's first comment was that the crazy golf was in need of replacement as the obstacles were worn, dated and unfit for purpose. As such, he suggested that a new course be developed. Mr Price then went on to mention the Kiddie Cars that are currently situated in front of the pay hut. Mr Price stated that the current cars are getting old and so maintenance was becoming problematic and so they should be replaced. Mr Price mentioned that work was underway looking into new cars and the possibility of extending the track.

Mr Price's final comment was in regard to car parking around Onchan Park. He stated that the current provision was not enough and that when the Park was busy there was considerable congestion on nearby roads. As such, he suggested that another area dedicated to car parking be introduced around the Park. The area he highlighted as a potential site was the small green area at the top of the children's play area. This is adjoining the existing car park and so would serve well as an extension to create a good sized car park on the West side of the Park. Mr Price also suggested that, should the stadium be converted and the fence line adjusted as mentioned above, then the existing car park on the East side of the stadium could be extended northwards, creating a more regularly shaped and larger car park.

**Mr P Sutton, Operations Manager**

Mr Sutton was asked about the crazy golf attraction and the state of its current condition. He stated that the current course was past its best and was looking dated and worn. As such, he advocated a significant expenditure to revitalise the attraction. Mr Sutton stated that the crazy golf is arguably the pleasure park's biggest money maker as it is such a popular attraction. However, Mr Sutton commented that whilst it makes a good income, this income stream is declining as people are no attracted to come and play again as the course offers little excitement or challenge. Therefore, Mr Sutton believes that if the course could be replaced with more adventurous and challenging obstacles, not only would this attract people who may have already played the current course back to play the new one but it would also aim to keep attracting people back, thus mitigating the reducing income flow.

Mr Sutton was then asked about the kiddie cars that are currently situated in front of the pay hut. Mr Sutton stated that these cars were now around 20 years old and so maintenance was becoming problematic. He went on to say that work has been undertaken looking into replacing the cars with new models which are slightly faster but also can allow a parent to assist their child with the driving. Mr Sutton believes that the new models would allow for a broader age range to use the cars which would boost the income made by the attraction. To further this, Mr Sutton suggested that the price per go was increased with that addition of extra time on the ride. The increase in price coupled with the wider age range and prospective increased interest would mean that the investment to renew the vehicles would be returned fairly quickly. Mr Sutton went on to suggest that the track be extended 5 meters towards the crazy golf course. He predicted that this project would cost in the region of £5000 however this would mean that more cars could be operated at the same time; therefore increasing income once again. Similarly, Mr Sutton advocated the increased use of coin operated equipment as they often prove to be popular but do not require a great deal of supervision.

Mr Sutton was then asked about any other suggestions or issues he may have with the Park at present. His first comment was around the significant expenditure and effort put into improving the pitch and putt. He stated that this attraction was now in good condition and that it was proving popular as a result. Mr Sutton therefore suggested that more advertising be done to promote this attraction as it seemed as though few people were aware of the facility. Mr Sutton then went on to discuss the tennis courts. He stated that the 2 courts on the south side of the area were currently out of action pending repairs as there are safety issues that have been identified. Mr Sutton believes that a decision needs to be made as to whether these two courts are going to be repaired as they occupy valuable space however are unused. Mr Sutton believes that the tennis courts might be an appropriate location for certain events such as a roller rink or markets (further discussion to follow).

Mr Sutton identified some issues that currently face the Park in regard to ASB and vandalism. He stated that there have been several cases whereby people have intentionally damaged play equipment in the children's play area which has required repair. Mr Sutton suggested that this might be due to a lack of free equipment that would appeal to the 11-15 age groups. He suggested that the inclusion of larger play equipment may mitigate the issue however conversely stated that there is likely little that could be done to solve the issue.

Mr Sutton was then asked about the impact of hosting special events in the Park. He stated that he believed the tennis courts to be an appropriate location for such events as they would not encroach on the Park's operation and there would be limited damage to any turf. Mr Sutton expressed concern at the idea of hosting any event that would require a solid floor on the Park Lawn. He stated that there have been previous issues with turf compression which has led to a seal being formed in the ground which has subsequently led to a build-up of methane gas under the surface. As such, the continued compression of the grass would incur significant and continuous expenditure to maintain the Lawn. He went on to question the benefit of such events to the Park and the associated business. He cited previous events which he claimed to be of no financial benefit to the Park as visitors did not use both facilities. Furthermore he stated that due to such events often providing their own refreshments, the associated catering businesses were not receiving any patronage.

Mr Sutton closed with a comment in regards to the prospect of a skate park. He stated that he could see the potential benefit of having a skate park; however he did not believe that Onchan Park would be the best place to have it. Instead he suggested that the area of green land adjacent to The Hub would be a more appropriate location as there would be fewer disturbances to local residents.

## **Isle of Man Tourism**

Isle of Man Tourism was contacted in order to gain evidence in regards to the tourism benefits that the motorsport facility attracts to the Island.

Mr Doherty, the Tourism Events Manager, replied stating that no records were held that would evidence the amount of tourism that the facility brings in. However, he did state that Isle of Man Tourism have supported the Raceway on occasion in the promotion of their events. Mr Doherty went on to say that such support is based on the amount of tourism an event may attract and specifically mentioned the attraction of visiting stock car drivers to the Island in order to participate in racing. Therefore the inference was made that the Raceway does have a tourism benefit, else Isle of Man Tourism would not provide such support.

Mr Doherty also mentioned an indirect tourist benefit of the motorsport facility as visitors may be attracted to the Onchan Area in order to watch the racing. He closed his response by stating that he believed the Park and the Stadium were of particular interest to families, who are a new key market for the Island's tourism industry.

## **Isle of Man Sport**

Isle of Man Sport was represented for this report by Mr G Corkhill, the Chair of Isle of Man Sport; Ms S Corlett, Chair of the Sports Liaison Committee; and Mr P Callow, the business administrator of Isle of Man Sport.

The meeting with the above representatives focused upon the sporting needs of the Island and was also used to be advised on how best a community sports and recreation facility should be set-up, should the decision be made to develop such a facility. The overarching opinion of the representatives was that sporting and recreational provision in a site such as Onchan Park should work to benefit the mass participation aspect of sport and recreation. As such, facilities would need to cater for all levels of sporting ability however should place special focus on 'grass-roots' participation and leisure activity rather than sporting excellence.

This therefore led to the suggestion that such a facility might benefit more from a focus on indoor activities. The representatives commented that it would likely be the best course of action, should such a facility be developed, to avoid including sport specific areas within the facility and instead include multi-functional, versatile sporting areas that could accommodate an array of sports and activities. It was believed by Isle of Man Sport that by adopting this approach, the facility would more likely be used more frequently and would allow the focus to remain on community participation rather than encourage sports clubs to envelop the facility. The representatives of Isle of Man Sport identified that there were a number of sports that currently had deficits of indoor facilities and it is the belief of Isle of Man Sport that the increased provision of such facility would benefit the Strategy for Sport (see next section) by encouraging wider participation and will be of value to the Strategy for Sport by affording an accessible facility for the residents of Onchan and the wider area. It was commented that, at present, Mr P Jones of Isle of Man Sport was undertaking an audit of sports facilities around the Island and that his conclusions should be drawn fairly soon. Therefore, evidence of any sporting facility deficits or demands should be available in the near future.

The provision of outdoor facilities was then considered by the representatives. A similar response to the above was given in that Isle of Man Sport advocated the provision of versatile 'playing surface' that could accommodate various sports rather than providing a

facility for a specific sport. In this they suggested that a grass pitch would potentially be limited in its use as they believe it would only be used by football teams; whereas an all-weather surface would be more attractive to other clubs and private members of the community. The representatives did however acknowledge that Onchan AFC would want to remain at the Nivison Stadium. It was stated that there currently appears to be a shortage of all-weather pitches during peak times which limits the ability of sports clubs and private users to access such facilities. As such, difficulties may have been met by those wishing to progress their sport. As such, it could be inferred that the provision of another such facility might improve this situation and support the sporting community on the Island as well as affording a valuable facility for the community to use without any affiliation to a club. Once again, evidence of this statement will be available within the data collected in the audit that was previously mentioned. However, anecdotal evidence was provided stating that similar facilities at The Bowl and St. Ninian's Lower School were often very difficult to access due to demand. Similarly, it was stated that the Tommy Clucas Community Sports Hall in Peel was seeing similar demand. The Tommy Clucas Community Sports Hall was identified as a particular successful example due to its versatility, as such; Isle of Man Sport suggested that a similar development in Onchan may prove equally successful and beneficial to local sport, health and fitness.

Isle of Man Sport also identified that provision of some form of cycling area might prove a successful venture. The representatives considered the inclusion of a velodrome in the current place of the banked track however suggested that this might not be the most effective use of space. Instead they suggested a track that could go around the Park that would facilitate leisurely cycling, potentially incorporating some of the Park Fields. Additionally, the suggestion of provision of a rough biking or skating facility was received.

The meeting with Isle of Man Sport was closed with a reiteration of their support for the provision of a community sports and recreation facility in the Nivison Stadium which could accommodate a wide variety of sports and activities and engage a large number of people in sport, leisure and physical activity.

## **SECTION FOUR: RELEVANT STRATEGY AND POLICY**

The Isle of Man Government has, in recent years, set out a number of policies and strategies for the Island in order to ensure that the public are given the very best deal available. As such, there are several points in such national strategy that link to a prospective development of Onchan Park. This section will outline the key relevant points from Government strategy and policy which must be considered as part of the decision making process as they have been constructed to give the Isle of Man a collective direction.



This report considers the following policies/strategies to be of particular relevance to Onchan Park and prospective changes:

- Isle of Man Strategic Plan – Recreation Policies (April 2016 – Chapter 10) [Attached as Annex B]
- Isle of Man Strategy for Sport 2014 – 2024 [Attached as Annex C]
- Isle of Man Strategy for Children and Young People 2015 – 2020 [Attached as Annex D]
- Disability Discrimination Act 2006

The above are likely not the only relevant Government publications however they have availed themselves as the most relevant and appropriate to the Future of Onchan Park Consultation. Any decision making must consider any other policies that may have an impact, the obvious being planning and structural policies, however these are not the focus of this report. The following is a summary of the policies included in the above documents alongside an analysis of how such policies may impact upon plans for development.

## Isle of Man Strategic Plan – Recreational Policies

The Strategic Plan is the development and land use plan for the Isle of Man set out by the Cabinet Office as a written statement of the Department’s general policies. The plan’s overall purpose is *“to maintain and build on the high quality of life enjoyed by the Island’s community”*. In order to fulfil this purpose, the plan states its strategic aim:

**To plan for the efficient and effective provision of services and infrastructure and to direct and control development and the use of land to meet the community’s needs, having particular regard to the principles of sustainability whilst at the same time preserving, protecting, and improving the quality of the environment, having particular regard to our uniquely Manx natural, wildlife, cultural and built heritage.**

Chapter 10 of the document sets out the plan for Sport, Recreation, Open Space and Community Facilities; all of which appear particularly relevant to Onchan Park and its prospective developments. This Recreation plan cites the ability for appropriately used open space and leisure facilities to improve and maintain the high quality of life that is enjoyed by the residents of the Isle of Man. In general terms, the plan favours the development and growth of sport on the Island and so envisages improving the sporting facilities on the Isle of Man.

It also envisages the maintenance of good open space as not only a versatile recreational asset to the community but an integral part to our heritage and a form of relief from urban developments.

As such, the Strategic Plan sets out a three-pronged approach to facilitate the development and use of recreational open space and sporting facilities:

- Protecting existing assets
- Making good deficiencies in existing provision
- Providing adequate provision within the new development

**Recreation Policy:** This policy states that an Area plan considering the development of sporting or recreational facilities should incorporate an assessment of the sporting and recreational needs of the community that the facility intends to serve. This includes assessment of the demand for both indoor and outdoor facilities and recreational areas.

Policy requires that consideration must be given to retain existing sporting facilities and open space unless alternative and comparable provision is made.

Policy also asks that Area plans identify suitable sites that may be appropriate to make good any deficiency in sporting and recreational provision which are, or may be, demanded by the community.

Similarly, the policy requires any development that may adversely affect an area of recreational or amenity value must involve alternative provision. There must also be an overall community gain and that the loss of a specific facility would have no significant negative impact on its surrounding area

**Analysis:** Recreation Policy 1 has a rather direct link to both the Eastern Area Plan and any consideration to develop Onchan Park. It asks that an assessment of the community needs be conducted as part of any plan. This has been done to an extent by the initial consultation however this small scale “call for ideas” may not be considered as a comprehensive assessment. Therefore, policy may require a further, more in depth assessment of community needs before any definitive plans are constructed.

The policy requires that sporting and recreation provision be retained unless alternative, comparable facility can be provided. This directly links to three areas of the Park.

First of all is the debate around the tennis courts and the proposed conversion to car parking. Policy 1 would initially be against such a development as it removes a sporting facility. However, as the initial consultation document outlined, there would be alternative provision of tennis courts elsewhere in the Park.

Secondly, the Park Fields could certainly be seen as informal recreational open space and so development of such space would not be favoured by the policy unless similar open space can be created elsewhere. At the time of writing this report, it is not clear as to where a comparable open space could be made and so it is likely that, in order to keep with policy, the Park Fields must go largely undeveloped. Similarly, the feedback from the initial

consultation suggests that any development that would not retain the open space of the Park Fields would have a significant negative effect on the surrounding area and the local residents and so again, development may not be supported by the policy.

Thirdly, the motorsport facility could be considered to be a recreational facility; however this must be clarified by policy experts. If it is designated as such then any plans to remove the facility must be supplemented by alternative provision that is of equal, or greater, community benefit. As such, to keep with policy, any plans to transform the Nivison Stadium into a Community Sports Facility must be closely assessed to judge whether or not it would bring an increased benefit to the community. Policy 2 in the plan (please see Annex B) states that a development that would remove a recreational space will only be considered if there is an overall community gain and the loss of such a facility does not have an adverse negative impact on the recreation provision or the character of the area. As previously mentioned, it must be more accurately gauged as to whether the conversion of the motorsport facility would be of overall benefit to the community. Focus is drawn however to the policy's mention of character. A significant argument from consultation feedback and interviews with Raceway operators show that the facility could indeed be an integral part of the character of the Park as a popular and unique attraction to the area. This must therefore be considered as a possible barrier to any development as well as a point to consider in regards to the desire to remove such a unique attraction.

Conversely, the spirit of the policy may favour redevelopment of the Nivison Stadium as the policy generally desires to maintain and create community accessible space. Whilst the stadium may be considered to be a recreational space that adds to the character of the local area, it could be considered to be an underuse of open space in an increasingly urban area. The Stadium is not routinely open to the community for recreational use and instead is only opened for certain motorsport events and Onchan AFC's home games during their allowed time period. Therefore it could be considered by the policy that the routinely locked off stadium is not a community orientated recreational/open space and therefore may favour development into a community sports facility. The community sports facility could be considered by the policy to be of greater community benefit not least due to it being a diversified space but also one that is open all year round as opposed to a seasonal operation.

The recreation policy as part of the Isle of Man Strategic Plan therefore poses some interesting questions that must be closely considered should any developments be taken forwards as part of the Future of Onchan Park. It appears that the overall spirit of the policy is to maintain open space and recreational facilities on the Isle of Man in order to promote sport, healthy lifestyles and a greater quality of life. As such, any plans for development must consider how they will impact on the open space nearby and the benefit the development will bring to the local community, balanced against the impacts of any loss of previous facilities. The policy repeatedly refers to community benefit; as such any future

plans must first gauge the views and requirements of the community and then put the needs of the community at their heart.

The Strategic Plan requires potential developments to be outlined in Area Plans in which potential sites for development are identified and assessed for their suitability for development. The Emerging Eastern Area Plan, which incorporates Onchan, has gone through its 'Call for Sites' phase in which these sites have been identified and assessed. It appears, by reading the assessments that the vast majority of proposed developments are housing, with a number of sites being green open space. As such, there is a risk that the remaining green space within the ever increasingly urban Onchan area may be removed. This was a significant concern to many respondents in the initial consultation who wish to retain a good amount of green open space. Onchan Park has not featured as part of this plan (with the exception of the Belgravia Road Tennis Courts) however it must be considered that the Park area offers a significant amount of green space. Therefore, any development must consider the impact it will have on green open space, as it will be of significant importance to the community to retain such space.

The Emerging Eastern Area Plan consultation is currently under consideration and so the results should be considered upon their release as they may allude to prospective developments that may reduce green space.

## **Isle of Man Strategy for Sport 2014 – 2024**

The Isle of Man has seen ever increasing sporting excellence and has established itself as a strong sporting nation, most recently seen in the 2017 Island Games in which the Isle of Man won 101 medals, 39 of which were gold. The Strategy for Sport therefore aims to use this sporting excellence to promote wider participation across the Island and hopefully further boost our prowess on the international stage.

The strategy's main aim however is to use sport as a community based early intervention to combat growing issues of obesity and social issues; citing that they want to get "more people, more active, more often". As such, the strategy for sport directly links to the Future of Onchan Park project and the suggested development of the Nivison Stadium into a community sports facility.

The strategy sets out a number of objectives which will work towards getting a wider spectrum of the Island's community more involved in sport and physical activity which will then lead to a greater number of people leading healthier lifestyles.

1. Increase levels of physical activity in young people

2. Increase the number of children and adults who are regularly involved in community sport
3. Improve the quality of life and social wellbeing for people with disabilities
4. Improve the quality of life and outcomes for looked after children and young carers
5. Improve the wellbeing of children, adults and the elderly who suffer from poor health
6. Maintain, develop and improve facilities
7. Improve and develop coaching
8. Highlight the success of sport to promote the Isle of Man and fulfil the potential of talented performers on the world stage
9. Improve social inclusion
10. Help young people further their education and training using sport to improve their chances of finding employment

The strategy also outlines the peripheral benefits of expanding sport in the community. Sport and recreation services are cited as a low cost yet vastly successful way of improving social situations and quality of life. Additionally, increased sporting ability and participation may have a direct fiscal benefit to the Island. The strategy document mentions a considerable income to the Island's economy through sporting tourism (excluding the TT). Additionally, it cites sport as being able to act as an early intervention not only for health issues but also social ones. The document claims sport to be a vital and highly effective means of tackling anti-social behaviour and preventing people from falling into criminal activity. There is significant cost to the tax payer in dealing with offenders through the Criminal Justice System; however such costs may be mitigated if people, especially young people, can be diverted from crime and anti-social behaviour at an early age. It is believed that sport could be this diversion.

**Analysis:** The strategy discusses each of these points at length in its original document (Annex C) and so this report need not copy all of the detail. The Strategy's 'Plan on a Page' can also be found on the following page.

The Isle of Man government appears very keen to promote sport and physical activity wherever possible. Onchan Park is already home to a number of sports and associated clubs and so presents itself as an opportunity to support the Governments aims.

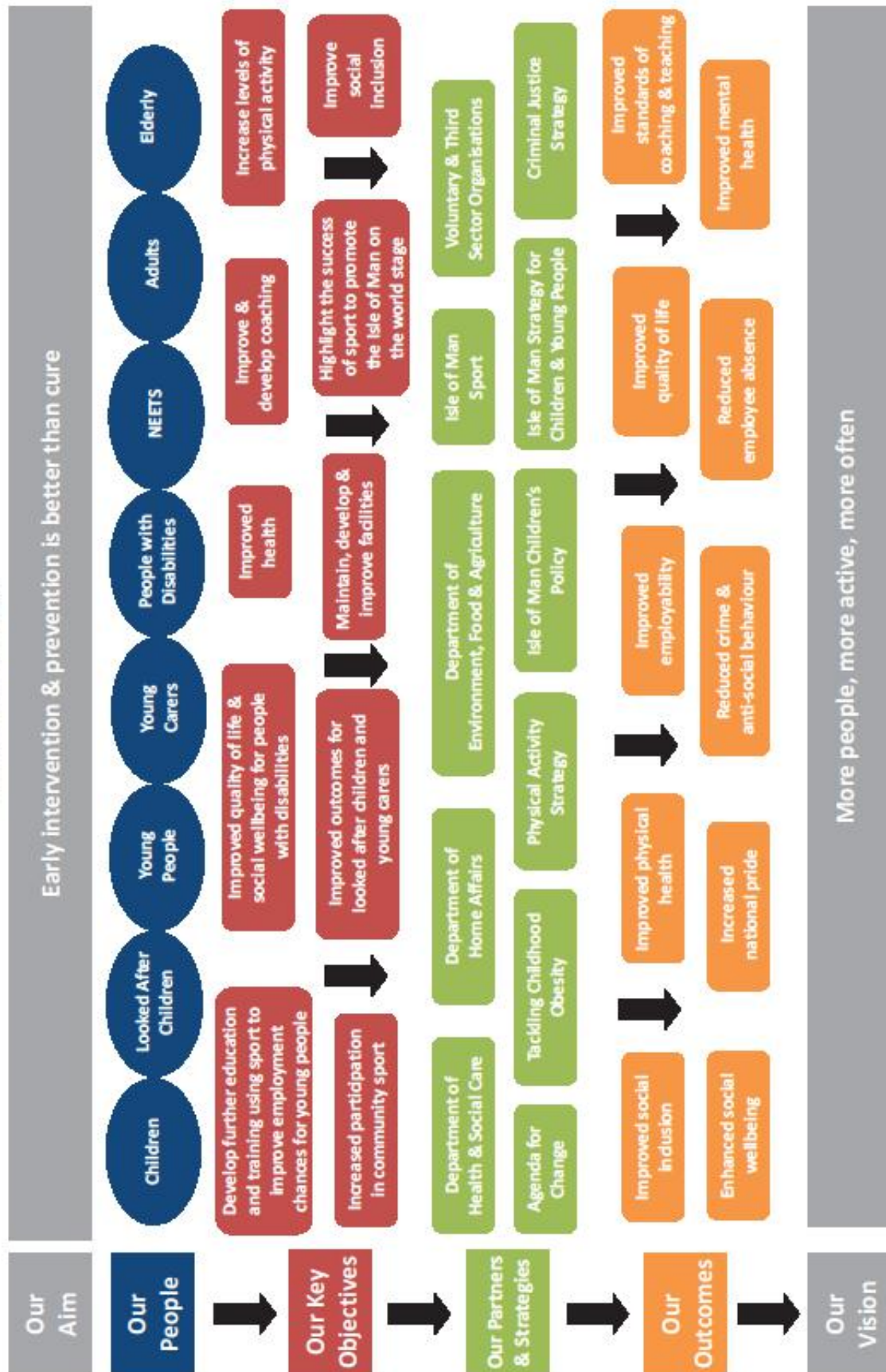
If the Future of Onchan Park were to work towards assisting the successful fruition of the strategy then the community sports facility at the Nivison stadium would be a prime way to do so. Not only would it add another sporting asset to the island but it would be one closer

to the people of Onchan. By providing a year round facility to local residents, the community would be encouraged to regularly participate in sport as there would be a facility closer to hand than other facilities in Douglas. The feedback from the initial consultation suggests that there is an appetite for a greater variety of sporting provision around Onchan, especially indoor sports. There is evidence to suggest that sporting facilities around the Island, especially football pitches and all-weather pitches, are in high demand. As such, both clubs and members of the public can struggle to access appropriate areas to train, compete or play recreationally. Additionally, increased provision for local clubs would improve local participation and promote a higher standard of competitive sport.

