



# DESIGNING FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

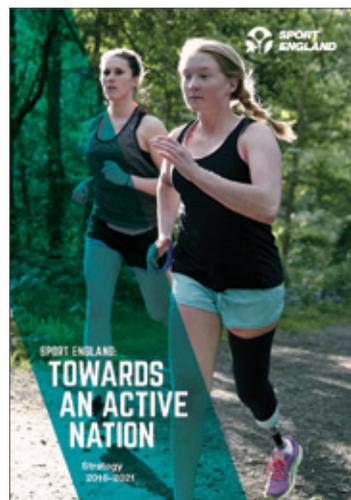
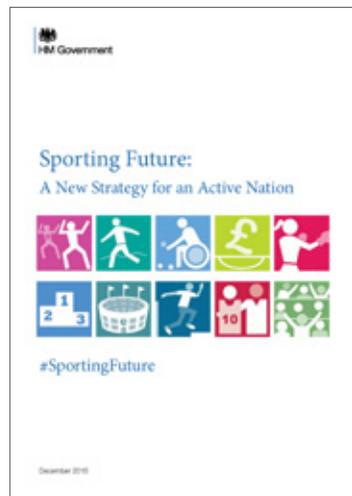


EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES TO ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

## ROUTES AND WAYFINDING



The Government's 'Sporting Future' strategy was published in December 2015 with a clear focus on the benefits that sport can bring to people and to society, built around a simple set of outcomes: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and economic development.



Sport England's strategy 'Towards an Active Nation' was published in May 2016 with a vision that everyone, regardless of age, background or level of ability, can engage in physical activity.

## FOREWORD

**THE CREATION OF EASILY ACCESSIBLE SPACES THAT INSPIRE AND ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO BE MORE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE AS PART OF THEIR EVERYDAY LIVES IS A CENTRAL CONSIDERATION**

“ *Creating more opportunities to be physically active means thinking about many prompts and cues that enable positive changes in our behaviour. An active environment is one which responds to community needs and aspirations and provides the conditions and opportunities for people to be more active in their everyday lives. Active environments require a more coordinated and holistic approach to the design and operation of our surroundings from streets, neighbourhoods and public open spaces to the policies, standards and planning of the infrastructure of where we live and work.* ”

**Charles Johnston**

Executive Director of Property, Sport England

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*SEE OTHER GUIDANCE ON DESIGNING FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY COVERING:*

- *ACTIVITY HUBS*
- *BUDGET COSTS*
- *COVERED OUTDOOR SPACES*
- *INDOOR SPACES*
- *OUTDOOR SPACES*
- *OTHER TOPICS*

*THESE AND THE ASSOCIATED ACTIVE DESIGN GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND CASE STUDIES ARE AVAILABLE AT:*

