



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE



Photo Credit: Ben Chattell



STRATEGY FOR SPORT & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

2023 - 2027 - SUMMARY DOCUMENT



INTRODUCTION

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity, 2023-2027. As an enthusiastic participant and avid follower of sport, I am looking forward to supporting and championing the University's efforts in this area

The opportunity to engage in sport and physical activity is such an important part of university life. As the strategy makes clear, our focus is on participation at all levels, while also ensuring that those who achieve excellence have the best possible support.

Involvement in physical activity and sports provides a much-needed release from the intense pressures that are associated with life at Cambridge. I firmly believe that these are inherently complementary pursuits, allowing participants to achieve a balance between their work commitments and their own personal wellbeing. Participation, at all levels, also helps to develop one of the most essential life skills that are essential for success at university and beyond, time management. I am continually amazed by the incredible academic success of some of our most committed and outstanding sportspeople, and hope that this offers inspiration and encouragement for all members of our community.

This strategy aims to enable and support the continued pursuit of physical activity and sport at Cambridge, for all, in the best possible facilities, and backed by the most dedicated of professional staff. I look forward to working with colleagues to help deliver these aims.

Bhaskar Vira
Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education/Chair of Sports Committee



STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Support
networks

Making friends
and reducing
loneliness

Student
Experience and
Lifelong
Association to
University

University
Brand

Student
Recruitment /
Widening
Participation

Mental Health

Physical activity can have a profound and positive impact on mental wellbeing. Being physically active can improve mood, decrease the chance of depression and anxiety and lead to a better and more balanced lifestyle.

Sport England

Sense of Belonging

The social or relational aspect of university life plays a key part in achieving a positive university experience, particularly to first-year students and those from non-traditional backgrounds

Scanlon, Leahy, Jenkinson & Powell, 2019

Attainment

Sports participants gained a higher percentage of 1st and 2i grades.

BUCS 2020

Undergraduate students who participated in University-level sport performed just as well academically, if not better, than the undergraduate population as a whole.

CU Sport 2018

Physical Health

If physical activity were a drug, we would refer to it as a miracle cure, due to the great many illnesses it can prevent and help treat.

UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines (2019)

Physical Activity and Sport

Employability

Graduates participating in university sport earned more than non-sports participants, sports volunteers earned a further premium.

BUCS 2020

Work/Life
Balance

Reduce
impact on
Health
Service

Workplace

Investing in the health of employees can also bring business benefits such as reduced sickness absence, increased loyalty and better staff retention.

Physical Activity in the Workplace Guidance (NICE)

Teamwork

Leadership and
Communication
Skills

Contribution to
Universities Civic
and Global
Agenda



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



ACTIVE STUDENTS

To work in partnership with the Colleges on delivering opportunities for students to participate in physical activity and sport.



SPORTS CLUBS SUPPORT

To support Sports Clubs and Societies in providing a first-class student sporting experience to members of the University and beyond.



PERFORMANCE SPORT

To further develop our specialist support for high performance athletes within the student, staff, and broader Cambridge communities.



ACTIVE STAFF

To work in partnership across the University to develop, deliver and promote opportunities for staff to participate in physical activity and sport; including volunteering.



FACILITIES, BUSINESS AND GROWTH

To deliver a high quality operations model for University sports facilities, serving students, staff and the wider community whilst expanding revenue streams to reinvest in staff, facilities and services.

ACROSS THE BREADTH OF THE STRATEGY

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

To continue to demonstrate our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion through our strategic priorities, policies, practices and projects.

Communication

To set clear communications goals, identifying key audiences, and mobilising multiple platforms to deliver key messages appropriately.

Development, Fundraising and Alumni Relations

The Sports Service and the Collegiate University will continue working closely with CUDAR and other potential funding partners to develop support for, and delivery of, the Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity.



Active Students

To work collaboratively across the Collegiate University to ensure students have access to physical activity opportunities to support their health and wellbeing.

- To develop physical activity and recreational sports programmes that promote physical and mental wellbeing and seek to remove barriers to participation.
- To develop a network of trained activity ambassadors/ advocates to welcome and encourage student participation at a college level and to deliver “on the door-step” activities.
- To increase the profile, range and availability of College competitions and leagues, ensuring the offering for student sport reflects with the current demographic of students.
- To create a network for Student Sport Officers across the Colleges to increase connectivity, provide information on University and local sports, physical activity and training opportunities and to share examples of best practice
- To provide information, templates and guidance to College Bursars, Tutors, and Wellbeing Teams to help them to ensure facilities and activities are safe and welcoming for all participants and that any instructors that are engaged to deliver activities in the Colleges are suitably trained and supported.
- To create easily accessible information on the Sports Service website and social media channels to help students and staff find information on sport and physical activity opportunities across Collegiate Cambridge and the City.