As mentioned previously in the section considering the Isle of Man Strategic Plan, a thorough assessment must be made into the requirements of the community in order to judge whether a community sports facility would be preferred, and be of more benefit.

The spirit of the Strategy for Sport is to boost participation in sport and physical activity across the Island in order to curtail health and social problems and improve our nation's standing on the sporting world stage. The strategy does not form government policy and so developments are not bound to adhere to the aims of it, as such Onchan Park is not obliged to act to enhance sporting participation in Onchan. However, its potential to do so must be considered in its future; and if it is decided that sporting provision should not be increased at the Park, then such provision should be considered elsewhere in order to encourage active lifestyles in Onchan.

## Isle of Man Strategy for Sport 2014 - 2024 A Plan-on-a-Page



Source: <https://www.gov.im/media/1349541/plan-on-a-page-new.pdf>

## Isle of Man Strategy for Children and Young People 2015 – 2020

The Government Strategy for Children and Young People has a more indirect impact on any prospective developments in the Park. As the Park is, and should remain to be, a community asset which is enjoyed by families and children, then developments could consider working to improve the lives of children on the Isle of Man.

The strategy has 4 key priorities which work towards ensuring that every child has the best possible opportunity in life:

- Nurturing children and young people's healthy development, aspirations and achievement
- Children and young people grow up resilient against adversity
- Children and young people grown up safe from harm and abuse
- Children and young people grow up to be engaged and contributing adults in supportive communities

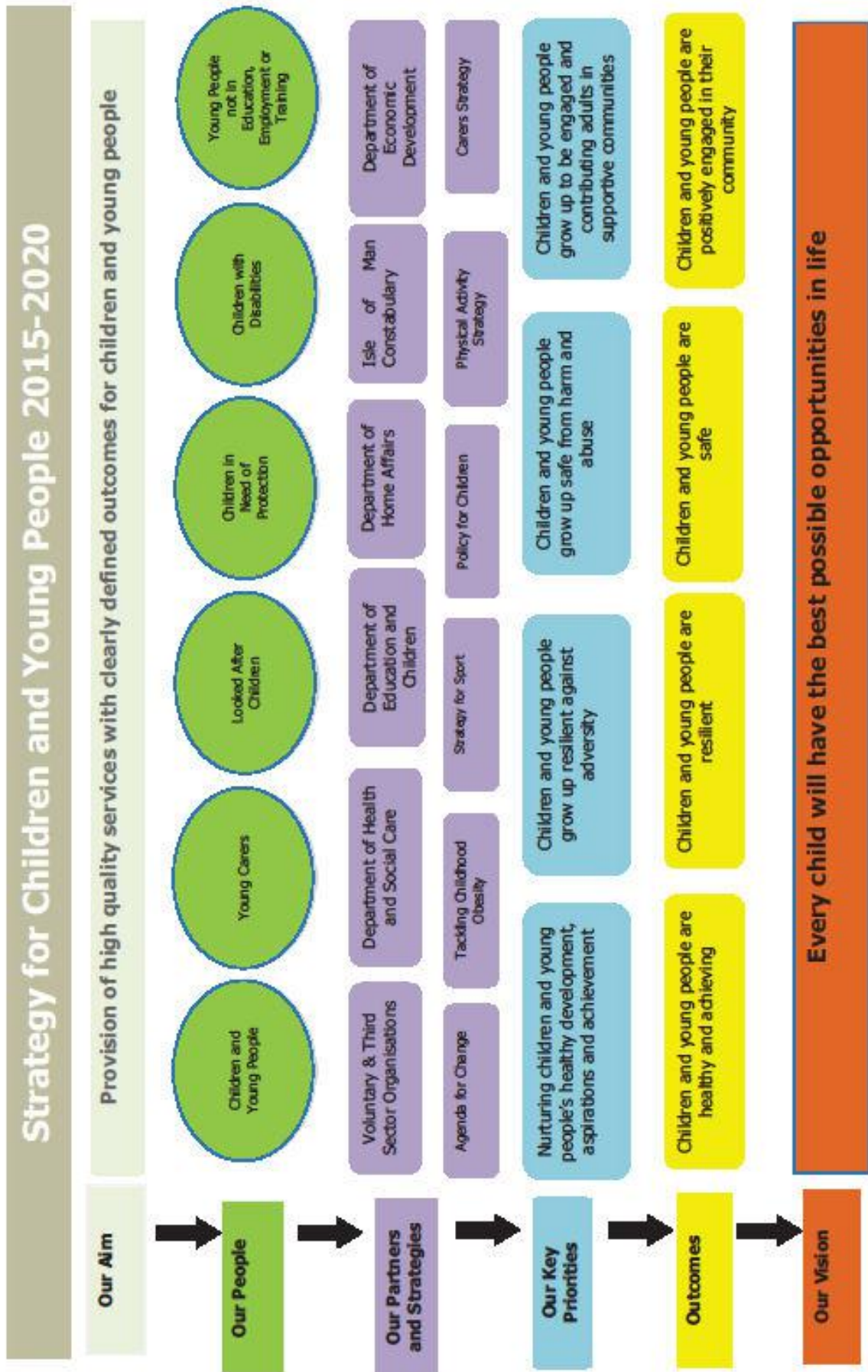
The strategy aims to ensure that young people can develop resilience in life whilst being kept safe and promoting their welfare. It is recognised by the strategy that early intervention in life is necessary to ensure that children do not fall into poor lifestyles such as those of crime or poverty and it identifies a number of ways in which young people can be supported in this regard.

**Analysis:** As mentioned above, this strategy does not necessarily have a direct link to developments in the Park nor would it be a barrier to the approval of any developments. It has been included in this report for consideration however as a considerable amount of correspondence in the initial consultation made reference to young people's use of the Park and a request that developments keep these young people in mind.

It is also the belief of the author that the Park could have the potential to provide more of a service to the young people of Onchan and the Island than simply a site of leisure and recreation. In a similar way to the Strategy for Sport, Onchan Park could be able to be a site to help young people get and stay active so to keep them healthy. Additionally, young people may be able to use the facilities at the Park as not just a safe space to meet and socialise but also an area that can provide opportunities to get involved in positive extra-curricular activity that will not only help them in formal education but provide a broader range of social skills and divert them from negative lifestyles.

The Strategy for Children and Young People Plan on a Page can be found on the following page.





Source: <https://www.gov.im/media/1349251/strategy-for-cyp-2015-2020.pdf>

## **Disability Discrimination Act 2006**

Onchan Park is an inclusive and family attraction; however there are at present a number of issues in regard to access to certain areas to the Park. Upcoming stages of legislative implementation will necessitate certain developments around the Park. The Disability Discrimination Act 2006 (DDA 2006) was passed by Tynwald over 10 years ago however its implementation has been split into progressive stages, the latter half of these are due in the next 3 to 4 years.

### **The legislation**

DDA 2006 is the legislation covering the discrimination of service provision towards people with disabilities. In short, it requires service providers to make adjustments, within reason, to allow those with disabilities to access their services without undue difficulty.

#### **Phase 1**

Phase 1 of DDA 2006 came into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016. This provided foundational guidance around disabilities along with baseline legislative sections on discrimination. Additionally, a code of practice was established in this initial stage of implementation.

#### **Phase 2**

Phase 2 commenced on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2016. This stage of policy implementation made it unlawful for a service provider to discriminate against a person with disability in relation to the provision of goods, facilities or services. This would relate to direct discrimination through denial of services. Additionally, the provision of phase 2 made it illegal for landlords to discriminate against those with disability in regards to residency or the disposal and management of premises.

#### **Phase 3**

Phase 3 is due for introduction on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018. This will require service providers to take reasonable steps to facilitate changes to current policy, procedures or practice that make access to goods or services unreasonably difficult for those with disability.

As part of phase 3, provision was made to require service providers to take reasonable steps to introduce auxiliary services that would allow a person with disability access to said services where reasonable steps could not be taken to allow access to the main area of service provision.

This phase essentially requires service providers to make every effort to ensure all persons have access to their premises or services without undue difficulty. This does not merely include physical barriers to access but also the actual use of services.

## Phase 4

The final stage is due for implementation in 2020 and relates to the physical nature of establishments and their accessibility. Phase 4 requires service providers to address any existing issues whereby the physical nature of a building poses undue difficulty for a person with difficulty to gain access.

The legislation provides four options for service providers with such issues:

- Remove the feature that poses issues to access
- Alter the feature so that it no longer poses an issue
- Provide reasonable means of avoiding the feature
- Provide an alternative method of making the service available to disabled persons

## Analysis

The DDA 2006 is of relevance to Onchan Park as it is a community facility that is used by many different members of society, some of whom will inevitably be disabled. As such, there is an upcoming legal obligation to ensure that these people have been afforded every reasonable chance of accessing the variety of facilities and services at the Park. There are not believed to be any issues in regard to the provisions introduced by phases 1 and 2, however there are some areas of the Park that will require attention in order to fulfil phase 4.

“The Views” Restaurant is at present only accessible by stairs. This is therefore a physical barrier for those who have mobility issues and as such there is undue difficulty to access services by such disabled persons. As such, Phase 4 of DDA 2006 will require steps to be taken to allow access without undue difficulty for those with mobility issues. The likely best course of action in this regard would be the installation of a lift from the ground floor entrance up into the main restaurant area on the first floor. Whilst discussing this issue with one of the proprietors of the restaurants, it was mentioned that she believed the ideal place for the installation of a lift would be on the Eastern side of the building as this is closest to the car park and so customers with disability will not have to move as far. Mrs Sutton stated that she envisaged that a two-person lift would fit comfortably to the current space with the necessary fittings, however planning experts would be better placed to comment on the most appropriate place for a lift. Mrs Sutton also expressed that she would expect such an installation to be the responsibility of the Authority however she said that she would take responsibility for the installation of disabled toilets.

The public toilets are also an issue in terms of disabled access. There is a significant step up to access these toilets which is a physical barrier to any person who requires the use of a wheelchair. Additionally, there appears to be limited space for the manoeuvring of wheelchairs inside the toilets which will inevitably make easy use of the facilities a difficult task to some. This has been corroborated by reports from members of Park staff who have witnessed such difficulties. As such, any development or refurbishment to the toilets should take into account these physical barriers in a pre-emptive move to bring them in line with upcoming legislation. These need not be major changes here, an extension of the cubicle to allow for a larger area for wheelchairs and a small ramp up from ground level which would allow easy access for wheelchair users.

Access to the stadium is also an area that will require consideration in regard to accessibility. There are access points that do not pose undue difficulty to disabled persons on the Northern side of the stadium which allow such persons to access the stadium to spectate the "Stock Cars". However, the only access to the stadium from the main Park area is via a significant number of steps. This poses an issue as this is the main access to the go-karts. As such, any development to the stadium, no matter what decision is made in regard to its usage, must improve the disabled access to the stadium. Should the status quo remain, a possible option would be to install a ramp on the western side of the main grandstand where the steps are currently situated. Not only would this improve disabled access to the stadium from the main Park area, but it would also address a concern in regards to the gate being routinely locked. The representatives of Onchan Raceway alluded to potential developments which would improve the experience of visitors who might not be able to access the grandstand.

Lastly, access to the Fun Factory and Dance Studio is hindered by a significant step up from ground level. This step is near impossible for wheelchair users and so must be addressed so to comply with Phase 4 of DDA 2006. Ms S Rye from the establishment says that the access issue is not only problematic for those with disability, of whom she does receive a good amount as she often hosts school learning support units, but also for parents with pushchairs. Similar difficulties are faced by push chair users who are reported to be some of the most prominent customers of the Fun Factory. Ms Rye states that plans are already underway with the Authority to rectify this issue; however this report reaffirms that access must be improved to the establishment in order to be in line with the upcoming stage 4 of DDA 2006.

In summary therefore, there are a number of areas of the Park which require improvements to their accessibility in order to remove any undue difficulty for visitors to the Park who might have disabilities. The largest of such developments will be the necessary installation of a lift to "The Views" Restaurant, however the other adjustments may require little more than the installation of an appropriately sized ramp.

## SECTION FIVE: OPTIONS

This section aims to identify a number of possible options that may be of interest to the Authority and Onchan Park. These options are based upon the various sources of information detailed throughout the report. The following options are by no means the only options however they are the options that reports believes to be the most appropriate based upon the information and opinions gathered throughout the entire process of constructing the report. The nature of each option is summarised and is then followed by a brief justification of its inclusion, focusing on the perceived benefits that it would bring should it be introduced. There will then also be consideration of the possible implications and shortfalls of each option. The benefits and criticisms listed come from the information gathered by the initial consultation and interviews. Should detail be required, please see the relevant section earlier in the report. In the subsequent section, this report will recommend the options that it believes will be of greatest benefit to the Park, its users and its stakeholders.

### Nivison Stadium

#### 1) Nivison Stadium

**Option Summary:** The motorsport facility is redeveloped to make way for a community sports & recreation facility. Both motorsport tracks removed and two full size pitches could be created – one of them potentially being all-weather.

#### Benefits:

- Onchan AFC could have uninterrupted access to their home pitch
- The pitches would require less repair as there would be no damage from motor vehicles
- Other sports clubs could be attracted to the facility
- An all-weather pitch could be a source of revenue There is demand for all-weather pitches
- Strategy for Sport would be assisted
- Increase opportunities for community health and fitness
- Allow more continuous and public use of the space
- Fun factory could expand onto banked track area

#### Criticisms:

- Requires significant investment to remove tracks and replace with two pitches

- Removal of motorsport facility could cause upset to some members of the community
- Removal of unique attraction to Park
- Risk of repetition of NSC which sees large maintenance costs incurred
- Reduction in tourism and motorsport footprint of the Island
- Development of two pitches will not serve many members of the community as they will want indoor recreational sports facilities
- Café and Restaurant business may be affected

## **2) Nivison Stadium**

**Option Summary:** Motorsport facility is retained and the football pitch is removed

**Benefits:**

- Onchan Raceway will have opportunity to expand and develop to make the facility more interesting. They could therefore attract more people to the Park.
- Cost of maintaining the football pitch following damage would be reduced

**Criticisms:**

- Onchan AFC would have to relocate against their current wish to stay in Nivison Stadium
- Only sport in the area would be tennis and bowling

## **3) Nivison Stadium**

**Option Summary:** The status quo largely remain however some general refurbishment take place around the stadium to modernise it and an internal barrier is constructed between the track and the pitch, with abandonment areas included. The pitch could also be re-laid with astro-turf.

**Benefits:**

- Both organisations can continue to run where they wish to be
- Damage to the pitch is reduced as "Stock Cars" cannot get on
- Pitch requires less maintenance from damage and mowing/seeding
- Astro-turf would allow for rental outside of Onchan AFC usage as per agreement

**Criticisms:**

- Onchan AFC want a grass pitch
- The motorsport facility will lose a run off area if pitch is surrounded
- Enclosure of track may cause an increased risk of collisions
- View may be obstructed for spectators of racing by barrier
- Multi-functional potential of stadium hindered by internal barrier (i.e. displays and concerts would be difficult to accommodate and have safety issues)

#### **4) Nivison Stadium**

**Option Summary:** Banked track could be converted to a cycle track in an outdoor velodrome style

**Benefits:**

- Calls for area in Onchan for cycling
- Multi-faceted use of the stadium throughout the year
- Sport is encouraged in the Park as the pitch would remain and the cycle track around it

**Criticisms:**

- Monster truck ride at Raceway would be lost
- Potential clash between users as cyclists could pose hazard to people trying to access motorsport facility track or pitch
- Safety risk for bicycles going near live motor track and having limited run off

#### **5) Nivison Stadium**

**Option Summary:** Wooden grandstand is refurbished to comply with relevant legislation and to make it more aesthetically pleasing. Changing and showering facilities underneath which are currently used by Onchan AFC are renovated so they are fit for purpose.

**Benefits:**

- Retention of historic piece of the Park
- Stadium appears more inviting
- Onchan AFC have adequate facilities which should not cost a great deal to install

**Criticisms:**

- Stadium is underused and so investment may not see any beneficial return

## 6) Nivison Stadium

**Option Summary:** The Main grandstand is converted to an annex of the restaurant which could then serve as a club/function room

### **Benefit:**

- Sports teams more attracted to the stadium as they will have a social space for after games
- “The Views” Restaurant will benefit from increased interaction with local sport and from the increased business from both sports functions and other social events
- Other such facilities (Vagabonds, St Johns ACF, Douglas RUFC, Douglas Golf Club) have been particularly successful with such social functions

### **Criticism:**

- Costly endeavour to construct such an annex on the existing structure
- Removal of historic wooden grandstand
- Removal of spectator area for sporting facility
- Would only work if stadium were to be completely converted

## 7) Nivison Stadium

**Option Summary:** Secondary grandstand is demolished and either a new facility for sports changing, storage and showers or a community clubhouse is built

### **Benefits:**

- Onchan AFC can be afforded adequate facilities
- Sports clubs that might be attracted to a new facility can be easily accommodated
- Community groups can be allowed to use a clubhouse as a meeting place in the Park area
- Safety concerns around grandstand are removed

### **Criticisms:**

- Onchan AFC are building a clubhouse on Blackberry Lane however would be more interested if all of their club could be at the stadium
- Clubhouse would likely only be a viable option if a variety of sports facilities were available at the stadium
- Significant with limited return anticipated
- Popular viewing platform for motorsport would be removed



## 8) Nivison Stadium

**Option Summary:** The secondary grandstand is demolished and a small indoor sports facility that may contain facilities for squash, indoor tennis or aerobics etc. is erected in its place

**Benefit:**

- Sports facility would be more accessible and more appealing to more of the community as many might not want to use outdoor facilities
- More continuous use of space
- Would support the strategy for sport by encouraging wider participation

**Criticism:**

- Would only work if full conversion of stadium is made
- Expensive endeavour to construct new building

## 9) Nivison Stadium

**Option Summary:** The status quo remains with necessary refurbishments and repairs completed

**Benefits:**

- Onchan Raceway and Onchan AFC can continue to operate where they both wish to be
- Stadium looks more modern and more attractive for a greater variety of events
- Neither attraction is lost to the Park

**Criticisms:**

- Associated problems may continue

## The Park Fields

### 1) The Park Fields

**Option Summary:** The Park Fields are developed to create a small all-weather pitch or tennis court(s)

**Benefits:**

- Sport is encouraged in an already recreational area
- Revenue could be generated by leasing out facility
- Demand for sports facilities met

**Criticisms:**

- Residents of The Park are against development on the Fields
- Reduction of green, recreational space
- Overflow car parking hindered
- Difficult to supervise as it is outside normal view of staff

## **2) The Park Fields**

**Option Summary:** The Park Fields are levelled off to make it more accessible for recreational games and events to be held there potentially with a walking track introduced

**Benefits:**

- Area is more accessible for people to play informal ball games
- Walk and talk facilitated in the area even following rainfall when the grass area may not normally be solid under foot
- Green open space retained

**Criticisms:**

- Development may be costly and disruptive to residents
- Costly endeavour

## **3) The Park Fields**

**Option Summary:** The Park Fields is part developed with either AstroTurf or a hard standing to increase car parking in the area