<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/active-design/>

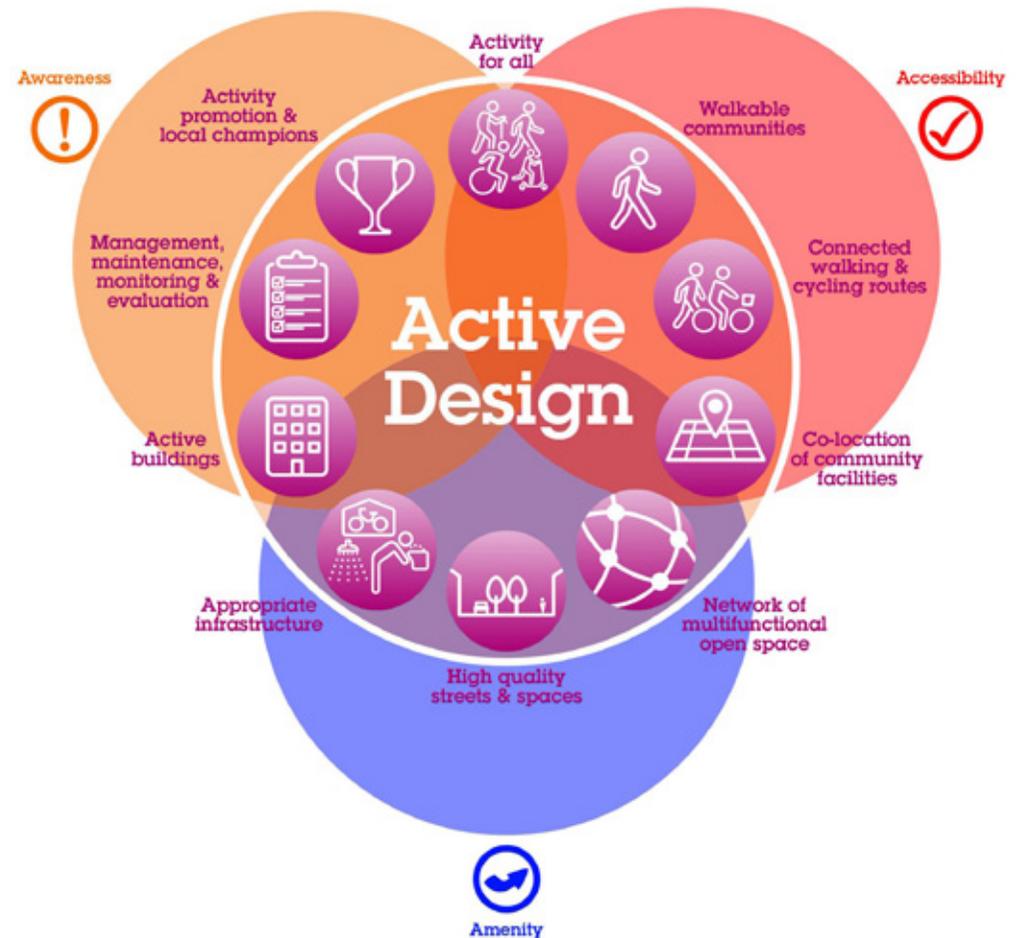
# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## ACTIVE DESIGN

*ACTIVE DESIGN IS ROOTED IN SPORT ENGLAND'S AIMS AND OBJECTIVES TO PROMOTE THE ROLE OF SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN CREATING HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES.*

*ACTIVE DESIGN IS SUPPORTED BY PUBLIC HEALTH ENGLAND AND IS PART OF OUR COLLABORATIVE ACTION TO PROMOTE THE PRINCIPLES SET OUT IN PUBLIC HEALTH ENGLAND'S 'EVERYBODY ACTIVE, EVERY DAY', TO CREATE ACTIVE ENVIRONMENTS THAT MAKE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY THE EASIEST AND MOST PRACTICAL OPTION IN EVERYDAY LIFE.*

<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/active-design/>



The ten principles of Active Design - achieving as many of these as possible within an Active Environment will optimise opportunities for active and healthy lifestyles

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT

The term 'physical activity' can cover a wide range of informal, casual and recreational pursuits that maintain or enhance fitness, health and overall wellbeing. The term 'sport' is usually associated with more formal training or competition.

For all parts of the spectrum, easily accessed spaces that inspire and enable people of all ages to be physically active as they wish are a valuable community asset. Innovative approaches are advocated that remove barriers to participation and are proportionate and appropriate to customer needs.

Where there is a clear need for formal sports spaces, then the relevant prevailing guidance from national governing bodies of sport (NGBs), Sport England, Department for Education or Education Funding Agency should be followed. However, a distinction should be made between the formal requirements of spaces for sport and more informal spaces for physical activity, albeit that the underlying principles of any relevant prevailing guidance should not be disregarded.

Local context, potential users and site specific risk assessments are all important considerations during the design and briefing stages of a project. For further advice on good practice, visit the Sport England, The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) websites.

## ROUTES AND WAYFINDING OVERVIEW

### CONNECTIVITY

Routes and wayfinding, whether in urban, suburban or rural areas will be important for many people and organisations. Individuals or groups might already walk, cycle or run along existing roads, pathways and tracks and be conscious of their overall value. Landowners, parish councils or local authorities might play a part in the management and maintenance of local networks and be interested in levels of use and overall sustainability. More generally, people are likely to perceive a network of routes that join up destinations as positive features in the areas in which they live and encourage a healthy and active lifestyle.

### GETTING PEOPLE ACTIVE

The development of a 'connected' approach that links key spaces, features and facilities in a locality can have obvious benefits. Routes and wayfinding signage that are well considered with appropriate branded information on distances and timings can increase people's awareness and enjoyment of their local neighbourhood. These interventions can also help develop a distinctive local identity and sense of place, and encourage people to be physically active.