Our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion will be reflected in our approach to project delivery and communications.



Sports Club Support

To support Sports Clubs in providing a first-class student sporting experience to members of the University and beyond.

- Transfer ~30 Sporting Societies to join the existing 48 University Sports Clubs registering with the Sports Service on an annual basis. Continue to review and improve the Sports Club Registration process and support systems to support good governance, operational management and a positive student experience.
- Support Sports Clubs to create and implement development plans to ensure sustainability, growth and ongoing success.
- Collaborate with Sports Clubs and Colleges to increase the profile, range and availability of College competitions and leagues, ensuring the offering for student sport fits the current demographic of students.
- Ensure inclusivity and accessibility to University and College sport for all.
- Support Clubs with the delivery of outreach activities through a coordinated and meaningful approach that positively contributes to the University Widening Participation agenda and strategic ambitions.
- Provide training, guidance and support to all those involved in running University Sports Clubs, including student officers, staff, and volunteers.



Performance Sport

To further develop our specialist support services for high performance athletes within the student, staff, and wider Cambridge community.

Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS)

To retain our place on the scheme as an approved Talent Delivery Site and an accredited Institution for Dual Career. As TASS develops and expands to be the athlete support programme serving the top of the English talent pathway funded by Sport England, we may see our athlete cohort grow and will be prepared for this.

University of Cambridge Athlete Performance Programme (UCAPP)

- To explore how we can bring greater resources into funding the programme to expand its scope.
- To consider how the University might attract more high performance student athletes to Cambridge.
- To engage with key internal University partners on discussions around academic flexibility.

Performance Academy

To explore the option of creating an athlete performance programme for University Staff and Community Members. This would need to cover its own costs so fees would reflect this and/or other means of financial support sourced.

Service Partners

We have partners providing physiotherapy, psychology and nutrition services and are exploring possible further development of our performance sport services to offer physiological performance testing.



Active Staff

To work in partnership with University Departments, Faculties, Institutions, and Colleges to develop, deliver and promote opportunities for movement, physical activity, and sport across the workforce.

- Discuss with key internal University partners where sport and physical activity for staff should interact with the broader staff health and wellbeing agenda.
- Identify potential barriers to participation with staff groups, and explore strategies for overcoming these challenges.
- Provide individual staff with information and encouragement to get and stay active.
- Give Departments, Faculties, Institutions, and Colleges a toolkit and training to create space, time and opportunity for their staff to move and be physically active during the working day.
- Build social networks through movement and physical activity initiatives across the University.
- Provide the opportunity for staff to try or re-engage with organised sport, and to become regular participants and/or volunteers.



Facilities, business opportunities and revenue growth

Deliver a high quality, cost effective and responsive operations model for University sports facilities to serve students, staff, and the wider community.

Expand Sports Service revenue streams to reinvest in sports facilities and services.

- To continue to work with the University, key partners, and alumni on the strategic development of the University's sporting estate, including recognition of the role that sport and physical activity should play in relation to the West Cambridge and North West Cambridge sites, potential South West developments, and the broader District Plan.
- To increase Sports Service income streams through innovation and partnership work whilst protecting access to student sport and physical activity.
- To promote defined core values for Sports Service staff, invest in their ongoing training and development, and monitor performance against key targets.
- To agree the parameters and responsibilities for funding and delivering facility maintenance and minor works projects with the University.
- To continue to develop the programme of audits (internal, University and external), accreditation and user feedback systems to ensure effective and appropriate quality assurance and compliance monitoring across functions and operational areas.