**Benefits:**

- Car parking is improved in the area and can accommodate a greater number of visitors to the Park and stadium

**Criticisms:**

- Removal of green open space (Recreation policy issue)
- The Park residents are opposed to any development on the Fields that would detract from the green open space

- Recreational play or other activity on the Fields would be curtailed

#### **4) The Park Fields**

**Option Summary:** The Park Fields are left untouched by any development

**Benefit:**

- Green open space is retained

**Criticism:**

- Recreational play not as accessible as it could potentially be

### **Children's Play Park**

#### **1) Children's Play Park**

**Option Summary:** The top area of the play park is installed with a water play area

**Benefit:**

- Attraction to the play area will be greatly increased during summer months
- Increased attraction to the Park would be of benefit to other facilities in the Park
- Unique attraction to the play Park which a number of sources have said is desired

**Criticism:**

- Would require constant supervision and maintenance
- Not viable for use in winter months
- Costly to install and maintain

#### **2) Children's Play Park**

**Option Summary:** The play park undergoes a general refurbishment to improve the standard of play equipment and some larger pieces of play equipment are installed

**Benefit:**

- Older children more likely to want to use the play park

- Provides a broad range of play equipment to make the play park, and the Park in general a more attractive place for families with children

**Criticism:**

- Potentially costly
- Older children may not want to play in the same area as younger children

### **3) Children's Play Park**

**Option Summary:** The current equipment in the park is replaced with a themed selection of play equipment such as a Manx theme or a specific theme akin to the 'Pirate Ship' in Birch Hill

**Benefit:**

- A themed play park will be particularly memorable and exciting and so will be an attractive place for children
- It would place Onchan park at the cutting edge of play parks on the Island as the play area would not just be a generic selection of equipment

**Criticism:**

- Costly to replace all of the existing equipment
- Reports show that most people are generally happy with the play area – potentially a case of fixing something that is not broken

## **Bowling Greens**

### **1) Bowling Greens**

**Option Summary:** Both bowling greens are left as they are

**Benefit:**

- Both greens are a significant asset to the Park both for their facilitation of leisure sport but also the number of members of associated clubs that use the Park regularly
- Considerable investment into maintenance is retained

**Criticism:**

- Space is argued by some to be underused and so both greens remaining could be seen as a missed opportunity to develop another sporting facility

## **2) Bowling Greens**

**Option Summary:** One bowling green is converted into an all-weather sports facility such as a tennis court(s) or 5-a-side pitch

**Benefit:**

- Wider variety of sport provided for within the Park
- Revenue possible from leasing

**Criticism:**

- Significant presence of a bowling club would be lost
- Costly endeavour to develop such a sports area
- Investment into maintenance of green(s) lost by conversion
- Bowling has been a central part of the Park since its inception and so to reduce this would detract from the original aim of the Park

## **Tennis Courts**

### **1) Tennis Courts**

**Option Summary:** The tennis courts remain on Belgravia Road and are opened to the public for free with appropriate refurbishment

**Benefit:**

- Supervision no longer required
- Facility can be used after Park operating hours

**Criticism:**

- No income from attraction – area almost gets excluded from Park boundary
- Refurbishment will still need to take place to make courts fit for use
- Car parking situation on Belgravia Road is not improved

### **2) Tennis Courts**

**Option Summary:** A proportion of the tennis courts are retained but the remainder are converted into a basketball/5-a-side facility, partitioned by a fence

**Benefit:**

- Sporting choice is increased in the area
- Sporting facility is retained
- Potential income from leasing new court/pitch

**Criticism:**

- Supervision of area would still be an issue
- Considerable expense to develop small area
- Potential noise impact on local residents if activity goes on through the evening
- Parking situation not improved
- Number of tennis courts reduced

### **3) Tennis Courts**

**Option Summary:** Tennis courts are converted to car parking and replacement courts found elsewhere in the Park (see later options regarding pitch & putt and Park Lawn)

**Benefit:**

- Car Parking around residential area is improved making way for increased visitor numbers to the Park
- Congestion eased around Belgravia Road and Royal Drive as motor homes can be moved off the road
- Supervision of site no longer required
- Better quality courts can be brought into the main Park area which offer a better experience and are easier supervised

**Criticism:**

- Opposition to this idea in initial consultation
- Replacement elsewhere might take up open space in the Park
- Planning permission issues already faced
- Emerging Eastern Area Plan has already identified this as a potential site for housing developments, conversion to a non-recreational site would make this more likely

## Pitch and Putt

### 1) Pitch and Putt

**Option Summary:** The pitch and putt course is refurbished to make the course more exciting and more entertaining

**Benefit:**

- Likelihood of increased use due to it being a high quality and unique attraction
- Would add more attractive aspect to such an open space

**Criticism:**

- Cost incurred, however expenditure does not need to be significantly large

### 2) Pitch and Putt

**Option Summary:** The pitch and putt course is reduced in size to a 9-hole course or the top three holes are removed. In their place, could be replacement tennis courts or a new sporting facility such as a multi-purpose all-weather pitch

**Benefit:**

- Sporting facilities expanded around Park
- More diverse use of space as 18-holes could be judged too big for informal golfing

**Criticism:**

- Need to avoid blocking exceptional view from Park Lawn and café
- Encroachment on a popular Park attraction
- Sports facility arguably not a compatible fit to the immediate area

## Park Lawn

### 1) Park Lawn

**Option Summary:** The Park Lawn is developed for replacement tennis courts or other sports facility

**Benefit:**

- Facility brought into Park and so easier supervised
- Could be a hardstanding for special events

**Criticism:**

- Risk of congesting central Park area which benefits from an open feel
- Need to avoid blocking view from central Park area
- Removal of informal green space in middle of Park

## **2) Park Lawn**

**Option Summary:** Lawn becomes a regular site for special events and also acts as an informal space and picnic area

**Benefit:**

- Increased attraction to central area of Park
- Use of open space in a way that does not permanently congest the area
- General benefit to surrounding businesses
- Retention of areas for people relax in the Park

**Criticism:**

- Potential regular damage to the Lawn
- Temporary congestion of area

## **3) Park Lawn**

**Option Summary:** The Park Lawn is replaced by a soft play surface which could, if required by decorated with various patterns and is partially covered

**Benefit:**

- More durable surface that could cope with inclement weather and the pressures of special events upon it
- Versatile play area for small children
- Maintains open feel to central area but could inject some more colour and interest
- Reduction of maintenance to grass

**Criticism:**

- Removal of a natural green space
- Cost of laying such a surface



## Central Facilities

### 1) Central Facilities

**Option Summary:** Central facilities could be totally redeveloped

**Benefit:**

- Community based area available in the Park which can accommodate a great variety of clubs and societies
- Demolition of existing facilities and replacement would avoid ongoing high cost of maintaining this old building
- Higher standards of facilities are expected by visitors
- Compliance with DDA 2006 could be easier achieved
- Additional space for rental could be developed

**Criticism:**

- Disruption of valuable businesses which add a great deal to the function and character to the Park
- Significant change to longstanding establishments
- Loss of income to the Park
- Disruption and short term loss of income for the Park

### 2) Central Facilities

**Option Summary:** The central facilities, especially the café, undergo cosmetic refurbishment to the façade to make it appear more attractive, possibly including an awning

**Benefit:**

- More inviting feel to the centre of the Park
- Address issues around excess heat in the café from the windows and conversely allow for heating to be installed for the winter months, increasing the capability of the cafe

**Criticism:**

- Would not address present issues in regard to maintenance and accessibility

## Crazy Golf

### 1) Crazy Golf

**Option Summary:** The crazy golf course could be refurbished with new obstacles, potentially forming a theme and potentially getting sponsorships

**Benefit:**

- Unique attraction to the Park
- Updating tired and dated obstacles would make the attraction more enticing
- Engagement between local business and the community
- Income stream decline from lack of interest to return is mitigated and attraction is renewed

**Criticism:**

- Support from initial consultation to retain old-style obstacles

### 2) Crazy Golf

**Option Summary:** The crazy golf course could be extended further around the South side of the lake

**Benefit:**

- Larger and more attractive activity will likely generate more interest
- Unique attraction for the Eastern Area is improved

**Criticism:**

- Potential Cost
- Encroachment to possible area of development for kiddie cars

### 3) Crazy Golf

**Option Summary:** The crazy golf course undergoes general refurbishment on current obstacles

**Benefit:**

- Retention of old-style obstacles which people appear to be fond of
- Little cost to the Authority
- Attraction made marginally more attractive to customers

**Criticism:**

- Does little to improve the area or the attractiveness of the Park

## **Skateboarding**

### **1) Skateboarding**

**Option Summary:** A skateboard park could be installed on the small green area at the top of the children's play area (The Park side)

**Benefit:**

- Introduction of a unique feature to the Onchan area
- Provision of an attractive area for young people who are interested in skateboarding
- Potential site for competitions
- Utilisation of underused space

**Criticism:**

- Potential noise issue to local residents
- Potential objection from The Park residents around removal of open space

### **2) Skateboarding**

**Option Summary:** Skateboard Park could be installed on green band adjacent to Gent's toilets and gate to go-karts. Adjusting the fence line to allow for more space and allow use of natural height in the bank to improve ramps.

**Benefit:**

- Introduction of a unique feature to the Onchan area
- Provision of an attractive area for young people who are interested in skateboarding
- Potential site for competitions
- Utilisation of underused space

**Criticism:**

- Objection from “The Views” Restaurant, concerned about the impact that young people loitering close to the entrance will have on their custom
- Potential safety issues in adjustment of fence line so that people are closer to the motorsport facility
- Removal of green, decorative area from the Park

### **3) Skateboarding**

**Option Summary:** Introduce skate park area to ‘The Rec’ in Onchan or in an indoor facility

**Benefit:**

- Skate park area is still provided within the Onchan Area
- Provided in an area already frequented by young people
- Lesser impact on local residents to the Park

**Criticism:**

- Similar risks in regard to ASB and noise complaints
- Costly endeavour
- Diverts young people away from the Park

*These are not the only possible options that could be considered for the Park; however they are those that were judged to be of value following analysing the feedback from the initial consultation and interviews with vendors and clubs. The evaluation has been kept short for the sake of brevity however more in depth analysis, especially in regards to cost and benefit, should be done if the option is considered further.*

## SECTION SIX: RECOMMENDATIONS

*Vision Statement for the Future of Onchan Park:*

**Onchan Park should be a family and community-orientated amenity which meets both the leisure and recreational needs of local residents and visitors.**

Onchan Park was founded as a unique recreational facility that was designed to give local residents adequate opportunity to pursue recreational sports and leisurely pastimes. Over the Park's history, there have been numerous developments that have changed some of the attractions and physical nature of the Park; however its ultimate aim remains unchanged.

This vision statement has been formulated based upon the opinions and suggestions of users of the Park and is therefore a result of evidence gathered from the people who use the Park and the stakeholders that play a part in the Park. The following recommendations are believed by the author to work towards achieving this vision.

### **Nivison Stadium**

The author of this report has faced great difficulty in deciding the future which they will recommend for the stadium. It has appeared to the author that there are two main options:

- to remove the motorsport facility in place of a sports facility or;
- to retain the motorsport facility and largely maintain the status quo.

The author of this report believes that there is considerable evidence in favour of retaining the motorsport facility. Many of these are enclosed earlier in the report however a summary of such evidence will be given here. From visits to the stock car meets, it has been made clear to the author that the racing is an event which is very close to the hearts of a large number of local residents and is very much a community based event. Additionally, both first hand observations, reports from the motorsport facility staff and a comment from the Tourist Board have suggested that the "Stock Cars" do have a benefit to tourism in the Onchan Area as teams travel over for the racing and often make a holiday of it.

Furthermore, the "Stock Cars" are believed to add a unique attraction to Onchan Park alongside the go-karts and the monster truck ride. Mr Whitehead also commented in this regard that such attractions were not at the expense of the Authority however still worked to benefit the character and attractiveness of the Park. It must however be considered that the presence of the motorsport facility does appear to be a barrier to development of the

area and so the large area which is enveloped by the stadium goes underused for the majority of the year.

On the other hand, the prospect of a sports facility which could include two full sized pitches and the potential for other small sporting facilities within the boundary may appear to have more evidence of potential benefit to the community. It has been shown that sports facilities around the eastern area have large demands placed upon them which often cannot be met, meaning that sport on the Isle of Man may be suffering as a result.

Should the Authority decide to lease pitches out then they could expect a considerably larger income than what is currently gleaned from the lease from the tenant of the motorsport facility based on estimated figures from other similar facilities. Additionally, the provision of a sports facility would allow the Authority to work towards fulfilling the aims of the Strategy for Sport on an increasingly sporty Island. Therefore, a sports facility would be of benefit to the sporting aspect of the Island. It must however be asked whether motorsport would not be included in the sporting fold and the motorsport background of the Isle of Man. Furthermore, there have been numerous comments from various respondents questioning the requirement of more sporting facilities and whether Onchan should host a facility similar to the National Sports Centre. There will also be a significant investment to develop the area in such a way that the desired sporting areas can be effectively included.

On balance of the evidence that has been gathered throughout this report, it is the author's recommendation that the motorsport facility make way for a community sports centre to be introduced to the stadium. Within this sports facility, it is recommended that both tracks are removed, levelling the banked track so that the floor of the stadium rests level. The grass pitch could be rotated through 90 degrees and moved over to the left of the stadium. This would then allow space for a second pitch to be put in the right hand side of the stadium. This second pitch should be an all-weather surface which could accommodate a wide variety of sports and activities. A justification for this suggestion is listed below:

- Evidence showing that there are not enough all-weather facilities to accommodate sporting demand in the Eastern Area
- A sports facility will allow for continuous and year-round usage, making the most of the space available
- The Authority will be able to lease out facilities to offset any costs and see a return in the long run which will allow for future developments.
- Based on leasing costs of other facilities around the Island, the pitch and indoor sports facilities would also provide significant income. Little expenditure is made in the current arrangement, whereas the development and maintenance of a sports facility will undoubtedly be more costly. It must

therefore be considered how much such a project will cost and where the funding will come from.

- The Authority will be able to support the Island wide Strategy for Sport
- Onchan Park will have the potential to be a hub for sporting and recreational activity and attract a number of sports teams to the area
- An increased number of regular users of the facility is believed to be of benefit to other tenants
- Current safety issues will be addressed by renovation

### **Indoor Sports Facility**

This report recommends that the secondary grandstand is removed and in its place an indoor sports facility is constructed. This suggestion comes from feedback from the initial consultation in which a significant number of respondents suggested a need for such a facility in the Onchan Area. In this indoor facility there could be a number of areas which would likely need to be versatile spaces to accommodate a range of sporting activities. The activities highlighted during the consultation included squash, indoor tennis and an aerobics studio. By including such an indoor facility, the area would be more attractive to more of the community. Not all persons would wish to play outdoor sports on full size pitches and so for the facility to be effectively branded as a *community* sports facility then more provision would be required to be more inclusive of various needs and sporting preferences. The construction of such an indoor facility would require the space currently occupied by the grandstand with additional space over the current banked track and space up towards the current fence line to the west of the stadium.

### **Changing Facilities**

The report recommends the refurbishment of the current changing facilities for sports teams which are currently situated in the main grandstand. Consultation with Onchan AFC state that they would be quite content with this arrangement however the facilities are in need of improvement. This refurbishment would also work to attract different sports teams to the stadium. In any case, the current facilities used by Onchan AFC are not fit for purpose and the refurbishment of the current facilities would be the least expensive way to introduce adequate facilities.

### **Main Grandstand**

This report recommends that the restaurant facilities be extended into the main grandstand. This annex would extend out as far as the current boundary of the grandstand and have large windows overlooking the sports grounds. This annex could then serve as a club room for the associated sports teams where they could meet after games. It could also serve as a spectator area during poor weather. This development would be of benefit to the

restaurant tenant as they may see a significantly larger through flow of customers who would be purchasing drinks and light food during and after games. Additionally, when not in use by sports teams, the room could serve as a function room in which Onchan Park could be the host of a great variety of social, corporate or charity events.

Other such function rooms around the Island have seen particular success and have been able to host large numbers and wide varieties of events which have brought them an increased income. Such a development is perceived to have considerable benefit to all parties involved. The View's restaurant will benefit from a new versatile space and increased business from sports teams. Onchan AFC and any other prospective sports teams will benefit from having a social space for after games. The wider community will benefit from having a social function space available to them in the Onchan Area. The Authority would also benefit from the increased activity that the Park facilities will see and from the income from leasing such a valuable asset.

A proposed plan of how the stadium could be arranged is attached as Annex E. This plan is an adaptation of a sketch map produced by the District Surveyor.

The full cost of the suggested redevelopment cannot be reasonably be predicted by this report, however it can be said with some certainty that it will require significant investment. It is predicted that the income gleaned from leasing of venues and facilities will take at least 10 years to balance the cost of the project. Therefore, such a development would need to be regarded as a long-term investment, and in fact an investment in sport and community wellbeing rather than a fiscal investment.

## **Pleasure Park**

The evidence gathered within this report has led the author to make the following recommendations:

### **Crazy Golf**

The crazy golf course should undergo a significant renovation. This renovation would involve the total replacement of the current obstacles which are not only dated and worn, but they also provide little entertainment for the players. They appear to be showing their age quite considerably and so to keep them would require regular maintenance which would demand continuous funding and man hours in order to keep the obstacles in a usable state. When the state of disrepair and the lack of entertainment value are combined, it makes sense that investment is made to improve the attractiveness of the game. That being said, the Park staff have reported that the crazy golf is a popular attraction and has been taking well. It



therefore must be considered whether the current set up is adequate under the adage of “if it isn’t broke, don’t fix it”.

It is however the belief of this report that improvement to the quality of the attraction will improve its usage and popularity rather than damage it. Despite the popularity of the crazy golf at present, the obstacles could very reasonably be argued to be unfit for purpose.

A number of responses from the public and a significant proportion of stakeholders have suggested that the crazy golf has great potential to be improved. They agreed that the current obstacles appear boring and worn and that investment is required to make the course more attractive and entertaining.

Additionally, there is a belief that there is declining interest in the attraction due to the poor condition and lack of challenge in the course. Therefore, this report recommends that **the crazy golf course obstacles be replaced with larger, more imaginative and more entertaining obstacles**. These new obstacles could take various forms with one suggestion being a larger scale of ‘classic’ style obstacles such as windmills and swinging obstacles whereas others suggested the introduction of cartoon-style characters that may be of particular appeal to young children. Such large and imaginative crazy golf courses have proven extremely popular in the UK with there being at least 4 large scale courses in Liverpool and Manchester alone, all of which have around 150 highly positive reviews on trip advisor which indicates that they are well used and well enjoyed.

However the suggestion which this report recommends is to add a theme to the renovated course. There is no end to the list of possible themes however, in the interest of national showcasing and retention of a Manx feel to the Park, this report recommends that there should be a ‘Trip around the Island’ theme in which the various obstacles represent different landmarks around the Island. It has also been suggested that local businesses be asked to sponsor an obstacle. This would not just keep costs down however it would allow for local business to become more integrated into the community by getting involved with recreation.

This report would estimate a ceiling cost of around £30,000 to renew the current course. This is likely an over-estimation. It is expected that the investment in the crazy golf course would be recouped within around 2 years. This estimation is likely a conservative one however as one would expect that a new and improved crazy golf would attract a larger number of visitors which in turn would increase the income received and reduce the time it would take for the break-even point to be reached. Therefore, not only does it appear fairly necessary that the crazy golf undergo improvement but it would be a viable investment over a small number of years.

## **Bowling**

This report recommends that the status quo remain in regards to the crown and flat greens. The flat green at Onchan Park is the only one of its type on the Isle of Man. The Flat green bowling club has also seen extensive success on the international stage and believe that this is partly down to the fantastic facility which they enjoy. Similarly, the crown green has seen great success and is engaging well with the Park users by putting on training sessions for new bowlers over the summer. As such, both clubs are particularly successful. The bowling greens are both recreational/sporting facilities and so are considered under the Strategic Plan and the Strategy for Sport, meaning that any development to these sites would require commensurate alternatives to be introduced.

When this is coupled with an acknowledgment of the expenditure and effort put into the restoration and maintenance of the greens then it would appear wasteful to redevelop these sites when so much effort has been put into a site which is so well used and enjoyed. Therefore, this report recommends that both greens remain as they are and are not developed upon.

## **Boating Lake**

This report recommends that the boating lake remains the same in its current use. Both boating attractions have proven popular despite disappointment in the cessation of the vintage style boats. The boating lake is a central and unique attraction to the Park and to remove it altogether would be detrimental to the Park's appeal and character. It has also been strongly supported by the initial consultation that the boating lake remains.

## **Battery Powered Children's Cars**

This report recommends that the kiddie cars be retained in their current situation. They have been reported by Park staff to be a particularly popular attraction and add a valuable attraction for small children to use the pleasure Park services.

This report further recommends that new cars be purchased for the kiddie car track alongside an extension of 5m of the track. It has been reported that the current cars are coming to the end of their lives and so will need replacing soon. It has been suggested that 4 cars be purchased which could then be used in conjunction with the remaining operational cars. It is understood however that if there are to be more cars, and faster cars as the new ones will be, then the track will need to be extended by around 5 meters.