In places with well-connected streets and footpath networks, people are:

- 12% more likely to walk and 20% more likely to cycle
- Three times more likely to walk for over an hour each week

### CONSULTATION

A consultation and mapping process can help communities review the existing pattern of provision and make choices about new projects. Small cost-effective adaptations might make a significant improvement to a particular neighbourhood or a larger project might open up a potential that had previously been overlooked. It might be that a new section of footpath, cycle route or jogging trail will avoid a conflict with a busy road or an alternative route will be more attractive and give views of an inspiring section of a town or local landscape.

***ROUTES AND WAYFINDING IS AN OVERALL DESCRIPTION FOR A VARIETY OF WAYS THAT PLACES CAN BE MORE CONNECTED. SOMETIMES PATHS, TRACKS, STREETS AND THE OPEN SPACE BETWEEN THEM ARE CONSIDERED IN ISOLATION. THIS DOCUMENT EXPLORES THE BENEFITS OF TAKING A MORE HOLISTIC VIEW AND HOW THESE IMPORTANT ELEMENTS CAN COMBINE TO CREATE AN OBVIOUS NETWORK OF SPACES THAT ENCOURAGE AND SUSTAIN MORE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.***

### **BRANDED ROUTES LINKING KEY LANDMARKS OR DESTINATIONS:**

To encourage walkers, cyclists and wheelchair users and be linked to personal fitness targets



# 2.0 CONSIDERATIONS

## GENERAL

A series of markers or locational indicators can influence the way people move around their local neighbourhoods and encourage physical activities such as walking, jogging or cycling. Over and above the obvious need to get from A to B without risk, confusion or danger, opportunities exist for local routes and wayfinding to enhance peoples quality of life and appreciation of their neighbourhoods.

Some people may be fortunate enough to possess a spatial awareness that enables them to negotiate and remember new routes easily, but most benefit from sensory reminders for guidance and reassurance.

Within a local environment, roads and streets are usually named and have directional signs usually located at highway junctions for the primary benefit of vehicle drivers. There are often diverse networks of footpaths, bridleways and byways along which people may wish to travel to school, work or shops to be physically active. All routes should be pleasant to use, clearly defined, physically navigable and provide a feeling of safety throughout the journey.

Signage indicating times, distances, steps or calorie markers for a particular walk or cycle ride can give encouragement and confidence to users and generally enhance the experience.

## Consultation

A typical consultation process would include:

- Consult By survey, evening open meetings or workshops, focussed discussions with key individuals, specific groups or organisations
- Collate Take all feedback, views and comments into account
- Analyse Review all the feedback and identify trends, reoccurring themes
- Prioritise Without leaving anything out, list the findings in priority order
- Confirm Share the findings of the process with the community for their understanding and agreement



**At the planning stage, it is important to consider how people will move around an area and external links to wider networks**



**To encourage use, ensure that local people are engaged in the development of route and wayfinding initiatives**

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

Joining together local networks will create a far more interesting and diverse strategic network and new developments should aim to be as 'connected' as possible. Careful strategic thinking is needed to determine the location and type of new routes and the way existing routes might be enhanced and managed.

## ANALYSIS AND CONSULTATION

Much will depend on the particular situation and it is important to understand the physical activities that already take place and the potential for further enhancement and development. A wide community consultation process is recommended across the agencies and stakeholders that may be involved, together with an appropriate level of analysis.

Key success factors may include:

- The availability, legibility and accessibility of information and interpretation (signage, waymarking and audio, visual and digital technologies)
- Identifying specific local needs that can be met using established and proven design solutions. For example:
  - 'Wayfinding guidance' - Ramblers Association
  - 'Waymarking public rights of way' - Natural England
  - 'A guide to controlling access to paths' - Sustrans
- Practical support for local initiatives aimed at extending the local trails network and forging links with regional initiatives and programmes.

## TYPES OF ROUTE

It is possible to categorise routes in a number of ways, but they are often multi-purpose. They can be:

- Direct routes to specific destinations such as school, workplace, shop and recreational facilities
- Local neighbourhood footpaths, lanes or streets
- Dedicated cycle routes
- Fully-accessible routes
- Connecting routes between separate communities
- Links between designated green spaces
- Green corridors designed for the benefit of wildlife
- Themed routes and trails around wildlife and nature sites
- Routes around heritage, educational, orienteering and tourism sites
- Dedicated activity routes and trails for health and well-being initiatives, with time and distance markings.