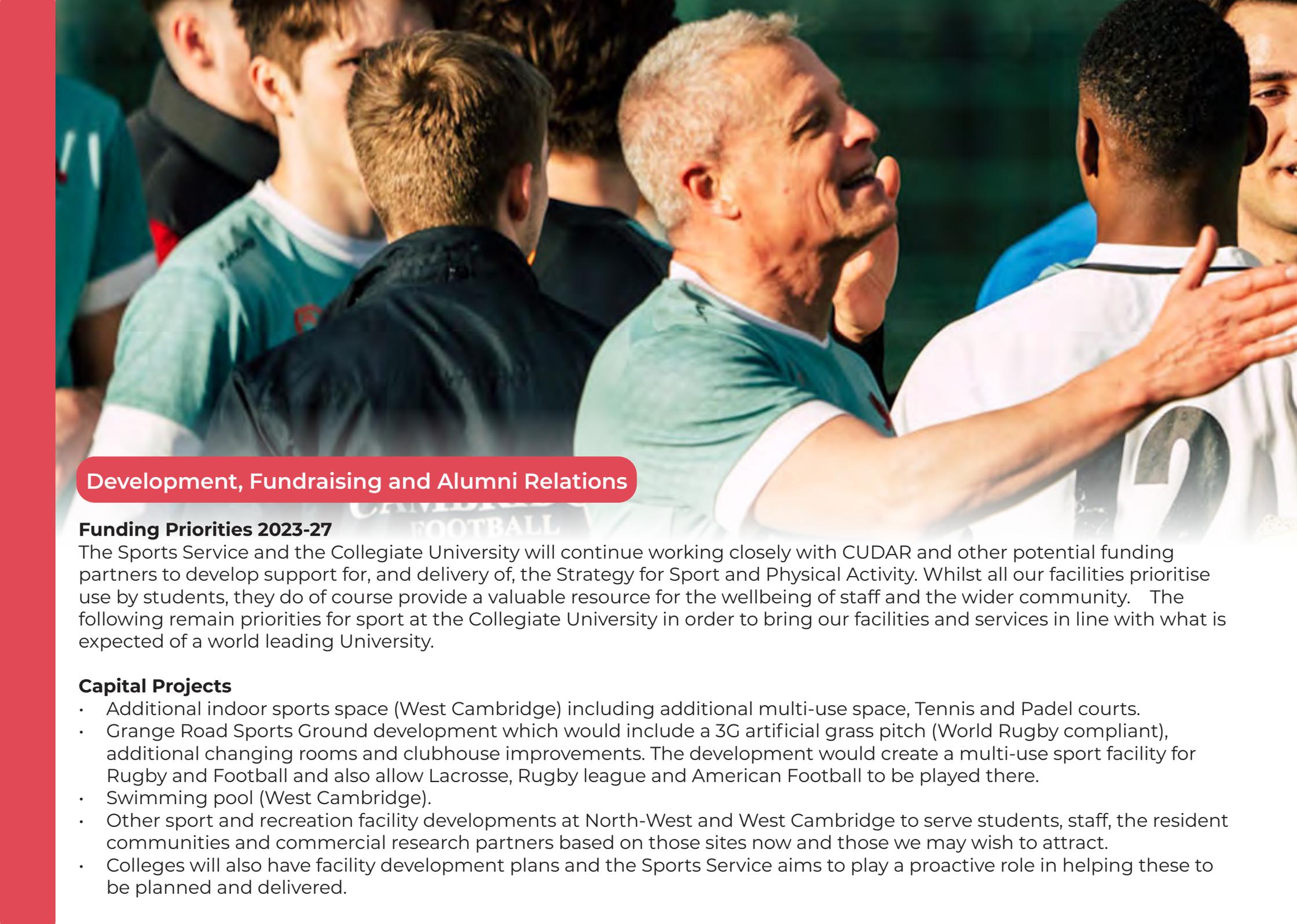
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

To work with key University and College partners to complete a detailed and honest assessment of the current position in relation to:

- Access to University, College and Club sports facilities and programmes.
- The experience of those using Sports facilities.
- The effectiveness of Sports Service staff recruitment and training processes.
- The experience of students within University and College Sports Clubs; and
- Barriers to participation in sport and physical activity (students and staff).

The Sports Service aims to use this information to inform:

- Future facility developments and services.
- The further development of Sports Club policies, procedures and training.
- Future recruitment and training approaches for Sports Service Staff.
- The development of new opportunities, in collaboration with key partners, that can help to remove barriers to participation for students and staff. This will include the identification of new income sources to help tackle financial barriers.
- The way in which the Sports Service and Sports Clubs can expand their contribution to the University's outreach activities in a coordinated way.
- How we engage and develop our community outreach programmes.
- How we promote and celebrate sport and physical activity across Collegiate Cambridge.



Development, Fundraising and Alumni Relations

Funding Priorities 2023-27

The Sports Service and the Collegiate University will continue working closely with CUDAR and other potential funding partners to develop support for, and delivery of, the Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity. Whilst all our facilities prioritise use by students, they do of course provide a valuable resource for the wellbeing of staff and the wider community. The following remain priorities for sport at the Collegiate University in order to bring our facilities and services in line with what is expected of a world leading University.