If the estimated takings are correct, then the cars would only have a small deficit in their first season. This would then be recovered in the first two months of the following season, allowing the busiest months of the season to take significant profit from the investment. Therefore, this report recommends that 4 new cars are purchased and the track is extended

5 meters as per Mr Sutton's suggestion. Once the original cars are no longer usable, the profit made from the investment can be used to replace these at no loss to the attraction.

### **Pitch and Putt**

This report recommends that the pitch and putt course is reduced in size by a total of 3 holes. The 3 holes that are suggested to be removed are at the top end of the course, closest to the Park Lawn. These have been selected as they are situated on a relatively level piece of green land which is close to the main area of the Park.

This report would then suggest the area be a regular site for play additions such as bouncy castles, bungee trampolines or other such attractions. The pitch and putt has availed itself as a popular attraction (as reported by Park staff) however it appears that few people complete the 18-hole course and so the detracting of a small number of holes should not be of detriment to the attraction. Conversely, the presence of bouncy-castle type attractions has seen success in Onchan Park even this year. During the Onchan Fayre, a bouncy castle was present and appeared to be popular amongst children. Following the fayre, the bouncy castle provider, approached Parks staff enquiring as to the possibility of having a regular spot in the Park as their business was successful during the fayre.

As such, this report recommends that the area at the top of the pitch and putt be the site for regular additions of play equipment such as bouncy castles. It is perceived by the vendor that they will be busy over the summer season and as such there will be an added attraction to the Park which will have a knock-on benefit to the Authority run attractions and other associated businesses.

Additionally, should the recommendation that follows in regards to the Park Lawn be actioned upon, then this reclaimed area of land could provide an alternative site for relaxing or picnicking. This area also benefits from a picturesque view of the bay which would make it an ideal picnic area.

### **Children's Play Park**

This report recommends that the addition of some larger play equipment be installed into the children's play area. There is significant support for the play area and so there appears to be little public demand for large scale redevelopment of the play area, nor do there appear to be any structural or functional issues. However, a number of respondents from the initial consultation suggested that whilst the play area was generally in good condition, there appeared to be little for the older age bracket of children who might still use the Park.

As such this report recommends that the Park remain largely the same, however there be at least one addition to the play area that is of considerable size and provides more adventurous play for older children. The supported suggestion alluded to the introduction of an appropriately sized low ropes course which would not require any safety equipment. It is believed that this would complement the current play equipment in the Park and attract a broader range of children to use the play area. The increased attractiveness of the play area will be of wider benefit to the Park.

## **Central Facilities**

### **Restaurant and Cafe**

This report recommends strongly that the board allow the appropriate funding in order to install a lift from the ground floor of the central building up to the first floor where “The Views” Restaurant is situated. There is an upcoming statutory requirement for such access to be allowed as part of Phase 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act 2006 which is due to come into effect in 2020. This report however suggests that this issue should be addressed as a matter of urgency as both the Authority and “The Views” Restaurant have received a number of comments airing disappointment at the current lack of accessibility. This report therefore believes that alterations should be made as soon as reasonably possible in the interest of equality and public service.

Whilst the viability of such a venture has not been fully investigated by this report, consideration could certainly be given to the prospect of demolishing the current buildings and totally rebuilding them. This would address issues around maintenance and accessibility in the building and would improve the general quality of the facilities. Such a development would have the potential to complement developments to the Nivison Stadium however would require significant investment. In any case, the conditions of DDA 2006 must be satisfied by 2020.

### **Toilets**

This report recommends that the public toilet facilities in the central building are refurbished. Both toilets are in poor condition could be argued to be unfit for purpose. If the Park is to be branded as an attractive family space, then the provision of good standard ablutions would be a good start

### **Fun Factory and Dance Studio**

This report recommends that the entrance to the Fun Factory and Dance Studio be improved so to allow adequate disabled access. The entrance to this facility currently has

two steps from ground level up to the floor level of the building which Ms Rye, the proprietor, believes is too large for a wheelchair user to climb without undue difficulty. Ms Rye added that it makes pushchair access very difficult also. When one considers that a large proportion of customers of the Fun Factory require pushchair access and that Ms Rye often hosts disabled children in the play area, it is clear to see why disabled access is required. As well as a matter of easy access, DDA 2006 will require such an obstacle to be addressed. In order to do this, this report suggests that a concrete ramp be installed from ground level to floor level.

### **Main Grandstand**

This report recommends that the main grandstand be converted to an annex of “The Views” Restaurant in the form of a sports club room/function room (please see section on the stadium)

### **Nivison Stadium**

This report recommends that, should the stadium be converted and the banked track subsequently be removed, an area to the rear of the Fun Factory be cleared so to make room for a small outside area that would be available for patrons of the Fun Factory to use. Additionally, this report recommends the installation of a number of windows in the play areas within the Fun Factory. At present, there is no natural light within the facility which makes the area appear dim and uninviting. The lack of ventilation also means that the rooms can begin to smell.

### **Park Lawn**

This report recommends that the Park Lawn should be replaced by a soft play surface which could have board game designs incorporated on them. Alternatively, a track design could be incorporated which would allow an area for small children to practice riding their bikes. Either design would allow for increased usage of quite an underused area of the Park. As well as boosting usage of the area, it would reduce the necessity for maintenance of the grass turf which in turn would reduce the maintenance costs for the Park. This will be furthered if the investment is made to install a wet-pour surface which suppliers claim will have a very long life span. Furthermore, by introducing a solid surface to the area, special events could be held on this central area without any concerns of how the compression will affect the surfacing. The very nature of wet-pour surfacing is that it is shock absorbent and so the pressure of something such as an ice rink should not damage the surface. Wet-pour play surfaces have seen extensive success from various suppliers and preliminary research has shown that more and more parks, schools and recreational facilities are using wet-pour as a durable alternative to tarmac or grass.

## **Other**

### **Events**

This report recommends that Onchan Park host a greater number of special events throughout the summer season. Almost every stakeholder talked to in the consultation agreed that the Park was in need of more events that would provide a fresh interest in visiting the Park.

A wide variety of suggestions were given in this regard varying from band nights, nerf gun battles and a return of It's a Knock Out. Such events have proven particularly popular in other areas of the Island. Observation of special events such as the Braddan Parish Family Fun day evidences the popularity that such events can have. In addition, a comment from a promoter of an It's a Knock Out attraction has stated that such events are very popular and routinely attract over 100 participants. It would therefore be expected that at least another 100 would attend to spectate. A 200 strong visit to the Park is bound to have positive effects on the image of the Park and on the businesses that are within the Park.

Moreover, stakeholders in the Park believe that an increased footfall throughout the Park will be of great value to their business as people will be attracted to visit the event, but will then naturally be inclined to use the other facilities. This benefit could be improved if the existing catering facilities were the only such businesses allowed to the event. Additionally, the Authority could benefit from such events as visitors are likely to purchase admission to the pleasure Park attractions.

### **Park Committee**

The report also recommends that a committee formed of Park stakeholders is formed. This committee would allow all businesses and clubs that use the Park to communicate with each other and the Authority in a clear and consistent manner. Not only could issues within the Park be discussed, and a co-operative solution found but also the committee could be able to design and organise the above special events. This would take some administrative pressure off of the Authority staff and allow the Park stakeholders to work together. Every stakeholder that received this suggestion was very much in favour of it as they feel that the Park does not work together.

### **Park Environment**

This report recommends that light provision is improved in the Park. Specifically, it is suggested that a number more lamp posts are installed to the walkway adjacent to the play park. This suggestion comes in light of the information that Mrs Sutton has provided stating that during darkened hours, that walkway is particularly dark and causes concern to visitors to the restaurant. This concern is based on the safety aspect of not being able to see where

one is going but it has also been reported that the poorly lit area has become an area wherein people loiter after dark. This report therefore believes that the installation of lights will mitigate any ASB issues but will also make the Park more accessible to people after dark.

### **Skate Park**

This report recommends that a skate park be introduced to the Onchan Area; however this should *not* be part of Onchan Park. It is believed that the close proximity of the identified sites to residential housing and “The Views” Restaurant may cause issues and detract from the harmonious working environment within the Park. Alternatively, this report recommends that such a project be considered for ‘The Rec’. Not only would there be more space for such a development at the new proposed site, however if situated in adjacent to The Hub, then there should be few complaints of noise from local residents and the skate park should not have any effect on any businesses.

### **Car Parking**

This report recommends that car parking provision be increased around the Park area. During peak times, it can be seen that the current car parks are often full and so visitors will Park on surrounding roads. This causes significant congestion around the Marion Road, Belgravia Road, Royal Drive and The Park area. When one considers that parking already appears limited and the desire to attract more people to the Park, the necessity for increased parking is made clear. Presently, The Park Fields are often used as overflow parking however this is not a sustainable site. Therefore, this report recommends that the small green area at the top of the children’s play area is converted into an extension of the current car park in that area. Additionally, should the stadium be converted, it is likely that the Eastern fence line will need to be adjusted in order to allow for peripheral space around the pitches. This adjustment could be extended so to allow space to be reclaimed from the banked track which could then extend the current car park on the south east of the stadium.

### **The Park Fields**

This report recommends that The Park Fields not be developed and it remains as a communal green open space. This report recommends that this area allow dog walkers to exercise their pets off their leads. As such, dog waste bags should be provided at certain points around this area so to encourage people to clean up after their dogs. This comes after numerous suggestions for a dog exercise area which suggests that there is significant demand for such a site. The use of The Park Fields in this way would not only meet demand for a dog exercise area but it would also require little expenditure by the Authority and it would appease the objections made by The Park residents who vehemently opposed any structural development on the green space. The provision of dog waste bags could be trialled at Onchan Park before a wider roll out to other areas in Onchan which may have

issues with dog fouling. This approach was trialled by Braddan Parish Commissioners who reportedly saw some success in the venture.

**The recommendations made by this report are based on the evidence gathered in the short period in which this project was undertaken. The report does not suggest that it has gathered all relevant information, especially regarding costings of developments and the wider views of the community. This information was not available in the short time-frame available; however the author of this report would like to stress the importance of ensuring that the community are at the heart of any decisions made. Therefore the members of the community and the ratepayers of Onchan should be thoroughly consulted to ensure that any developments match their needs.**

## **SECTION SEVEN: PROPOSED ACTION PLAN**

This final section of this report aims to provide an action plan in order to fulfil the recommendations made by the previous section. The large scale developments proposed by this report will not be achievable immediately, instead the redevelopment of Onchan Park will require several years of work. This action plan aims to prioritise the development so to advise what works should be undertaken first.

The first course of action should be to address the accessibility issues in certain Park facilities. Work to address these issues will inevitably take some time to be completed due to the extensive nature of some works such as the installation of a lift to the restaurant. As such, work should begin in a timely manner so to ensure that the necessary alterations are made in time for the implementation of Phase 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act 2006 on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

Monitoring of the success of the special events and Park Lawn marquee in September 2017 should be completed so that an idea of how special events could benefit the Authority and tenants. Observation of the effects that such an event will have on the grass will also allow for accurate judgement of the necessity of a harder wearing surface to cope with anticipated increased use. In addition, a number of other special events should be held in the Park during the 2018 season which would be used as further gauges of the potential success of hosting such events regularly.



Should it be decided that an increased number of special events will be of benefit to the Park and the associated businesses then the soft play surface should be installed following the 2018 season ready for use in the 2019 season.

The installation of dog waste bag stands on The Park Fields would be a helpful addition at whatever stage of the development of the Park; however this report believes that such a small project could be easily undertaken this year so that the area can be enjoyed as soon as possible. There have been reports of issues of dog fouling around Onchan and so the introduction of such provision could work towards a swift solution if installation is extended around Onchan. Onchan Park however may be a useful test site to judge whether such a provision could mitigate any issues of dog fouling.

Priority should also be placed on improvement of marketing for the Park. Current projects to attempt advertisement should be monitored for their effectiveness and lessons learned as to how best advertisement should be done. A strategy and budget for advertising should then be set for the 2018/19 financial year so that an appropriate amount of marketing can take place as soon as the season starts.

This report would also recommend prioritising the formation of the stakeholders committee so that appropriate communication can begin promptly. This committee would then be able to start considering what events might be appropriate to introduce to the Park in the 2018 season.

Funding should be made available following the 2017 season to replace the crazy golf course in time for the commencement of the 2018 season. This project has been prioritised as it is perceived to be an investment with high potential for return. The renovation of the crazy golf and the renewed interest will generate some more income that can be used to assist with future developments.

Funding should be made available following the 2017 season to replace the battery powered children's cars in time for the commencement of the 2018 season. This project has been prioritised as it is perceived to be an investment with high potential for return. The renovation of the crazy golf and the renewed interest will generate some more income that

can be used to assist with future developments. Additionally, there has already been work done towards such a project and so developments could be made fairly quickly.

The above two action points are likely to recover their costs fairly quickly and continue to generate income. Therefore, if they are actioned upon sooner rather than later, the profit made from them can be diverted to support larger and later developments.

Should the decision be made to redevelop the Nivison Stadium, such work could begin in 2018 following the expiration of the current lease held by Onchan Raceway. It is believed that if the process goes smoothly in terms of gauging public opinion and obtaining planning permission, then work could start in 18 months. It was however stipulated that if work were to begin this promptly, then a decision would be made in a timely manner. Therefore, if the resolution is made to convert the stadium in the near future then this report would suggest that work begin as soon as possible so that construction can begin following the expiration of the current lease.

If however, there are doubts about the timeliness of the process or if additional consultation is required then it would be the recommendation of this report to allow a shorter term lease to Onchan Raceway so that the area does not go unused for a prolonged amount of time. This report has suggested that any decisions made should be extended to the public for consultation to ensure that the developments will meet the needs of the community and so it anticipates that planning works may not be able to begin so soon. Therefore, so to not rush into any works at the peril of lacking a public mandate, this report makes the recommendation that Onchan Raceway be granted a shorter term lease following the expiration of the current one so that works to design, plan and gain appropriate permissions and public approval for the sports facility can be completed without an undue time pressure. Therefore, this report would anticipate that works could begin around 2020, allowing for up to two years to comprehensively plan such a massive project. This is likely far more time than will be required, however it would be a great shame for the stadium to go unused for any longer than is necessary.

## CONCLUSIONS

This report was tasked with the objectives of:

- Collating existing information and decisions into a report to be provided to the Board of Onchan District Commissioners including a proposed action plan
- Understanding the views of existing users of the Park
- Engaging with national bodies who have an interest in the future of the Park
- Providing a vision for the Park area over the next 5 years and beyond

This author of this report believes that such objectives have been met. Section 1 focused on collating the information acquired from the initial consultation and section 4 has included the relevant policy information into the fold. Section 2 has comprehensively covered the views that current users (stakeholders) of the Park currently possess alongside their preferences for the Park's future based on how they believe changes may impact on their custom. Section 3 has covered engagement with national bodies and other relevant persons who have knowledge or interest in the Park. The final sections of the report have then met the last objectives. A number of options have been evaluated and then a decision on which option is perceived to be best **at this time** has been made by way of recommendation. This report has provided a vision for the future of Onchan Park along with recommendations regarding specific developments that will help fulfil that vision and increase interest in the Park.

*This report has been compiled as part of the STEP Scheme run by the Isle of Man Department of Economic Development. The author is an undergraduate who has been working with the Authority for the purposes of this project. The author is not an employee or official for either ODC or DED.*

## **ANNEXES**

***Annex A – Initial Consultation Document***

***Annex B – Isle of Man Strategic Plan Recreation Policies***

***Annex C – Isle of Man Strategy for Sport***

***Annex D – Isle of Man Strategy for Children and Young People***

***Annex E – Proposed plan of developed stadium/sports facility***

# ANNEX

## A

# **Onchan District Commissioners**



## **The Future of Onchan Park Public Consultation**

**24<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

**Commissioner's Office**

**Hawthorn Villa**

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**Onchan IM3 1RD**

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## **Introduction**

The Board of Onchan District Commissioners is aware of their responsibility to provide community facilities and consider that Onchan Park provides a valuable facility to the community and visitors.

In order to ensure that this area continues to provide services which are valued by the community, the Board wishes to refresh their medium to long term view of how the Park should continue to develop to meet the needs to the community.

In order to achieve this they are seeking the views of the community and visitors in a public consultation which will run until the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2017. The Commissioners hope that this will give the community of Onchan time to consider the future of the park and to let their Commissioners know how they wish this area to develop.

Onchan District Commissioners will continue to exercise the highest standards of financial management and in doing so will balance any suggestions for the future of the Park against whether they can be afforded and will work to make sure there is no additional burden upon the rate payers of Onchan.

Onchan District Commissioners are seeking views regarding anything to do with Onchan Park and the facilities provided; they wish to ensure that it continues:-

- be a safe and attractive environment;
- be accessible to all members of the community;
- to meet the requirements of the community.

In order to provide a framework for this consultation this paper sets out a suggested view for the future of the Park so that this might stimulate ideas and suggestions from the community.

## **Consultation**

There will be many ways in which you can express your views about the future of the Onchan Park:-

- talk to one of the Commissioners representing the community of Onchan;
- write or email to the Commissioners Offices at Hawthorn Villa;
- attend a fortnightly public meeting of the Commissioners;
- attend one of the Commissioners Surgeries;
- message the Commissioners via Facebook or Twitter @OnchanDC.

In providing a review of Onchan Park the area can be considered in four distinct parts –

1. Community Sports - Nivision Stadium, grandstands and changing facilities;
2. Pleasure Park - Recreation & leisure facilities;
3. Central Facilities - Restaurant, café, indoor play area & dance studios;
4. Children's Play Park – play equipment for children.

## **1) Community Sports**

### **a) Current**

This area currently consists of a football pitch, motorsport track, banked track, two grandstands and two equipment sheds. The football pitch is used for senior matches and training between September and May each year by Onchan AFC who also use the changing rooms situated in the main grandstand.

The motorsport track is used between May and September for go-carts and stock car racing by the tenant who also uses the banked track for vehicle rides. The grandstands and open areas surrounding the banked track are used as spectator areas for football and stock car racing.

### **b) Issues**

The stadium has limited access points for the public with few entrances and exits only some of which are easily accessible. This limits the types of event which can be held in the stadium.

The use of the football pitch is restricted by the priority use of the motorsport track by the tenant. Some football games at the start and finish of the football season may be held at different locations.

The secondary grandstand requires work to be carried out to the roof to maintain structural integrity. The cost of this appears to exceed the value which would be gained from carrying out the work.

The banked track is not in a good state and therefore has limited uses.

The continued use of the motorsport track in its current location is a restriction on any development within this area.

The community football club have many junior members and are considering developing an alternative site for their activities including a clubhouse.

### **c) Potential Developments**

#### **Community Sport Facility**

There is demand within the community for further sports facilities particularly for all-weather surfaces for football and other team sports. There is also interest in providing a community focussed facility for informal sport and recreation.

Successful examples of community sports facilities can be seen in other areas of the Island and are usually combined with a clubhouse facility. There is anecdotal evidence that there are insufficient facilities to meet current demand in the eastern area of the Island in the evening and weekends.



### **The Banked Track Area**

The area of the former banked track places a restraint on the development of the stadium as it provides a physical boundary making the central area less assessable and it is also a little used area which is not attractive to users.

This area is used during the summer season however the surface has deteriorated and it is unlikely that it can be used for any other purpose except for providing a safe area between the spectators and the motorsport track

If the banked track area is removed it would improve accessibility to the facilities, allow additional sport facilities and possible extension to existing parking areas.

### **Main Grandstand**

Consideration needs to be given to the future use of the main grandstand. The access to this facility is limited and it is perceived there are public safety issues.

The future of this facility should be considered in conjunction with future use of the stadium area for community sports and also together with the future of the central facilities. The grandstand is "back to back" with the restaurant and café facilities within the park and the main access is through this building, any potential development of these facilities would have to take into account the grandstand and in particular the access required.

### **Secondary Grandstand**

If a decision is made to demolish this grandstand the site could be used for the extension of play or sports facilities and/or a community clubhouse.

### **Community Clubhouse**

A number of parties have suggested that a community clubhouse facility would be an appropriate development in conjunction with the additional sport facilities. This facility would support all the sports which use the park providing a clubhouse, new changing and showering facilities, car parking, equipment storage and a base for the associated social clubs.

It is intended that such a facility would work alongside the family restaurant and café facilities which already exist in the park.



## **2) Central Facilities**

### **a) Current**

The central area of the park provides indoor facilities which are let to tenants including a ground floor café (open seasonally), first floor restaurant, an indoor play area and dance studio.

### **b) Issues**

Access to the first floor restaurant is by a winding staircase which is not easily accessible.

The frontage of the ground level café is in need to replacement.

There is no central heating available in the ground floor café area and this may limit its use at certain times of the year.

The ground floor area of the building is split between the café and a storage area with a central stairwell of the grandstand. This detracts from the usability of this area and reduces the area available for the café and other facilities.

In spring, autumn and winter evenings the area from the car park to the indoor play area is quite dark and uninviting and it has been suggested that work needs to be undertaken to increase lighting in this area.

Level access needs to be created to the indoor play area and dance studio to make them more accessible.

### **c) Potential Developments**

Consideration should be given to whether the central café and restaurant block should be redeveloped. With the possible removal of the banked track area of the stadium there may be an opportunity to build a replacement facility closer to the car park, nearer to the play park or at the rear of the current stadium.