Capital Projects

- Additional indoor sports space (West Cambridge) including additional multi-use space, Tennis and Padel courts.
- Grange Road Sports Ground development which would include a 3G artificial grass pitch (World Rugby compliant), additional changing rooms and clubhouse improvements. The development would create a multi-use sport facility for Rugby and Football and also allow Lacrosse, Rugby league and American Football to be played there.
- Swimming pool (West Cambridge).
- Other sport and recreation facility developments at North-West and West Cambridge to serve students, staff, the resident communities and commercial research partners based on those sites now and those we may wish to attract.
- Colleges will also have facility development plans and the Sports Service aims to play a proactive role in helping these to be planned and delivered.



Support for Collegiate University Sport and Physical Activity

- Create, and keep updated, facility development and feasibility plans that align with the Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity and the University's wider strategic development ambitions.
- Develop a collegiate approach to promoting the benefits of, and exploring funding for, sport and physical activity to support student wellbeing and mental health. This might include philanthropic donations, accessing grants and resources available through public bodies and charities, and sponsorship opportunities.
- Develop a consistent and accessible funding support system across Colleges for individual students wishing to access physical activity and sporting opportunities.
- Raise funds for a University, centrally managed Club Support Fund to help Clubs to deliver key priorities, including high quality training and competition opportunities and support.
- Establish a University Sports Fund to support philanthropic giving (and other donations) to sport.
- Attract further funding for the University of Cambridge Athlete Performance Programme to ensure sustainability.



Communications

To set clear communications goals, identifying key audiences and using appropriate platforms to deliver key messages effectively.

- Be advocates/ambassadors for the benefits that sport and activity can have on physical, mental and emotional health.
- Demonstrate that Cambridge takes and supports sport seriously to attract and develop prospective students who are also talented athletes.
- Promote facilities and membership to key audiences to generate a commercial return to reinvest in sports facilities and support for Sports Clubs.
- Collaborate with partners both internally and externally to share and promote sport, health and fitness news, initiatives, and successes from across Collegiate Cambridge to external audiences, contributing to central University goals to widen access to Cambridge.
- Work closely with CUDAR, delivering content for alumni engagement that helps develop lifelong relationships with University sport.
- To explore the development of a virtual, multi-disciplinary research hub for sport and physical activity that celebrates the academic work that is already taking place across Cambridge in this field.
- Engage further resources to assist delivery in this area of work, such as additional members of staff.

MEASURING AND REPORTING IMPACT

The Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity 2023- 27 details our ambitions for the Collegiate University as a whole. We aim to create the conditions for greater collaboration around sport and physical activity so that we can deliver activities at our dedicated University sports facilities as well as on the doorstep in Colleges and across University sites.

The Sports Committee, Colleges Working Group and Sports Service have mapped out a 5-year delivery plan which focuses in key priority areas, but also recognises the need to ensure that the appropriate infrastructure is in place to support delivery. A more detailed annual implementation plan for each theme will be developed with delivery monitored by Sports Committee. Regular updates will also be provided to the University Council, General Board, University Joint Wellbeing Committee, Human Resources Committee and Colleges Working Group.

The delivery plans focus on:

1. Ensuring that sufficient funding is in place to support delivery and that investment is targeted effectively to provide varied opportunities to get active, encourage innovation and partnership work, reduce barriers and seek long term sustainability.
2. Suitable governance arrangements being in place to deliver positive, effective and safe opportunities at all levels.
3. Recognising the importance of investing in people (staff and volunteers) to deliver all activities appropriately and to advocate for physical activity at local level.
4. Integrating the collection of high-quality data, insight and learning, and applying it to ensure a shared understanding of the opportunities and the challenges that the Collegiate University face.

We will continue to capture information on the impact of Sports Service programmes and initiatives. We will also aim to assess the the impact of interventions and partnership work delivered at the more local level to build a community picture of sport and physical activity. This will show whether or not the collective action we take is having the impact we desire: to remove barriers to participation, increase the levels of activity across the Collegiate University, and support the mental and physical wellbeing of our students.. It will also help us to be more agile and effective as we continue to shape annual delivery plans throughout the strategic period.



Nick Brooking
Director of Sport



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We will work in partnership with internal and external stakeholders to deliver positive, varied and inclusive opportunities for students, staff, and the community to access sport and physical activity.

We will provide a supportive environment that focuses on the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of participants regardless of whether they are new to exercise, train regularly or are striving for international success.

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