#### **Café**

There is potential to refurbish the ground floor area to provide an improved layout amalgamating the store and café area and either incorporating the stairs to the grandstand or removing them and creating alternative access.

The public toilets could be accessible from within the ground floor café area.

Heating could be provided to the ground floor extending the length of the season where customers would be comfortable in using the area.

The ground floor café area could be provided with a new frontage.

### **Indoor Play Area**

With the removal of the banked track there is a possibility to extend the area of the facility possibly providing a sheltered outdoor area with access to the play park.

### **New facilities**

An extension to the existing building could be considered extending to the current car park the extension could contain community facilities (or it could be the new community clubhouse see above).



### **3) Pleasure Park**

#### **a) Current**

Onchan Park has a boating lake, a flat green and crown green bowls, pitch and putt, crazy golf and tennis as "pay as you go" leisure facilities. All apart from tennis are situated within the main body of the park along with a "pay hut" where payments are made and equipment provided.

The "pay hut" is run by seasonal staff and who also assist users on the boating lake.

#### **b) Issues**

The tennis courts are outside the main body of the park and are therefore difficult to supervise and ensure all users have paid.

Retaining staff for the pay hut and boating lake is a significant expense and consequently the money raised by these attractions can be less than the cost of providing them.

There is a significant cost to maintain all these facilities which is not met entirely by income.

#### **c) Potential Developments**

##### **Tennis Courts**

The Board have recently considered other uses for the tennis court area, and have submitted an application for planning permission in principle for public and private car parking. The income from the parking would then pay for the development of replacement sport facilities elsewhere in the Park.

In the medium term this area could be used for house building with the income received being re-invested in the community sports facilities in the stadium area. Car parking could then be provided in other parts of the park area.



**Putting**

**Green**

The area in front of the café has been previously used as a putting green but would need considerable investment to return to this condition.

It has been used occasionally as a location for roller skating and other leisure event within a marquee.

Consideration could be given to creating a central area with a hard standing and possibly a marquee style roof. Together with improved power supplies this area could then be used as an outdoor extension to the café and also an area for use by third party organisations to hold events and attractions.

Another possibility is the creation of a wet play area for younger children.



### **Crazy Golf**

Consideration could be given to purchase of new crazy golf facilities; this is a popular attraction for all ages.



### **Pitch & Putt**



One of the possible locations for the replacement sports facilities following the relocation of the tennis courts would be to place all-weather courts at the top of the pitch and putt on the flat area opposite the crown green bowling.

If some of the existing pitch & putt course is removed than it can either be turned into a 9 hole course or enhanced to provide the new crazy golf facility with larger obstacles and a more interactive course in the same manner as urban golf in other countries.



#### **4) Children's Play Park**

The children's play park continues to well used and appreciated and it is suggested that little needs to be done in this area apart from continuing the maintenance and investment.

With the remodelling of the stadium and possible removal of the banked track it might be a good time to consider the access from the play area to other areas of the park.



## 5) Summary

An area such as Onchan Park does require on-going investment to ensure that the facilities provided continue to meet the needs of the community.

Whilst this type of facility will always require some support from the rates, investment to change the mix of facilities within the park will hopefully reduce support from the rates and make the whole area more sustainable for the future.

This document suggests the following substantive changes could be made within the park:

- The landscape of the stadium could be changed to increase accessibility and maximise the community use of the facility and allow the development to a community sports facility;
- The creation of a “clubhouse” with new changing facilities;
- Investment in the café and restaurant area to upgrade facilities or create a new building;
- Creation of a new area in front of the café / restaurant which can be used all year round;
- Relocation of the tennis courts;
- Creation of multi-sport all weather facilities in the main park area;

The Commissioners would now welcome ideas and suggestion from the community of Onchan on how their views for the future of the park.

**Onchan District Commissioners**

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*Find us on Facebook and on Twitter @OnchanDC*



**ANNEX**

**B**



## **CHAPTER 10**

### **SPORT, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

#### **10.1 Introduction**

- 10.1.1 The quality of life on the Island and the quality of our environment are improved by attractive open space and by facilities for recreation and other community purposes. This chapter sets out policies which combine to form a land-use planning framework for the provision, protection and enhancement of such space and facilities.

#### **10.2 Sport and Recreation**

- 10.2.1 The Sport and Recreation Strategy 2002-2012 – “Planning for Sport” sets out a vision for the continued development and growth of sport on the Island and the benefits that this will bring. The Island is fortunate in that over the recent years a network of sporting facilities has been provided across the Island. The Sport and Recreation Strategy envisages improving on these both in terms of sport development and, as appropriate, new facilities.

#### **10.3 Open Space**

- 10.3.1 The presence and use of various forms of Open Space in towns and villages on the Island form an integral part of the fabric of community life. Open Space takes various forms and serves many purposes. It ranges from formally laid parks to the wide and extensive public footpath network including Raad Ny Foillan and Millennium Way.

- 10.3.2 Open Space forms part of our heritage as well as being an attractive and usable asset, and, in the wider context, provides visual and spiritual relief from the developed urban settlements on the Island. In addition, it provides recreational enjoyment in respect of various active and some less active forms of sporting activity. Open Spaces also provide a means of improving the health and fitness of the Island’s population. Open Space is defined in this context as land used for recreational purposes, both formal and informal, including amenity space whether privately or publicly owned.

- 10.3.3 The Strategic Plan needs to facilitate sport and recreation opportunities and to ensure that areas of open space are retained, and provided to meet local needs. The Strategic Plan will facilitate this by a three pronged approach:

- a) protecting existing assets;
- b) making good deficiencies in existing provision; and
- c) providing adequate provision within new development.

In pursuing these three objectives, it is recognised that developers will not be expected to make good existing deficiencies in recreational facilities as a requirement of carrying out their developments.

- 10.3.4 To ensure that suitable provision is made for sport and recreation development across the Island it is proposed that Area Plans should incorporate an assessment of sport and recreation need and provisions. This should include, where appropriate water-based sport and recreation. Such assessments should recognise that sport and recreation facilities may benefit local communities across defined Area Plan boundaries.

## **Recreation**

### **Policy 1:**

**Area Plans should incorporate an assessment of the indoor and outdoor sport and recreation needs of the plan area, and the wider context and include proposals to:**

- **retain existing sporting facilities and open space provision unless alternative provision of equivalent community benefit and of equivalent or better accessibility is made available;**
- **identify suitable sites to make good any deficiency in provision both for existing and future residents of the area; and**
- **ensure appropriate provision is made as part of any proposed residential development, in accordance with the Open Space Standards set out in Appendix 6 to the Plan, related to the needs generated by the development, unless the specific housing provision within the development justifies a reduced provision in relation to specific types of open space requirement.**

10.3.5 In certain circumstances it may be beneficial to allow the redevelopment of areas of underused, poorly maintained or inappropriately located open space. Development on such areas will only be permitted where alternative provision can be made. However, the new open space must be easily accessible to the local community and be at least equivalent in terms of type, quantity and quality to that which is being replaced.

## **Recreation**

### **Policy 2:**

**Development which would adversely affect, or result in the loss of Open Space or a recreation facility that is or has the potential to be, of recreational or amenity value to the community will not be permitted except in the following circumstances:**

- (a) **where alternative provision of equivalent community benefit and of equivalent or better accessibility is made available; and**
- (b) **where there would be an overall community gain from the development, and the particular loss of the open space or recreation facility would have no significant unacceptable effect on local open space or recreation provision or on the character or amenity of the area.**

10.3.6 In the case of residential developments for 10 or more dwellings, the Department proposes to adopt the following general standards (which refer to the area required per 1000 head of population):

#### **Recreational Open Space**

Sports Pitches	1.8 ha
Children's Play Space	0.6 ha
Amenity Space	0.8 ha

10.3.7 These general standards will be applied having regard to the following circumstances:

- (i) the size, type, and particular needs of the resident population in question;
- (ii) the needs of visitors to the area; and

- (iii) the proximity and availability of existing Open Space, including the foreshore, public glens and parks, and school fields which may be available for public use outside of school hours.

More detail is set out in **Appendix 6**.

- 10.3.8 The Department has therefore adopted the following policy such as to plan positively for the provision of well-designed recreational and amenity space.

#### **Recreation**

**Policy 3: Where appropriate, new development should include the provision of landscaped amenity areas as an integral part of the design. New residential development of ten or more dwellings must make provision for recreational and amenity space in accordance with the standards specified in Appendix 6 to the Plan.**

- 10.3.9 Open Space in new developments should be provided within the site, but where it is impractical to provide the recreational space within the site, consideration may be given either to

- (a) provision off-site, but conveniently close thereto; or to
- (b) the use of commuted sums, which, under the terms of a section 13 Agreement, would be paid to the Local Authority as a contribution towards the provision of community recreational open space.

Further details of these requirements are included in **Appendix 6**.

#### **Recreation**

**Policy 4: Open Space must be provided on site or conveniently close to the development which it is intended to serve, and should be easily accessible by foot and public transport.**

#### **Recreation**

**Policy 5: Area Plans will identify areas where improvements to informal access to the countryside can be made and to the public footpath network. Existing public rights of way should be retained and any development which affects these will be permitted only if it provides diversions which are no less direct or attractive than existing routes.**

### 10.4 General Leisure

- 10.4.1 In 2003 the Department of Tourism and Leisure approved a General Leisure Strategy for the Island. It includes sections on:

- Leisure and Tourism
- The Manx Countryside
- Seascape and Coastline
- National Leisure Facilities
- Local Leisure Facilities
- Children and Young People
- Entertainment and Nightlife
- Access and Opportunities
- Funding for Leisure

10.4.2 Each section includes policy statement or statements and an agenda for action. The policy statement generally accords with the Strategic Objectives and Policies of the Strategic Plan. The agenda for action points relate to a number of Government Departments, local authorities and other agencies. Agenda for Action 3.1 suggest that the Department of Local Government and the Environment should designate suitably located land in the Island Strategic Plan for future leisure development. The Department is fully supportive of the policies in the General Leisure Strategy but the Strategic Plan is not the appropriate vehicle for such a suggestion. The Department will however continue to consult with the Department of Tourism and Leisure in the preparation of Area Plans to establish whether there are appropriate sites for proposals for the provision of additional leisure facilities which accords with the policy framework of the Strategic Plan and the General Leisure Strategy.

#### 10.5 Civic and Community Facilities

10.5.1 Community facilities are those services or facilities that provide for the needs of the Island population. As such, they should be appropriate to the needs of the Island's population and be located as to be easily accessible. Community facilities include community centres, medical facilities, places of worship, schools, nurseries, library services and premises which provide an element of care for those sectors of the community that are in need of this.

10.5.2 It is not for the Strategic Plan to address or determine the needs for community facilities, but to address the land use issues arising from such proposals. Where there are known site requirements these will be safeguarded in the relevant Area Plans for that area. Proposals for such uses will therefore be assessed against general criteria based policies.

10.5.3 It is one of Government's general policies to promote equity and equality of access to education, health, community and recreation facilities, services and the wider environment for all sectors of the community.

#### 10.6 Neighbourhood Centres

10.6.1 The provision within residential areas of small shops, often combined with sub-post offices and off-licence facilities, occupies an important place in the range of shopping facilities available. Many people are dependent on such shops, these being the only shops to which access can be gained easily on foot, without relying on public or private transport. In addition, such a facility may not only be considered a desirable service, but may also serve as a focus of community life and help sustain a small community.

10.6.2 Local shopping/neighbourhood centres, typically described as local centres, usually comprise a newsagent, a general grocery store, a sub-post office and occasionally a pharmacy, a hairdresser and other small shops of a local nature. Allied to this may also be a community centre/meeting place to serve the immediate local community. With the increased focus on recycling, local centres are ideal sites for local recycling facilities.

10.6.3 In requesting community facilities within new and expanding developments, account needs to be taken of the size, type and particular needs of the new resident population. However, account must also be taken of availability and proximity of existing community facilities. Community benefit in this context is defined as one or more of the following: sub post-office/general store, doctor's surgery and community meeting centres.

10.6.4 The following policy is therefore adopted to ensure the provision of appropriate facilities within new residential developments.

## **Community**

**Policy 1:** Where relevant and appropriate, there should be provided by the developer of new or expanded residential areas, community benefits in the form of neighbourhood centres.

### 10.7 Community Centres

- 10.7.1 Community centres, meeting places, and village/parish halls are an important focal point in community life. Where perceived lack of provision is identified, land will be safeguarded in the relevant Area Plan. The following policy is therefore adopted:

## **Community**

**Policy 2:** New community facilities should be located to serve the local population and be accessible to non-car users, and should where possible re-use existing vacant or underused buildings.

- 10.7.2 Local community facilities are important in providing for local communities without the need for travel and should be retained unless the site or premises are no longer suitable for the current or an alternative community use. Developers will be expected to demonstrate that the potential to use the site or building for other community uses has been investigated.

## **Community**

**Policy 3:** Development (including the change of use of existing premises) which results in the loss of a local community facility (other than shops and public houses) will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that it is no longer practical or desirable to use the facility for its existing use or another use likely to benefit the local community.

### 10.8 Retention of Existing Local Shops and Public Houses

The loss of facilities such as neighbourhood shops in towns and or village shops and public houses reduces customer choice and can also necessitate people travelling further to meet their needs. This is a particular problem in rural areas where village shops, post offices and public houses can be central to village life. It would be preferable to retain viable facilities, or those that can be made viable and where a change of use or re-development is proposed developers will be expected to show evidence of attempts to market the property as a business in these areas.

## **Community**

**Policy 4:** Development (including the change of use of existing premises) which involves the loss of local shops and local public houses, will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that the use is no longer commercially viable, or cannot be made commercially viable.

### 10.9 Hospitals

- 10.9.1 The new hospital located in Braddan is now operational, and any further land-use requirements arising therefrom are dealt with in the relevant Area Plan. Likewise, any land-use requirements arising from regional facilities will be addressed by the appropriate Area Plans.

## 10.10 School Sites

- 10.10.1 Schools play an important role as a focus for community activity, providing not only schooling for children but also adult education, sports facilities, and cultural and social opportunities. This is especially true in our smaller villages. The continued viability and accessibility of village schools will therefore be one of the more important criteria to which the Department has regard when preparing new Area Plans. In the preparation of Area Plans, the Department will consult with the Education Department on such criteria. Also, an increasing population, and changes in the profile and distribution of the population, are leading to demand for new and extended schools. Accordingly, the following policy is appropriate:

### **Community**

**Policy 5: Permission will generally be given for proposals to improve or extend existing schools and institutions of higher education and to build new schools, subject to their being sited and designed in accordance with the other policies of this plan, having particular regard to the potential for community use of the buildings and the associated Open Space.**

## 10.11 Community Health Care Facilities

- 10.11.1 Health care facilities such as nursing homes, residential homes, or training centres are usually sited within residential areas, but can generate activity and traffic which has detrimental effects on the amenity and character of these areas. The following policy is therefore adopted.

### **Community**

**Policy 6: New community health care facilities and extensions to existing facilities will be permitted provided that they:**

- a) would not result in an over concentration of such uses in a particular area;**
- b) would not have an unacceptable effect on the residential or prevailing character or amenity of the area;**
- c) would be easily accessible; and**
- d) would not have an unacceptable impact on the local highway network.**

Regard should be had also to the parking standards set out in **Appendix 7**.

## 10.12 Police Service

- 10.12.1 Government is improving community safety through reducing the incidence of crime. The Isle of Man Constabulary is the principal agency for crime reduction and the Department works closely with the Constabulary to ensure that crime reduction is considered as part of the assessment of planning applications and new building by the Department. The Department has adopted the principles of Secured by Design (SBD) in the design of its own schemes and through the planning process. The Constabulary have suggested that this should be extended to incorporate the principles of Designing Out Crime. This includes SBD but also incorporates the principles of Defensible Space, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design and Situational Crime Prevention<sup>(1)</sup>. Accordingly:

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<sup>(1)</sup> See [www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com) for further details

## **Community**

**Policy 7:** The design of new development and the extension and refurbishment of existing buildings and development must, as far as is reasonably practical, pay due regard to existing best practice so as to help prevent criminal and anti-social behaviour.

- 10.12.2 The Isle of Man Constabulary has suggested that neighbourhood police stations, where the public can meet police officers, are needed to improve community safety. In the majority of cases these will need to be provided within existing communities as opportunities arise. Consideration should be given to incorporating such facilities in larger new developments in association with other community facilities.

## **Community**

**Policy 8:** New neighbourhood police stations should be provided in the community and in particular in any new major housing developments. These should be accessible to the local population either by car or on foot. Consideration will be given to these being part of other community facilities.

## 10.13 Fire Service

- 10.13.1 The aim of the Fire Service is to protect life and property from fire by the provision of an up to date, well equipped and well trained Fire Service. The Strategic Plan is supportive of this aim and by the following policy addresses the provision of new fire stations where required in new and expanded developments.

## **Community**

**Policy 9:** Favourable consideration will be given to applications for new fire stations in or near to new or expanded residential areas.

- 10.13.2 Fire-fighting is dependent not only on there being a short response time from a conveniently close fire-station, but also on proper access for fire-fighting vehicles, and adequate supplies of water from conveniently sited hydrants. Accordingly:

## **Community**

**Policy 10:** Proposals for the layout and development of land will be permitted only where there is provided proper access for fire-fighting vehicles and adequate supplies of water for fire-fighting purposes.

- 10.13.3 Fire prevention can be improved via the development control processes, and the Department has for many years welcomed input to these processes from the Fire Safety Department. Accordingly,

## **Community**

**Policy 11:** The design and use of all new buildings and of extensions to existing buildings must, as far as is reasonable and practicable, pay due regard to best practice such as to prevent the outbreak and spread of fire.

**ANNEX**

**C**





**Early intervention & prevention  
is better than cure**



**Isle of Man Strategy for Sport 2014 – 2024**



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & CHILDREN  
*Rheynn Ynsee as Patichyn*

On the Isle of Man

Physical inactivity costs approx **£11.6 million** per year

**Obesity** costs approx **£5.6 million** per year **1 in 5**

reception children are overweight **64%** of 8 – 14 year olds are

involved in community sports clubs **£22,000** charity funding for wheelchairs Cost of employee absence to the Isle of Man Government is over

**£12 million** per year

**50lbs** weight loss for one lady & **54lbs** weight lost by a

14 year old girl on the Health Referral Programme **51** coaches on the Dame

Kelly Holmes Education Programme approx **£3 million** per year

visitor spend at sporting events Isle of Man were **1st** out of the home nations

in the 2014 Commonwealth Games medal table per

head of population & **1st** in the medal table at the 2013 Island Games

**£58,779** average cost per prisoner per year **£200,000**

average cost to UK taxpayer for an under 16 involved in the criminal

justice system upto **£130,000** lifetime cost of **1** NEET in loss of

earnings and state benefits **41%** of Walk & Talk attendees now have

reduced GP visits upto **1000** estimated number of young carers



## Foreword

My Department is extremely committed to creating accessible opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity and ensure people remain involved and active throughout their lives. By working in partnership with other Government Departments, notably the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department of Home Affairs along with the voluntary sector we can ensure that we can improve the health, social well-being, confidence and self-esteem of people on the Isle of Man.

This Strategy outlines our vision to enhance and enrich people's lives through regular and sustainable participation in sport and physical activity. Sport has a unique ability to bring together and strengthen families and communities, particularly those who find themselves in vulnerable circumstances to strive for a better future. It sets out ambitious and innovative objectives that will be outcome focussed and make an impact and real difference where it is most needed on the Island. It will help address the onset of obesity that is now a common feature of modern society and enable young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to contribute positively in their community.



The Strategy will also continue to deliver opportunities for people to be engaged in sport for life and for those with talent to flourish on the world stage, demonstrating what a proud sporting nation the Isle of Man is.

Sport is extremely powerful and touches the lives of the vast majority of people on the Isle of Man, whether it be as a leisure or social activity, competition and performance or volunteering and coaching – sport enhances our lives and binds our community together.

In these difficult economic times, it is essential to recognise the considerable benefits that sport and physical activity brings to our health and well-being, community development and of course the economy. Over the next few years, there is no doubt that we shall face some extremely difficult financial challenges. I believe that this Strategy along with appropriate and adequate funding in sport, recreation and physical activity, can generate substantial long term cost savings for the Isle of Man Government and be a key deliverer of the Chief Ministers Agenda for Change.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Crookall, MHK." The signature is written in a cursive style.

Tim Crookall, MHK  
Minister, Department of Education and Children

# Testimonials



## **Peter Kennaugh, MBE, London Olympic Gold Medal winner and World Record Holder**

"Isle of Man Sport and the support services that they provided were a great help to me during my early cycling career."

## **Mark Cavendish, MBE, Multiple Grand Tour Stage Winner and 2011 World Road Race Champion**

"Growing up on the Isle of Man gave me a great foundation for my career so I am passionate about the future of Manx sport. We have such great facilities and there are so many opportunities for young people to be involved in sport."

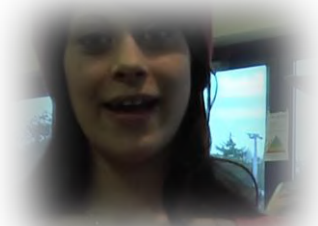


## **Ray, Walk & Talk participant**

"Walk and Talk is fantastic, all GPs will tell you that. Since my heart attack, I started at Walk and Talk and as a result I have stopped taking my medication. Walk and Talk has been brilliant for me"

## **Gavin and Lee Gawne**

"The sports opportunities provided for Lee to take part in by the sports development team are essential for his quality of life and social well being. He enjoys sport so, so much."



## **Georgie, aged 18**

"I was a looked after child with St Christopher's when I was referred onto the Fit 4 the Future programme which provided me with the opportunity to get involved in the gym, to exercise more, gain some recognised qualifications, improve my confidence and the programme has helped me to live independently."

## **Leanne, aged 14**

"I lost 4 and a half stone in 10 months after being referred onto the Fit 4 the Future programme. I am now more confident, I go running every week and my parents bought me a new wardrobe as my clothes no longer fitted me. I can't thank the sports development team and the Fit 4 the Future staff enough, they are so supportive, the programme is fantastic. I recommend any other young people to get involved."



## **Eve, aged 11**

"Eve has Cerebral Palsy and is wheelchair bound. Coming to the Wheelchair sports Club is the only thing that we can all enjoy and do together as a family. Its fantastic, Eve's friends can all come and join in as well. Its great for her socially." Steve Kelly, Father

## **Female client on the referral programme**

"Prior to the referral programme I led an unhealthy lifestyle and got quite depressed with the weight which I had put on. I have now lost 3 and a half stone since starting on the exercise referral programme. As a result I am no longer on the waiting list for the dietician or for gastric band surgery. I am happy in myself and I am now living a healthier lifestyle".



## **Wayne, aged 11**

"Playing sport makes me very happy. I play for a football club and I have lots of friends"

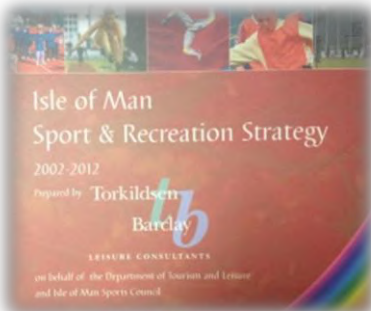


# 1988 – 2012: A Sporting Review

There has been significant investment in Sport on the Isle of Man over the last 20 years. The first Strategy for sport (1988) was responsible for the building of facilities, most notably the National Sports Centre, which opened in 1998 and the regional astro-turf pitches based at secondary school sites in Ramsey, Castletown and Peel. Additional facilities have since been added to the National Sports Centre and the Bowl Stadium has been re-furbished into a 3,000 all-seater stadium with an all weather pitch extending the available usage throughout the evenings and weekends.

The second Strategy for sport: The Isle of Man Sport and Recreation Strategy 2002 – 2012, identified four key initiatives:

- Sporting Schools
- Sporting Communities
- Sporting Excellence
- Sporting Partners



As a result of these initiatives, there has been huge growth in the number of people participating in sport on the Island. Isle of Man Sport has successfully delivered a Community Key Sports Programme which has assisted 'key sports' on the Island to invest in sports specific development officers. The Governing Bodies that have benefitted from this have seen more people involved in their sports either as participants (children and adults), coaches, officials or volunteers.

The Isle of Man Sport and Recreation Strategy 2002 - 2012 was also responsible for providing an Isle of Man Sport Institute, a specialist building and programme for gifted and potentially talented performers to become elite sports men and women. As a result of this there has been considerable improvement of results on the international stage with regular reference made to the Isle of Man on major television stations, national newspapers and other media organisations around the world.

This reputation was further enhanced with the Isle of Man hosting the 2011 Commonwealth Youth Games which attracted the world's best junior sporting talent from across 64 nations of the Commonwealth to compete in seven sports. An enthusiastic team of 1000 volunteers worked tirelessly to ensure that those who visited the Island for the Games will be eager to return again in the future.

Significant progress has been made by Manx Sport and Recreation over the last decade which has received national and international recognition. As a result of external verification for continuous improvement, both the Sports Development Unit and National Sports Centre have been awarded a status that ranks them in the top 5% of organisations throughout the British Isles for the delivery of sports and recreation services. In addition to this in 2011, Manx Sport and Recreation were awarded the European Community Sports Award. This prestigious award recognised the excellent partnership work of Manx Sport and Recreation throughout the community and their strong philosophy to improve the outcomes for people who reside on the Isle of Man. This award evidences the multitude of benefits that sport can offer.





# Moving Forwards: Isle of Man Strategy for Sport 2014 – 2024

Early intervention and prevention is better than cure

More people • More active • More often

Sport and physical activity can make a significant contribution to improving health, community safety, education and social well being. Together with the ever increasing international sporting success which the Isle of Man has experienced over recent years and the large numbers of people who visit the Island for sporting events and competitions, sport and physical activity can also help grow the local economy.

By working together with other Government Departments, Manx Sport and Recreation have developed the Isle of Man Strategy for Sport 2014 – 2024 which consists of ten objectives aimed at achieving and improving positive outcomes for children, young people, adults and the elderly. The Strategy can help deliver the far wider reaching aims and objectives of the Isle of Man Government and its broader policies and strategies in a cost effective manner to achieve long term savings.

Many of the objectives in the Isle of Man Strategy for Sport 2014 - 2024 complement the wider Government strategies and plans, demonstrating how sport and physical activity can contribute to:

- **An Agenda for Change**
- **Tackling Childhood Obesity Strategy** (Department of Health and Social Care)
- **Physical Activity Strategy** (Department of Health and Social Care)
- **Isle of Man Strategy for Children & Young People** (Departments of Health and Social Care, Education and Children and Home Affairs)
- **Criminal Justice Strategy** (Department of Home Affairs)

Obesity has become one of the biggest public health concerns around the world. Expensive to treat on its own, it is also responsible for many other related illnesses such as diabetes, coronary heart disease, strokes and joint problems along with the psychological risks that affect mental health and social well being. Forecasts from other Governments around the world indicate that costs will increase ten-fold by 2050 if the issue is not dealt with properly.

Manx Sport and Recreation can be a key service provider to assist the Department of Health and Social Care with the objectives established within the Health Strategy (*Tackling Childhood Obesity and Physical Activity Implementation Plan*) to ensure that this will not be the case on the Isle of Man in the future by getting more people, more active, more often.



In the UK, Obesity costs  
**£6 billion** per year (2013),  
expected to rise to  
**£60 billion**  
by 2050.

Based on these figures,  
obesity is estimated to cost  
the Isle of Man

**£56 million** per year  
by 2050

Sport and physical activity can also help improve social inclusion and community engagement. Manx Sport and Recreation can play a significant role in 'An Agenda for Change' by making sure the protection of the vulnerable remains a high priority. Embedded within this Isle of Man Strategy for Sport 2014 - 2024 is a commitment to ensuring that children and families have more accessible opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity to help improve their quality of life.

Involvement in sport is vital in preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour. Where young people are bored and have nothing to do, the likelihood of becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour becomes greater and consequently so do the costs of dealing with it.

### **£14.7 million**

Direct Costs of the Criminal Justice System on the Isle of Man.

The Isle of Man Criminal Justice Strategy

recognises that over the long term, **preventative** measures are more **cost effective** to the taxpayer, with a greater emphasis placed on the promotion of early intervention and prevention programmes

Diverting young people away from anti-social behaviour and providing early intervention programmes using sport and physical activity is essential in helping to keep them out of the criminal and youth justice system and thus reducing costs.

'An Agenda for Change' also recognises the importance on growing the economy. In recent years, the Island has received world-wide coverage as a result of the conveyor belt of sporting talent produced on the Isle of Man. Sports men and women competing in Olympic and Commonwealth Games, World Championships and other major international events has and will continue to produce millions of pounds of publicity for the Isle of Man.

This group of elite performers will also inspire young people on the Island to get involved and stay involved in sport, regardless of their level of participation.

Isle of Man Sport acts as an independent body providing a vital role in supporting and assisting governing bodies on the Island and helping talented athletes fulfil and achieve their potential.

The Isle of Man attracts a large number of visitors who travel to the Island for sports competitions and events. Since 1998, the National Sports Centre has hosted an ever increasing number of international competitions for off-Island participants. Other than events at the National Sports Centre, the natural environment of the Isle of Man is a fabulous location to host and stage large sporting events.

Such facilities, landscapes and access can also contribute to attracting high net worth individuals and skilled workers to the Isle of Man, as families seek good quality sports provision for their children.



**15**

Manx athletes

competed at

**World &  
International**

level competitions

during

2012/2013

**11,000 visitors**

(excluding TT)

for sports events with a total  
visitor spend of more than

**£3 million**

in 2012/13



The Isle of Man Strategy for Sport 2014 – 2024 aims to align a significant number of its objectives to *The Strategy for Children and Young People 2014 - 2019*. Providing opportunities and provision for children and young people to grow up healthy and safe, reach their full potential and personal development and in doing so be happy, independent and prosperous adults. Participation in physical activity and sports clubs from an early age can contribute to this plan. Through a multi-agency approach with other Government Departments, Manx Sport and Recreation can contribute to making a difference to the lives of children and young people on the Island.

Following the inspection into Children's Services on the Isle of Man in October 2013, it was identified that the quality of sport and recreation services, provision and facilities was of a very high standard. Verbal feedback from the inspectorate suggested that effective and supportive early intervention will be essential in the future and that there was a need for creativity and innovation across departments for joint planning and continuous improvement. The Isle of Man Strategy for Sport 2014-2024 will contribute to the delivery of this.

Manx Sport and Recreation will be a key service provider in helping the Departments of Health and Social Care, Education and Children, Home Affairs and Economic Development to achieve their objectives.

The Isle of Man Strategy for Sport 2014 – 2024 has been written using a model known as outcome or results based accountability. The aim is to demonstrate the contribution sport can make to the lives of those people who live on the Isle of Man. Manx Sport and Recreation can support other Government Departments to deliver their own strategies and thus save money during a difficult economic climate.

Mark Friedman who designed this template of working visited the Island in October 2013.

"I'm a big fan of  
**sport and recreation  
services.**

They are **low cost** and  
**successful**  
compared to many other  
services

which aim to **improve the  
quality of life"**

Mark Friedman  
Founder of the Fiscal Policy Studies Institute



Jamie McCanney  
World Youth Enduro  
Champion 2013



Anna Christian (Centre) British  
Junior Road Race Champion 2013



Commonwealth Youth Games 2011



First Wheelchair Sports Club  
established 2011



# Isle of Man Strategy for Sport 2014 – 2024

## Our Objectives

1

Increase levels of physical activity in young people

2

Increase the number of children and adults who are regularly involved in community sport

3

Improve the quality of life and social well being for people with disabilities

4

Improve the quality of life and outcomes for looked after children and young carers

5

Improve the well being of children, adults and the elderly who suffer from poor health

6

Maintain, develop and improve facilities

7

Improve and develop coaching

8

Highlight the success of sport to promote the Isle of Man and fulfil the potential of talented performers on the world stage

9

Improve social inclusion

10

Help young people further their education and training using sport to improve their chances of finding employment



## Increase levels of physical activity in young people

The modern environment of cars, fast food, computers and video games has led to our lifestyles and those of our children being more sedentary than previous generations bringing about a significant change in the health of the nation. The increasing prevalence of obesity amongst adults and children is a major public health challenge both locally, nationally and internationally. Today's society faces an obesity epidemic which at current growth levels is set to bankrupt the National Health Service with current costs at £6.3 billion per year rising to £60 billion per year by 2050 in the United Kingdom. Based on these figures the obesity epidemic is estimated to cost the Isle of Man £5.6 million per year rising to £56 million per year by 2050.

The consequences of obesity are not limited to the direct impact on health. Overweight and obesity also have adverse social consequences through discrimination, social exclusion and loss of or lower earnings later on in adulthood. There are also adverse consequences on the wider economy through, for example, working days lost through absence, increased pension payouts, decreased pension contributions and increased benefit payments.

The Isle of Man Health and Lifestyle Survey of 2009 found that 50% of adults were overweight or obese and 20% of reception class children aged 4 and 5 were overweight.

- Isle of Man Government
- Department of Health and Social Care
- Department of Infrastructure
- Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture
- Isle of Man Sport
- Governing Bodies of Sport

- Strategy for Children and Young People 2014 – 2019
- Physical Activity Strategy and Implementation Plan
- Tackling Childhood Obesity
- Planning: Isle of Man Strategic Plan

Based on current UK figures;

- Physical inactivity currently costs the Isle of Man Government approximately **£11.6 million** per year
- The obesity epidemic currently costs the Isle of Man Government approximately **£5.6 million** per year



**35%**  
The number of additional days that a physically inactive person spends in hospital

\* UKactive Research Institute

## KEY ACTIONS

- Research and data collection to establish levels of physical activity for young people.
- Expand and deliver various programmes and initiatives aimed at improving levels of physical activity for young people, including:
  - Community Coach Programme (Olympic Legacy Initiative)
  - Primary School Sports Programme
  - Fun Festivals
  - Manx Youth Games
  - Step into Sport after school activity programme
  - School Holiday Activity Programme
- Improve school - club links.
- Establish a programme of 'alternative' physical activities.
- Where it is safe to do so, promote the value of walking and cycling to school.
- Investigate the feasibility of introducing fitness testing for young people in schools.

20%

or 1 in 5

children

aged between

**4 & 5** on the  
Isle of Man are  
**overweight**

The Isle of Man Tackling Childhood Obesity Strategy 2013

## PERFORMANCE MEASURE

- Increase the percentage of children who do 1 hour of physical activity per day. \*

\* World Health Organisation recommended daily amounts of physical activity for young people

As a result of increased levels of physical activity in young people aged 4 – 17 years to the recommended daily amount of exercise from the World Health Organisation, young people will be leading a more active and healthy lifestyle.

An increase in physical activity assists young people to:

- develop healthy musculoskeletal tissues (i.e. bones, muscles and joints);
- develop a healthy cardiovascular system (i.e. heart and lungs);
- develop neuromuscular awareness (i.e. co-ordination and movement control);
- maintain a healthy body weight.

Physical activity has also been associated with psychological benefits in young people by improving their control over symptoms of anxiety and depression. Similarly, participation in physical activity can assist in the social development of young people by providing opportunities for self-expression, building self-confidence, social interaction and integration. It has also been suggested that physically active young people are more likely to adopt other healthy behaviours by avoiding alcohol, cigarettes and drug use. Research suggests that physically active young people can also demonstrate higher academic performance at school.

It should also be noted that if children are currently doing no physical activity, by encouraging them to do amounts that may still be below the recommended daily levels, will bring more benefits than doing no exercise at all.

Future savings will also be evident within the health budget as a healthier, fitter population will see a decrease in obesity and its associated illnesses, less visits to the GP, less time off work, less medication as well as an increased productivity within the workplace.

## Increase the number of children and adults who are regularly involved in community sport

Over the last decade there has been a significant growth in the number of opportunities that children and young people have to get involved in sport on the Isle of Man. Manx Sport and Recreation has assisted local Governing Bodies on the Island to increase the number of participants, teams, clubs, coaches, officials and volunteers involved in sport through a variety of initiatives.

Many sports now have an infrastructure in place that enables children as young as four years of age to get involved and remain involved in sport through to their adult years.

Isle of Man Sport's Community Key Sports programme has provided funding to assist a number of Governing Bodies on the Island to appoint sports specific development officers. As a result of this and with a new range of initiatives and opportunities there is an increasing number of children and adults involved within these respective sports and it is vital that this trend continues in the future, contributing to the other objectives included within this strategy.

- Isle of Man Sport
- National Governing Bodies of Sport
- Isle of Man Sports Associations
- Department of Home Affairs
- Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture

### STRATEGIES, PLANS & GROUPS

- Strategy for Children and Young People 2014 – 2019
- Sports Specific Development Plans
- Isle of Man Protecting Children Board

**52%**

of all people

who

volunteer,

do so in

**SPORT**

\* Institute for Volunteering Research





## KEY ACTIONS

- Provide a wide range of activities to ensure children and young people have opportunities to take part in sport at grass roots level through schemes listed below:
  - Community Coach Programme (Olympic Legacy Initiative)
  - Primary School Sports Programme
  - Fun Festivals
  - Manx Youth Games
  - Step into Sport After School Activity Programme
  - School Holiday Activity Programme
- Review the current Community Key Sports Programme with Isle of Man Sport.
- Develop initiatives to increase participation, including more teams and clubs around the Island.
- Improve school club links, coach education and the recruitment of volunteers and officials.
- Promote a safe, fun and inclusive environment to protect children involved in community sport.

**64%**

of children **aged 8 – 14**  
years of age on the Isle of Man  
are involved in a  
**Community Sports Club**

Sports Development Survey 2014

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Increase the number of children and adults involved in community sports clubs.
- Increase the number of young people joining community sports clubs following participation in Sports Development Unit activities.

**48%**

of young people join a  
**Community Sports Club**  
as a result of taking part in the Manx Youth  
Games initiative

Sports Development Survey 2014

## IMPACT

It is well known that being involved in a sports club is good for community engagement. There is much evidence to suggest that there is less chance of being bored and involved in anti-social behaviour in and around the areas that you live in, if you're a member of a community sports club.

Long term involvement from a young age and progression from junior to senior teams will hook people on sport and activity for life. This long term involvement in sport will improve the physical health and well being of the Island's population, which subsequently will help address the obesity problems and lessen the financial burden on the Department of Health and Social Care in future years.

Obesity-related illnesses are preventable and by engaging the community in sport and physical activity, Manx Sport and Recreation can contribute to reversing this trend.



Manx Sport and Recreation is committed to ensuring that all people with a disability, their families, carers and organisation, have access to fully inclusive sport and recreation opportunities to improve an individual's quality of life and social well being.

Over the last 5 years there has been a significant expansion in the number of sport and physical activity opportunities available for people with disabilities on the Isle of Man.

Initiatives such as the Disability School Sports Programme and Festivals, the Step into Sport Programme, the Passport to Sport initiative, the Junior Gateway Games, the Wheelchair Sports Club, the Manx Youth Games and Walk and Talk have encouraged large numbers of children and adults with disabilities to get involved in sport and physical activity.

The Passport to Sport initiative improves the access of individuals who require the support of a carer in order to participate in sport and physical activity at the National Sports Centre by offering the carers free admission to accompany individuals in their chosen activity.

In October 2011 the Island's first Wheelchair Sports Club was established. Having secured £22,000 funding from the Wooden Spoon Charity to purchase sports specific wheelchairs, a group of 25 adults and children meet regularly to participate in a variety of wheelchair based sports activities.

Sport and physical activity is a key element required to improve the quality of life and social well-being of individuals and therefore opportunities must be developed for members of the public to socially interact and engage in a range of recreational activities within society.



## PARTNERS

- Isle of Man Government
- Department of Health and Social Care
- Department of Home Affairs
- Third Sector Organisations including;
  - Crossroads Care
  - Autism Initiatives
  - Project 21
  - Manx Blind Welfare Society
  - Wooden Spoon Wheelchair Sports Club
  - PHAB

## STRATEGIES, PLANS & GROUPS

- Strategy for Children and Young People 2014 – 2019
- Agenda for Change
- Learning Disability Strategy: Living Life to the Full
- Community Engagement Team Disability Strand

"On a personal level we have seen great improvements in physical ability and gross motor skills in our daughter. She has developed an interest in areas which she has not had the opportunity to engage in before.

When she was younger we struggled to find physical activities for her to take part in. Thankfully this is no longer the case."

Parent of a child with disabilities

"Even the most 'un-sporty' students surprised themselves with how much fun they had; and that's what it's all about. Without a doubt self-confidence has improved."

Special Educational Needs Teacher

**£22 000**

of charity funding received to purchase  
18 sport specific  
wheelchairs  
to establish a wheelchair sports club



## KEY ACTIONS

- Research into people with disabilities to establish levels of physical activity.
- Fine tune and develop the Passport to Sport initiative.
- Develop physical activity initiatives for people with disabilities.
- Develop facilities and equipment at the National Sports Centre to improve access for people with disabilities.
- Explore the feasibility of establishing a “Buddy Scheme” for people with disabilities.

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

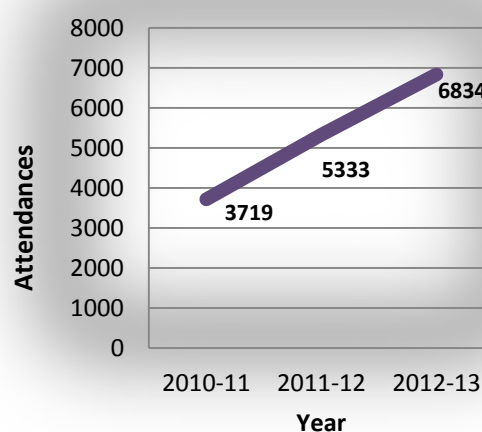
- Increase the percentage of people with disabilities who experience an improved quality of life as a result of participating in sport, physical activity and leisure programmes.
- Increase the percentage of those people with disabilities using the Passport to Sport initiative.
- Increase the number of people with disabilities joining Special Olympics or community sports clubs.

## IMPACT

As people with disabilities are often less active, their risk of gaining weight is greater. Excess body weight may itself have a disabling effect, further restricting mobility. By developing a wide range of initiatives and removing barriers to physical activity, opportunities for those people with disabilities to take part in physical activity can be increased.

Increasing physical activity levels of people with disabilities and helping them to join community clubs will increase their social integration and will go some way to improving their physical and mental health, self esteem, confidence, quality of life and social well-being.

### Individuals with disabilities participating in sport & physical activity



## Improve the quality of life and outcomes for looked after children and young carers

Children and young people require the care of Government for a variety of reasons. Each set of circumstances is unique and therefore services must be flexible and plan for the needs of each child or young person and care leaver. The majority of children and young people come into care of the Government for care and protection reasons resulting from parental neglect, abuse or because they have complex disabilities.

Looked after children and young people generally experience poorer education, physical and mental health and economic outcomes than their peers. They are less likely to achieve grades A-C at GCSE examinations. Looked after children are more likely to become homeless and be known to the Youth Justice Team and involved within the criminal justice system whilst they are in care and when they leave care.

Evidence suggests that early intervention and engagement of looked after children in physical activity can help tackle these issues and therefore contribute to an improvement in the quality of life and outcomes for these young people.

Crossroads Care has identified that there may be as many as 1000 young people on the Isle of Man who are young carers, caring for either their siblings, parents or grandparents. As a result, young carers may struggle to find the time and opportunities to engage in sport or physical activity and socialise with other young people and their friends. Crossroads Care has identified children as young as 8 years old as being young carers.

Young carers are at risk of experiencing disadvantages whilst growing up, including low income, mental and physical health problems, lack of social life, behavioural problems and educational difficulties.

- Isle of Man Government, Cabinet Office
- Department of Health and Social Care
- Department of Home Affairs
- Children's Service Partnership
- Crossroads Care

### STRATEGIES, PLANS & GROUPS

- Agenda for Change
- Strategy for Children and Young People 2014 – 2019
- Corporate Parent Group
- Children's Service Partnership
- Physical Activity Strategy and Implementation Plan
- Tackling Childhood Obesity
- Criminal Justice Strategy 2012
- Youth Justice Team Link Programme
- Crossroads Young Carers Project

The Isle of Man Government's  
**Strategy for Children  
 and  
 Young People  
 2014 – 2019**  
 is underpinned by  
 the following **key** principles:

- Provision of high quality services with clearly defined outcomes for children and young people
- To work in partnership with families to help them achieve the best they can for their children
- Ensuring children and young people are safe from harm and are able to build resilience to overcome inequalities
- Promote the wellbeing of children and young people



## KEY ACTIONS

- Secure funding to deliver a specific programme targeting looked after children and young carers.
- Identify those young people within the Isle of Man care system.
- Research and data collection to establish levels of physical activity for young people in care and young carers.
- Establish and develop an early intervention programme in partnership with the Youth Justice Team.
- Listen to the voice of the child through consultation with looked after children and young carers.
- Provide improved access to sports activities for looked after children.
- Establish and develop a mentoring and/or leadership programme easily accessible for looked after children and young carers.
- Provide sporting opportunities specifically for young carers.



There may be up to  
**1000**  
young carers  
on the  
Isle of Man

Crossroads Care

Evidence suggests  
that  $\frac{3}{4}$   
of young carers become  
**NEET** at least once  
in their lifetime

Audit Commission 2010

## IMPACT

As a result of increased levels of physical activity in young people in care and for young carers to the recommended daily amount of exercise from the World Health Organisation, these young people will be leading a more active and healthy lifestyle (see Impact in Objective 1).

A reduction in the percentage of looked after children referred to the Youth Justice Team as repeat offenders will reduce the associated costs incurred through the courts and justice system whilst improving the outcomes of these young people involved within the community.

A looked after child engaged in physical activity from an early age is more likely to contribute positively to society throughout their adult life, be engaged in a community sports club, have opportunities to enjoy and achieve and stay healthy.

A physically active looked after child or young carer can be a happier person with improved emotional well-being and increased self-esteem and confidence which can be transferred into the community, schools, at home and the workplace.

**8%**

(34) of referrals to the

**Youth Justice**

Team in 2012/2013 were

looked after children

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Contribute to a reduction in the number of looked after children being referred to the Youth Justice Team as repeat offenders.
- Increase percentage of looked after children who do 1 hour of physical activity per day. \*
- Contribute to improved attendances and attainment at school of looked after children.
- Increase the number of sporting opportunities available specifically for young carers.

\* World Health Organisation recommended daily amounts of physical activity for young people



## Improve the well being of children, adults and the elderly who suffer from poor health

Current obesity levels on the Isle of Man are rising fast. The Isle of Man Health and Lifestyle survey 2009 showed that 50.4% adults are overweight and that 15.9% are obese. It is not just the adults that are experiencing issues with this health condition with 20% of reception class children aged 4 and 5 currently being overweight.

Following United Kingdom trends, obesity illnesses related to inactivity are currently estimated to cost the health service on the Island £5.6million per year, with expert forecasts that this is expected to increase tenfold by 2050 to £56 million per year if nothing is invested to tackle the problem and reverse these trends.

In addition to these costs, health spending on the Isle of Man for the elderly population is expected to double over the next 20 years to more than £50 million per year due to the ageing population. Those people who are inactive will incur the greatest costs in this age bracket as this group of people are more susceptible to falls, heart attacks, strokes and joint replacements. A Walk and Talk initiative was established in 1999 to provide opportunities for the ageing population to lead a more active lifestyle and improve their social well-being. Every week hundreds of individuals, walk and talk a number of miles at various venues around the Island. Many of these people are aged 65 plus.

During 2012 and 2013 the Sports Development Unit have developed and delivered a pilot Physical Activity Referral Programme for children, adults and the elderly as a result of the Department of Health and Social Care's Physical Activity Strategy. Multi-agency funding from the Department of Health and Community, Culture and Leisure was used to deliver the adult and elderly programme, with additional funding from the Departments of Health, Education, Social Care and Community Culture and Leisure used to deliver the children's referral programme.

As of April 2014, 150 children have been referred onto the Fit 4 the Future Referral programme with 51% of those referrals attending for weight related issues. 56% of which have lost weight or reduced their BMI since attending the programme. Since March 2012, over 1200 adults with poor health have been referred onto the Physical Activity on Referral Programme. These startling figures highlight the importance of these programmes in improving the health of the Island's population in the future.

### PARTNERS

- Isle of Man Government
- Department of Health and Social Care

### STRATEGIES, PLANS & GROUPS

- Strategy for Children and Young People 2014 – 2019
- Physical Activity Strategy and Implementation Plan
- Tackling Childhood Obesity
- Team Around the Family



**£12  
MILLION**

The cost of  
employee absence  
per year  
to the  
Isle of Man  
Government

### EVIDENCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ADULT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY REFERRAL SCHEME

1241	Number of referrals (Since March 2012)
90%	continued with physical activity
81%	increased their levels of physical activity
54%	achieved the recommended 2½ hours of physical activity per week
50%	Maintained or lost weight
50%	Improvements with social well-being
47%	Improvements in mobility, muscular strength, endurance, flexibility and stamina
31%	Helped to relieve their stress levels
21%	Helped to control diabetes and relieve their depression

\* Data taken from those adults who completed and returned Surveys from 2012-2014

**£330 000**

The amount funded by  
Jersey's Health  
Department  
per year on an  
exercise referral  
programme  
for  
**1000** adults

## KEY ACTIONS

- Ensure multi-agency funding is set aside to guarantee the children's, adult and elderly referral programmes continue to operate effectively.
- Provide evidence and effectiveness of the physical activity referral schemes.
- Provide a wide and appropriate range of physical activities which are accessible to children, adults and the elderly who are overweight, obese or suffer from poor physical and mental health.
- Consult with those who are referred, identifying suitable activities that meet their needs and provide new sessions where necessary.
- Investigate the need for a multi-agency delivery team and family based programme approach.
- Raise the profile of the referral programmes across Isle of Man Government and investigate the need for a self referral option.
- Develop a pilot scheme in conjunction with Occupational Health, offering Department of Education and Children staff who are absent from work for prolonged periods, access onto the Physical Activity Referral Programme.
- Work with partners to develop a Team Around the Family Programme focusing on early intervention which identifies children with additional needs.

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Reduced percentage Body Mass Index (BMI) for those referred for weight related issues.
- Continue to maintain increased levels of physical activity once individuals have left the referral programme.
- Increased number of adults on the referral programme who lose weight.
- Reduced prolonged periods of absenteeism for Department of Education and Children staff.
- Increase the percentage of people aged 65 plus attending Walk and Talk.

### 50 lbs

Amount of weight lost by one adult on the Physical Activity Referral Programme. As a result this person no longer requires Bariatric Surgery at a cost of **£20,000+** to the Isle of Man Taxpayer

## IMPACT

Manx Sport & Recreation is acknowledged as a key stakeholder, driver and deliverer in relation to achieving the aims and objectives of the Department of Health and Social Care's Physical Activity & Tackling Childhood Obesity Strategies.

Early identification of children and adults with poor health, alongside an intervention programme with physical activity at the heart of it can ultimately lead to long term savings for the government in relation to health and social well-being.

Changing the mindset of individuals and families to lead a sustainable, healthier lifestyle as a result of the referral programme will lead to reduced illness, reduced absence from work, increased productivity in the workplace and subsequently money saved from a number of budgets across government.

A physically active individual aged 65 plus can be healthier with reduced visits to the doctors, happier with improved emotional well-being, increased self-esteem and confidence which in turn can be transferred into the community and at home.

Failure to continue with the provision of the necessary resources to deliver the Physical Activity Referral Programmes for children, adults and the elderly will lead to greater long term costs to government which will far exceed the investments required for the duration of this strategy and beyond.

### 54 lbs

Amount of weight lost by a **14 year** old girl referred onto the Fit 4 the Future referral programme



### 41%

of those who attend Walk & Talk now have reduced visits to their GP for health issues

*Maintain, develop and improve facilities*

Over the last two decades there has been a significant investment and development of sport and recreation facilities on the Island. The National Sports Centre was the result of the first strategy for sport, with the opening of the athletics track and astro-turf pitch in 1991 followed by the first phase of the National Sports Centre indoor facilities in 1998 and completion by 2001 in preparation for the Island Games.

Regional astro-turf pitches have been constructed at High Schools in Peel, Ramsey and Castletown as dual - use facilities in partnership with the Department of Education and Children. A recent addition to the National Sports Centre site, is a full size 3G pitch and re-development of the 3,000 seater Bowl stadium used for the Commonwealth Youth Games in 2011.

In addition to these world class sports facilities, there has been significant investment in community sports facilities where new schools have been built providing local communities with more space to participate in sport and leisure activities.

Failure to maintain these facilities and develop them where necessary will ultimately mean the majority of the other objectives established within the strategy are impossible to achieve. Without access to facilities around the Island, participation will decrease, there will be fewer activities to do, more anti-social behaviour and generally speaking the health of the residents on the Island will deteriorate.

The Isle of Man also has a beautiful natural environment and a variety of open green space, countryside and glens make it the perfect place for outdoor recreational activity. It is important that these areas, together with the purpose built sports facilities are also fully utilised and appropriately developed and maintained.

- Isle of Man Government
- Department of Health and Social Care
- Department of Infrastructure
- Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture
- Isle of Man Sport

**STRATEGIES, PLANS & GROUPS**

- Agenda for Change
- Strategy for Children and Young People 2014 – 2019
- Physical Activity Strategy and Implementation Plan
- Planning: Isle of Man Strategic Plan

**656,542**

National Sports Centre

**attendances**

2013-2014





## KEY ACTIONS

- Review the need for additional sport and recreational facilities in areas of the Island where demand requires them and assist local sports associations to develop their own facilities, wherever possible.
- Identify funding to deliver major works for equipment replacement and facility development at the National Sports Centre.
- Ensure a balanced programme of activities and opportunities at the National Sports Centre which meets its key role as a community sports centre, a focal point for the development of sport and physical activity and a hub for sporting excellence.
- Ensure a pricing policy at the National Sports Centre which encourages maximum usage of all facilities and that price is not a barrier to participation.
- Identify and remove barriers to improve access to facilities where there is greater capacity for community usage.
- Work in partnership with other agencies to ensure the planning and design of new facilities meets the needs of the community for sport, leisure and recreation.
- Promote the possibility of developing cycling and walking paths both on and off road.
- Contribute to the development of a Facility Audit for the Isle of Man.

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Increased attendances at National Sports Centre facilities of key user groups.
- Contribute to the success of the other objectives within this strategy through the provision and use of facilities.

## IMPACT

- Existing sports and leisure facilities being accessible and fully utilised at times where demand requires it.
- Better use of the natural environment for a range of physical activity and more people taking advantage of this free resource.
- Modern, high quality facilities and equipment which meet industry standards.
- Improved health and well being, with more people engaging in sport and physical activity.
- Growth of sports clubs with more junior and adult teams.



Benchmarked against  
other facilities in the British Isles,  
the  
**National Sports Centre**  
has been ranked  
within the  
top 5% of facilities by  
**QUEST**,  
the quality assurance scheme  
for sport and leisure facilities

## Improve and develop coaching

Good coaching is vital to ensure that those participating in sport have a rewarding experience. Coaching and teaching sessions should be fun, safe, engaging and appropriate for the age and ability of the young person or performer if they are to achieve their potential.

Whilst some coaches have qualifications in technical and tactical understanding, the majority of those who coach individuals and teams require further education, training and understanding of Long Term Athlete Development, FUNDamentals, talent identification and the growing and maturing child (physically, socially and psychologically).

Poor, outdated coaching and teaching practice is a contributing factor for those who drop out of sport and physical activity, especially those young people who receive a negative experience.

Providing the right environment with opportunities for participants to flourish and develop is key to assisting individuals achieve their potential, whether that be socially and for fun or as an elite competitor.

It is important to recognise that every child or performer is different and requires a bespoke approach if they are to be engaged and retained in sport for life, regardless of their ability.

Significant private sector funding has been secured to deliver the Dame Kelly Holmes Education Programme which has provided continued professional development for a number of the Island's coaches alongside their athletes to improve standards.

- Isle of Man Sport
- National Governing Bodies
- Commonwealth Games Association of the Isle of Man
- Island Games Association of Mann
- Department of Health and Social Care

### STRATEGIES, PLANS & GROUPS

- Strategy for Children and Young People 2014 – 2019
- Isle of Man Protecting Children Board
- Physical Activity Strategy and Implementation Plan
- Tackling Childhood Obesity

**125**

The number of members of the Isle of Man Manx Sport & Recreation Coaches Association (2014)



## KEY ACTIONS

- Investigate the feasibility of appointing a coaching co-ordinator to work alongside the Isle of Man Sport Performance Co-ordinator.
- Undertake research and data collection to consult with children and adults to help develop a continuous professional development training programme for coaches and school teachers.
- Help sports associations improve structured coaching development plans, and enhance the Heads of Performance remit.
- Look at best coaching practice in other jurisdictions (United Kingdom and beyond).
- Improve and develop the Isle of Man Manx Sport & Recreation Coaches Association.
- Expand the number of Sports Coach UK and similar bolt-on qualifications and training courses for coaches and school teachers.
- Develop a mentoring programme to improve delivery across the Island in a range of different sports.
- Work with Isle of Man College to explore the options of introducing and developing a sports coaching, leisure and exercise course to further develop education and training opportunities.



## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Increase the number of members in the Isle of Man Manx Sport & Recreation Coaches Association.
- Increase the percentage of qualified sports coaches who attend additional training/continuous professional development courses.



**51**

The number of  
coaches  
who attended the  
Dame Kelly Holmes  
Double Gold  
Coach Education  
Programme

## IMPACT

An increased profile of coaching and its importance in helping individuals to reach their full potential will result in greater participation levels across the Island as well as increased levels of coach motivation.

With increased expertise, knowledge and understanding of developing athletes and young performers, coaches will be better placed to make decisions around talent identification and deliver appropriate coaching sessions to groups or individuals. This will result in improved levels of performance throughout all aspects of sport on the Island.

By improving the standards and quality of coaching, teaching and session delivery, there will be fewer children dropping out of sport and physical activity. As a result, more children will be retained in sport together with increased numbers of those involved in community sports clubs, extra-curricular sport and physical activity at schools, as delivery will be fun, inclusive and engaging leaving children and young people inspired, wanting more.

A more active population will lead to a healthier nation and thus help alleviate the costs of physical inactivity to the government.



Highlight the success of sport to promote the Isle of Man and fulfil the potential of talented performers on the world stage

Isle of Man competitors have enjoyed unparalleled success over the past decade with Manx athletes continually achieving success and competing at the highest levels of sport both nationally and internationally. This continued sporting success is an excellent way of promoting the Isle of Man to the rest of the world.

The development of the Isle of Man Sport Institute over the last few years has been significant in helping athletes to achieve success on the world stage. It has been said many times that the Isle of Man is “punching above its weight” with regards to the excellent results its sportsmen and sportswomen regularly achieve.

The Island has been represented by athletes who have delivered success at Olympic Games, World Championships, Commonwealth Games and other European and international competitions and events. This high profile has numerous benefits to the economy of the Island in attracting visitors, journalists, television companies and newspapers. Indeed if this media exposure was to be paid for, it is estimated to be worth millions of pounds.

It is important that this success continues and is used to inspire the next generation of athletes.

- Department of Economic Development
- Isle of Man Sport
- Commonwealth Games Association of the Isle of Man
- Island Games Association of Mann
- Private sector sponsors



The George Sisters, Kirsten (aged 16) and Aalin (aged 17)  
2013 Compound Team Event, Bronze Medallists representing Great Britain at the World Archery Youth Championships in China

over **£3 million**

Amount of visitor spend in the Island

as a result of

sports events and competitions

from

**11,000** visitors annually

(excluding TT)

\*Isle of Man Tourism Visitor Economy Strategy



2012 London Olympics Gold Medallist and World Record Holder  
Peter Kennaugh, MBE, arriving home to the Isle of Man



## KEY ACTIONS

- Continue the Isle of Man Sport Aid programme and review its effectiveness and selection process on a regular basis.
- Continue to support and encourage the Isle of Man's representation in the Commonwealth Games, Commonwealth Youth Games and Island Games.
- Continue to engage with the private sector to attain additional funding to deliver existing and new initiatives.
- Further develop the services of the Isle of Man Sport Institute and identify additional support for talented athletes.
- Increase the use of the Isle of Man Sport Institute.
- Encourage those competing off Island to see themselves as ambassadors for the Isle of Man.
- Review support provided to Isle of Man representative teams competing in the United Kingdom and beyond.

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Increase the number of athletes competing at Olympic, Commonwealth, International and other World Class events.
- Increase the number of athletes utilising the Isle of Man Sport Institute facilities and services.



Zoe Gillings, Winter Olympian and World Cup Winner in Snowboard Cross



Mark Cavendish, MBE, 2006 Commonwealth Games 20k Scratch Race Gold Medal Winner, representing the Isle of Man, Multiple Grand Tour Stage Winner and BBC Sports Personality of the Year

15

The number of Manx athletes from 8 different sports who took part at World Championship, European Championship or World Cup level events during 2012 - 2013

1st

Isle of Man's position in the medal table at the 2013 Island Games in Bermuda

## IMPACT

- The profile of the Isle of Man is raised to a wider audience as a result of our sportsmen and sportswomen competing across the globe.
- Sport continues to be part of the Isle of Man's national culture and identity making it an attractive place for others to visit or come to live.
- Individuals perceive that success in sport is possible for someone living on the Isle of Man.
- 'The Isle of Man, where you can.....'

At the 2014 Commonwealth Games, the Isle of Man finished **FIRST** in the table for medals won per head of population out of the home nations

In a difficult economic climate social exclusion is more likely amongst vulnerable groups within society and as a result, socially excluded families are more likely not to participate in physical activity and therefore suffer from poorer health.

Sport and recreation programmes can engage socially excluded groups, prevent boredom, teach important life skills and divert young people away from a life of crime.

There is evidence and research which demonstrates involvement in sport and physical activity diverts young people away from anti-social behaviour throughout the United Kingdom. Sport and physical activity is not a magic cure for crime, however where an early intervention programme based on sport is delivered, on average anti-social behaviour falls by approximately 30% ([www.sportandrecreation.org](http://www.sportandrecreation.org)).

Costs of participation can be a barrier to preventing low income families from accessing sporting and physical activity opportunities. Therefore it's important that low cost activities are established which are easily accessible by all.

The increased prevalence of ethnic minority groups arriving on the Island in recent years has, as a result diversified the population make-up with different cultures requiring different needs and demands. Equitable sporting provision for these groups will aid in their social inclusion and integration into the Manx culture.

## PARTNERS

- Isle of Man Government
- Department of Health and Social Care
- Department of Home Affairs
- Youth Justice Team
- Isle of Man Sport

## STRATEGIES, PLANS &amp; GROUPS

- Strategy for Children and Young People 2014 – 2019
- Isle of Man Agenda for Change
- Youth Service
- Physical Activity Strategy and Implementation Plan
- Corporate Parent Group
- Tackling Childhood Obesity
- Youth Justice Team Link Programme
- Criminal Justice Strategy 2012

70%

7 out of 10 teenagers  
say they engage in  
anti-social behaviour  
because  
"there is

**nothing to do"**

[www.sportandrecreation.org](http://www.sportandrecreation.org)

£58,779

The average  
annual cost  
per prisoner on the  
Isle of Man

Isle of Man Criminal Justice Strategy 2012



## KEY ACTIONS

- Research and data collection to establish areas more likely to experience anti-social behaviour.
- Research areas where children and young people are less active and not involved within the community.
- Develop community consultation with groups of people in identified areas for improved access to sport and physical activity.
- Investigate the need for a multi-agency social inclusion programme in identified areas for hard to reach groups.
- Deliver a low cost programme of activities.



## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Increase percentage of children from targeted areas who do recommended levels of physical activity of 1 hour per day.
- Increase the number of children from targeted areas involved in community sports clubs.
- Contribute to a reduction in anti-social behaviour within targeted areas.
- Contribute to a reduction in the number of referrals to the Youth Justice Team.

“A more effective long term prevention strategy that focuses on early intervention with at-risk young children and their parents is required for those children exposed to the most acute combination of risk factors. These young people are between **five** and **20** times more likely to offend than those who are not.”

Isle of Man Criminal Justice Strategy 2012

**£200,000 +**

The average cost to the UK taxpayer of a young person in the criminal justice system by the age of **16**, while one given **support** to stay out of the criminal justice system costs **less than £50,000**

Isle of Man Criminal Justice Strategy 2012

## IMPACT

By providing specific opportunities within targeted areas, socially disengaged young people are more likely to become physically active, join community sports clubs, lead an active, healthy lifestyle and are less likely to become involved in anti-social behaviours.

Increased opportunities to take part in physical activity through targeted initiatives will lead to a reduction in anti-social behaviour and an increase in membership within community sports clubs.

Early intervention with these groups will result in a reduction in recidivist behaviours and referrals to the Youth Justice Team.

Increased levels of physical activity can lead to improved self-esteem and confidence within disengaged young people and therefore as a result, academic attainment and behaviour within school can improve.

A reduced cost programme of activity will ensure that physical activity becomes more accessible to those low income families identified through the Department of Health and Social Care and therefore levels of physical activity will subsequently increase amongst young people from these families.

Help young people further their education and training using sport to improve their chances of finding employment

Young people on the Isle of Man currently not in education, employment or training (NEET) have limited opportunity to gain essential work and life skills and subsequently are at risk of social exclusion and potential long term unemployment.

Youth unemployment on the Isle of Man has been steadily increasing over the last few years at a significant cost in both monetary value and in terms of young people's confidence, self esteem and worth.

There is evidence to suggest that young people who are NEET are more likely to get involved within the criminal and youth justice systems the longer that they are not in education, employment or training.

Evidence also suggests that this group of people are also more at risk of suffering from low self-esteem, depression and mental health issues.

The Chief Minister's Agenda for Change document identifies young people who are NEET as a priority, vulnerable group for the Isle of Man Government to assist in order to improve their outcomes and as a result contribute to growing the economy.

- Isle of Man Government, Chief Secretaries Office
- Department of Economic Development
- Department of Health and Social Care
- National Governing Bodies

- Agenda for Change
- Employment and Skills Group
- Strategy for Children and Young People 2014 – 2019
- Youth Service
- Sport Specific Development Plans

**£100 000 - £130 000**

Lifetime cost

of **1** NEET

in loss of

earnings

and

state benefits



"The experiences & skills I have learnt here can be used elsewhere, not just in a sporting environment"

"I have really enjoyed the week, I was really nervous initially as I don't like getting up in front of people, but I did it and I loved it"

"I have met a lot of new people and I am now a lot more confident when talking in front of people"

*Young Leader Testimonials, July 2014*



## KEY ACTIONS

- Develop and deliver a new sports leadership programme.
- Identify young people who would benefit from the opportunity to participate in a sports leadership programme through a referral scheme from the employment and skills group within the Department of Economic Development.
- Develop a mentoring scheme for young people to further enhance their skills and experience after they have completed the sports leadership programme.
- Encourage young people to attain recognised National Governing Body coaching qualifications.
- Work with the Isle of Man College to explore the options of introducing and developing a sports coaching, leisure and exercise course to further develop education and training opportunities.
- Ensure there are opportunities for young people to gain experience in local schools and community sports clubs to deliver sporting activities to children.
- Actively explore sponsorship opportunities within the private sector on the Island to grow the sports leadership programme.

38

The number of

## YOUNG LEADERS & NEETS

(16 – 24 year olds)

who completed a week long

Leaders Training Camp

with the Sports Development Team

July 2014

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Increase the number of young people involved in leadership training and mentoring.
- Increase the number of young people gaining recognised qualifications.
- Increased number of young people gaining employment as a result of attending the leadership programme.

## IMPACT

By increasing the opportunities accessible to young people to develop their education and training through the sports leadership and mentoring programme, they are more likely to find employment and contribute to society.

Through such initiatives more young people will improve their leadership skills, team work, planning, communication and organisation skills which are transferrable into further education and their working environment.

More young people who find employment will contribute to the economy, will have more disposable income and be less reliant upon the state for income related benefits and job seeker's allowance.

By providing these people with the necessary skills and employment opportunities, they are less likely to engage in anti-social behaviour and become involved in the criminal justice system whilst experiencing improved social well-being and mental health, thus saving Government money.



# Isle of Man Sports Development Unit Funding

## Isle of Man Government

Total Budget of £420 000 per year

Jersey £1.5 million per year (comparison)

## External Sponsorship

£79,500 per year\*

\*Not guaranteed



Additional funding required to deliver the  
Isle of Man Strategy for Sport 2014 - 2024

To support the delivery of the strategy objectives an additional £300,000 of funding will be required in the next three years to deliver:

- Adult Referral programme
- Children & Young People Referral programmes
- Social Inclusion initiatives

FINANCIAL YEAR	FUNDING REQUIRED	BENCHMARKED AGAINST
		Jersey (comparison)
2015/2016	£100,000	£750,000
2016/2017	£100,000	£750,000
2017/2018	£100,000	£750,000
	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>£300,000</b>	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>£2,250,000</b>

# Isle of Man Sport – A Roll of Honour

## 2004 – 2013

Name & Sport	Main Achievements
<b>Jonathan Bellis</b> Cycling	3 <sup>rd</sup> in the World Under 23 Road Race, represented Great Britain at the 2008 Olympic Games
<b>Trevor Boyles</b> Shooting	2006 Commonwealth Games team bronze medal winner
<b>Mark Cavendish</b> Cycling	World Road Race Champion, winner of Tour De France Green Jersey, 25 stage wins in the Tour De France, 2009 Milan-San Remo winner, Commonwealth Games gold medallist, twice World Madison Champion, 2013 British National Road Race Champion, 2011 Member of the British Empire and 2011 BBC Sports Personality of the Year
<b>Anna Christian</b> Cycling	2013 British Junior Road Race Champion
<b>Mark Christian</b> Cycling	2010 Commonwealth Games bronze medal winner
<b>Philip Cringle</b> Rugby	Played for Scotland in Under 20 Rugby World Cup in 2012 and 2013
<b>Aalin George</b> Archery	2013 World Team bronze medal winner
<b>Kirsten George</b> Archery	2013 World Team bronze medal winner
<b>Keith Gerrard</b> Athletics	2012 and 2013 English Cross Country Champion
<b>Zoe Gillings</b> Snowboard Cross	Competed in the 2006 and 2010 Winter Olympics
<b>Josh Green</b> Badminton	English U15 and U19 singles champion, 2007 and 2010
<b>Grant Halsall</b> Swimming	Winner of three medals at 2011 Commonwealth Youth Games
<b>Yasmin Ingham</b> Equestrian	2013 European Pony Champion
<b>Peter Kennaugh</b> Cycling	Team Pursuit Gold medallist at 2012 London Olympics in World Record time, World Junior Scratch Race Champion in 2006, 2008 Under 23 British Road Race Champion, 2012 Team Pursuit winner at the World Track Championships, 2013 Member of the British Empire
<b>Tim Kneale</b> Shooting	2010 Commonwealth Games Bronze medal winner
<b>David Knight</b> Enduro	2005, 2006 and 2010 World Champion, 2011 Member of the British Empire
<b>Daniel McCanney</b> Enduro	Third in the World Junior (U23) Championships in 2012 and 2013
<b>Jamie McCanney</b> Enduro	2013 World Youth (U18) Champion
<b>David Walton</b> Shooting	2006 Commonwealth Games Team Bronze medal winner

# Isle of Man Strategy for Sport 2014-2024

Early intervention and prevention is better than cure

## Contact us

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Sports Development Unit  
National Sports Centre  
Groves Road  
Douglas  
Isle of Man

01624 688592  
[sduenquiries@gov.im](mailto:sduenquiries@gov.im)



**Isle of Man**  
Government

*Reilrys Ellan Vannin*



**ANNEX**

**D**



**Every child will have the best possible  
opportunities in life**

**STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**2015 – 2020**

# INTRODUCTION

This strategy sets out a vision for the Isle of Man's children and young people aged 0 – 18 years. It is a vision shared by all the partner agencies providing services for children, young people and their families. It sets out the joint priorities for the next five years in line with the objectives of the Policy for Children (2014) and will address the key areas for action following the independent review of children services in 2013, including improving early identification and intervention, improving support for children with complex needs and developing creativity and innovation through strong collaborative leadership. The scope of the document reflects the continued development of joint working across all services, partners and providers making provision for the children and young people of the Isle of Man. The centre piece of the Strategy will be the development of a coherent 'Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy'. This will ultimately support our ambition towards targeted seamless services which cut across departmental, organisational and population profile barriers.

The Strategy builds on the strengths of the previous Children's Plan and is aimed at developing a fully integrated approach to delivering outcomes that make a real difference to the lives of children and their families. This new plan for 2015-20 focuses on joint activity which extends beyond departmental and agency boundaries and is underpinned by the following key principles:

- Provision of high quality services with clearly defined outcomes for children and young people
- To work in partnership with families to help them achieve the best they can for their children
- Ensuring children and young people are safe from harm and are able to build resilience to overcome inequalities
- Promote the wellbeing of children and young people

For some children and young people, the outcomes they experience are different to the outcomes experienced by the majority of other children and young people. For some children and young people these experiences challenge efforts to get the best out of life's opportunities.

Resources will be targeted towards those that need it most and where there is a likely positive impact in the longer term for individuals and the wider community.

The Strategy for Children and Young People 2015/20 will be implemented during unprecedented change and economic challenge. We are meeting this challenge by refocusing our efforts towards prevention and early intervention in order to provide timely support before difficulties escalate.

**Failure** to provide early **help** is **costly** for the individual, in terms of greater **complexity** of problems and poorer **outcomes**, for the public purse in terms of service **intervention** costs, and the wider **community** in terms of higher **crime** rates and **poor** environments in which we live.



Earlier intervention means **investing** resources differently, whilst **balancing** the need to **respond** to the current and increasingly **complex** needs which our **vulnerable** families face today.

This document concentrates on the overall priorities, rather than the operational detail that will be required within an Implementation Plan.

# Strategy for Children and Young People 2015-2020

## Our Aim

Provision of high quality services with clearly defined outcomes for children and young people

## Our People

Children and Young People

Young Carers

Looked After Children

Children in Need of Protection

Children with Disabilities

Young People not in Education, Employment or Training

## Our Partners and Strategies

Voluntary & Third Sector Organisations

Department of Health and Social Care

Department of Education and Children

Department of Home Affairs

Isle of Man Constabulary

Department of Economic Development

Agenda for Change

Tackling Childhood Obesity

Strategy for Sport

Policy for Children

Physical Activity Strategy

Carers Strategy

## Our Key Priorities

Nurturing children and young people's healthy development, aspirations and achievement

Children and young people grow up resilient against adversity

Children and young people grow up safe from harm and abuse

Children and young people grow up to be engaged and contributing adults in supportive communities

## Outcomes

Children and young people are healthy and achieving

Children and young people are resilient

Children and young people are safe

Children and young people are positively engaged in their community

## Our Vision

Every child will have the best possible opportunities in life

# Vision and Values

**Respect:** Services are inclusive where difference is respected and mutual respect exists between organisations and professionals protecting children

**Professionalism:** High quality services are delivered with integrity by a competent and knowledgeable team working in partnership to keep children and young people safe



**Every child  
will have the  
best possible  
opportunities  
in life**

**Caring:** Services are delivered in partnership and are child focused, empathising with the feelings of children, young people and families, through the creation of a safe environment in which concerns can be shared

**Fairness:** Decisions are made openly, consistently and lawfully, always in the best interests of the child, young person or family and that any discretion is used appropriately

**Listening:** The child's or young person's voice is heard, their experience understood and responsibility taken to act in their best interests

**Curiosity:** There is a thirst for knowledge, analysing, understanding and sharing information appropriately and never missing out on an opportunity to find out more about the child or young person's experience



## DID YOU KNOW?

### Some basic facts about our children and young people:

#### ALL CHILDREN

Total children and young people population of 17090  
2013 /14 School roll: primary (6262 pupils), secondary (4513 pupils)  
In 2013 /14 114 School Children required English as an Additional Language support  
85% of a child's waking hours are spent outside formal education  
In 2013, 50.8% of pupils achieved 5 + 'A\* - C' GCSE's including English and Maths  
70% of young people aged 11 - 19 are engaged in positive activities (62% in UK)  
96.8% of children feel safe or quite safe in the area where they live  
(Youth Survey 2013)

#### CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

1 in 10 children may have a mental health problem (2013 UK figs)  
25% of young people are unhappy or worried, 400 children are bullied most or  
everyday (Youth Survey 2013)  
In 2013, children were present at over 50% of reported domestic violence  
incidents.  
In 2013, 34 children were reported as repeatedly missing from home  
There are approx. 413 young people (16-24 year olds) not in education,  
employment or training (NEET) (July 2014)  
There were 412 referrals to the Youth Justice team, 11.5 % reoffended in 2013/14  
There are an estimated 304 young carers  
1 young person a week becomes estranged from their parents  
20% of children have identified Special Educational Needs  
1 in 5 children are overweight or obese when they reach reception class  
3 out of 10 children experience poor dental health (IOM Oral Health report, 2013)

#### CHILDREN WITH COMPLEX NEEDS, REQUIRING STATUTORY INTERVENTION

89 (5/1000) children are Looked After  
34 (2/1000) children are subject to a Child  
Protection Plan  
In 2013-14 there were 195 children with  
disabilities accessing Special Unit provision in  
schools  
There are 5 'off island' placements where highly  
specialist services are required  
(2013 /14)

Further details on these  
figures can be obtained  
from the Children's  
Services Partnership

## Our Priorities 2015 -20

### Priority 1

**Nurturing children and young people's healthy development, aspirations and achievement .**



#### **What a good outcome looks like:**

- a. Children with identified additional and complex needs receive an appropriate and timely service.
- b. Children are not overweight or obese on entry to reception class
- c. Children and young people who have special educational needs or leaving care are supported to participate in Education, Employment or Training.
- d. Parents know where to seek advice and support, and report their identified needs have been met.
- e. Children and young people are ready for school and achieving well.
- f. Young people aspire to enter meaningful paid employment when they complete education and training.

#### **Why is this priority important?**

Every child and young person deserves to be supported to achieve their ambitions and contribute to society and realise their potential especially those that may face difficulties in reaching their expected developmental milestones and aspirations. Preventing delayed development early on in a child's life is more cost effective in the longer term and prevents any potential for widening of health inequalities, attainment and achievement gaps which have a bearing on longer term life chances for certain groups in society. Early intervention will provide children with the best life chances as issues and difficulties are identified. Every child and young person deserves to be supported to achieve their ambitions and contribute to society.



## **The story for our children and young people in 2015**

Most children and young people are nurtured, engaged, aspiring, achieving and keeping out of trouble. However for minorities of children and young people this is not happening and we need to focus on these groups of children. Reviews have informed us that there is room for improvement in, planning, commissioning and communication between agencies. There is currently limited dedicated spend on preventative services. There is a vibrant voluntary and community sector, which provides an opportunity to build strong communities.

### **Key Actions**

- a. Children and young people's developmental needs will be met through a developed multi agency, early intervention and preventative strategy
- b. Scope the requirements, and implement a comprehensive integrated service for children with disabilities (including fair access, eligibility criteria, system wide definitions and charging policy).
- c. A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment will be undertaken
- d. Ensure additional support is available for 16 – 18 year olds especially those leaving care and education including preparing them for entry into the workplace

## Our Priorities 2015 -20

### Priority 2

**Children and young people grow up resilient against adversity.**



#### **What a good outcome looks like:**

- a. Children and young people with identified need are supported when leaving care and education.
- b. Children and young people influence services which affect them.
- d. Children and young people develop skills for independent living. Children and young people know how to manage appropriate risk themselves and understand the potential consequences.
- e. Children and young people report that they feel safe.

#### **Why is this priority important?**

Early intervention is critical for better long term outcomes, and preventative work can be more effective than providing support at a late stage, which tend to involve reactive input once issues have reached crisis point. It is crucial that services are useful, realistic and appropriate, providing specialist help where expert intervention is required. It is important that services are joined up and closely aligned to avoid duplication and deliver efficient and effective targeted care that is easily accessible. It is not always easy to measure progress as it is not always predictable or linear so it is important to be realistic and aware that there will not always be quick fixes to complex issues and children will often move in and out of support services. Individual and collective resilience contributes to stronger, safer confident and empowered communities.

## **The story for our children and young people in 2015**

Children and young people can be vulnerable and often require specific and timely intervention in order to enable their families and the wider community to provide appropriate care and access to services. Children, young people and their families often do not get help early enough and to address this, future provision needs to be helpful, sensitive, proportionate, professional, flexible and joined up. Whilst 'resilience' is seen as a vital component for a strong community, further work is required to better understand how this needs to be addressed and measured in a meaningful way. Vulnerable children and young people will sometimes require additional support throughout critical stages of their life in order to maximise the opportunities available to them.

### **Key Actions**

- a. Strengthen all transition pathways by mapping the roles and responsibilities of all partner agencies and re-aligning resources to address gaps
- b. Explore and develop the concept and meaning of 'Resilience'

## Our Priorities 2015 -20

### Priority 3

**Children and young people grow up safe from harm and abuse.**



#### **What a good outcome looks like:**

- a. Children and young people report they are safe from neglect, abuse, violence and exploitation and feel cared for and can live without fear.
- b. Children and young people needing support and protection are supported early.
- c. Child protection services work in partnership with families and children through clear thresholds and levels of intervention.
- d. Children, young people and their families are well advised on the risks posed by the internet and social media

#### **Why is this priority important?**

Identifying risks and signs of harm and abuse effectively and quickly can ensure children and young people are not left in unsafe environments. Responding to risks and abuse effectively ensures children and young people feel safe and have confidence in the services supporting and protecting them.

Children and young people not able to live with their birth families need to feel supported throughout their time in care and afterwards to ensure they have access to the same opportunities and support that children have from their parents in general.

## **The story for our children and young people in 2015**

Audits of practice, inspection and data information indicates that overall services are responding to concerns about risk but that the investigation and risk analysis process could be more robust to strengthen the response to children at risk of abuse.

The rate of children subject of a plan and looked after has been brought below the benchmark rates of the UK, in the past year, but there is a significant overrepresentation of older children. This would indicate that some families lack resilience during the teenage years and services often respond too late. There is no statutory requirement for 'Leaving Care' services, and currently 16 and 17 year olds cannot be identified as 'homeless' which, compounds the lack of appropriate social housing.

### **Key Actions**

- a. Review and strengthen the investigative process with children (Achieving Best Evidence, ABE)
- b. Develop and implement a Leaving Care Strategy
- c. Develop a clear understanding of thresholds and levels of intervention, and clarify roles and responsibilities in multi-agency working (linked to an early intervention strategy)
- d. Analyse, incorporate and take action on the views of children and young people about their safety

## Our Priorities 2015 -20

### Priority 4

**Children and young people grow up to be engaged and contributing adults in a safe and supportive community.**



#### **What a good outcome looks like:**

- a. Children and young people not involved / active become engaged in positive activities.
- b. Children and young people engage in Education, Employment and Training.
- c. Children who are in a 'bad place', are supported through opportunities to turn their life around.
- d. More young people are making a positive contribution and recognised for their efforts.
- e. Barriers to participation are understood and removed.

#### **Why is this priority important?**

Different groups will potentially experience barriers to engagement and attention must be focussed to support them. Young people not positively engaged in the community are more likely to not achieve in school, become unemployed, have poor health and social well-being and get involved in adverse risk taking and involvement in anti-social behaviour and therefore require greater and more long-term support in the future.

## **The story for our children and young people in 2015**

The majority of children and young people grow up in an environment which has low crime rates, a supportive community with a positive reputation as somewhere safe to live. These children are more often actively engaged and subsequently have good quality of life and it is important to recognise that this needs to be maintained. We need an active, healthy population of young people who will grow into healthy adults and more opportunities for young people and those not in education, employment and training to be engaged and contribute. Ensuring young people feel safe in their community and those that need help have access to services and support that sort things out quickly and effectively.

### **Key Actions**

- a. Identify those that are not engaged or involved and listen to their needs and requirements
- b. Find out and understand children and young people's barriers to engagement
- c. Establish localised, tailored services for young people in the areas which they live

ANNEX

E