## PROMOTION

Some routes may be promoted by local volunteers and organisations for walking, health or recreation. These might include rambling and well-being groups who explore heritage landmarks or merely plan excursions along the public rights of way network which may take them beyond the confines of town or village. Routes or local interest trails may be supported electronically with the use of mobile apps or digital symbols and triggers.

## HOW PEOPLE USE ROUTES

People can use routes for a wide range of activities, such as:

- To get to routine destinations directly and as efficiently as possible (which may involve part of the journey on public transport)
- Strolls for relaxation (at a lunchtime or in the evening)
- As a connection from home to parks, play areas or recreational facilities to undertake a range of specific leisure, exercise or sport activities
- Safe and navigable travel for those with a range of disabilities, which may involve wheelchairs or other mobility aids
- For exploration and education, following local heritage.

	Walking for leisure %	Walking for travel %	Cycling for leisure %	Cycling for travel %
Inactive	5.0	3.7	0.5	0.2
Fairly active	11.7	11.3	5.0	4.3
Active	83.4	85.0	94.5	95.5
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Active Lives Adult Survey May 17/18 Report data extracts for those participating in walking and cycling

### SEE NATURAL ENGLAND PUBLICATION: 'WAYMARKING PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY'

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/414626/waymarking-rights-of-way.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414626/waymarking-rights-of-way.pdf)

- Recommended colour categories and direction system
- Need to contact the Highway Authority for details of public rights of ways
- Need to contact landowners for agreement of 'permissive' paths
- Consultation with land occupiers and parish councils

*IT IS POSSIBLE TO WALK, CYCLE OR JOG ALMOST ANYWHERE ... BUT NOT EVERYONE FEELS COMFORTABLE WITH THE IDEA.*

*WAYMARKING A ROUTE IS A SIMPLE, COST-EFFECTIVE METHOD TO ENCOURAGE USE AND HELP OVERCOME BARRIERS.*



# 3.0 KEY FEATURES<sup>1</sup>

## DEFINING ROUTES

The term waymarking is often used for directional objects or signs along a public right of way. They can include signposting which usually show where a right of way departs from a road and indicates the initial direction of the route. Waymarking enables users to follow a route accurately and confidently at points where they might otherwise have difficulty. Waymarking benefits not only public right of way users through increased enjoyment of an area, but also landowners by reducing unintentional trespass, particularly in country locations.

Natural England recommend the use of a small coloured directional arrow of standard design (see page 13 for further information) in association with other promotional information signs. In urban and suburban areas, other marking systems may be appropriate that can include painted markings on surfaces, dedicated signage, and specific design features. These may also be supplemented by digital systems.

## SEATING, SIGNS AND SEGREGATION

Providing a series of visual reminder signs of the route destinations can enhance the user experience, create a sense of connection, and a reason for returning. Trails along disused railway lines, canal towpaths, public footpaths and cycle routes can all provide a degree of segregation from motor vehicles. Such green routes can also provide links and corridors for the shared benefit of people and wildlife that should be managed well for both whilst making them accessible, safe and well maintained.

Consideration should be given to providing locations to sit down or spaces for family and friends to socialise or for a variety of user groups to interact including dog walkers or people exploring on their own.

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<sup>1</sup> See also Sport England's 'Active Design' document, Section 3 Connected walking & cycling routes: Pointers to best practice (p22) at: <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/active-design/>



**Routes that are well used can encourage social interaction and increase the feeling of safety**



**Typical directional post with standard direction sign**



**Distance marker along segregated pedestrian route**

## ESTABLISHING SAFER ROUTES

It is important that routes are safe and form part of the strategic planning and design process, so that 'getting there' is just as comfortable as the destination itself. Ideas to make a route safer include:

- Adequate levels of lighting and unobstructed visibility:  
To assist in navigation and a feeling of security
- Aids to navigation:  
Street names, named routes and trails, distinct markings, use of simple and unambiguous signage and visible focal points to reassure users along their journeys
- Delineation of routes for pedestrians and cyclists:  
Either segregated or shared, to reduce conflict with motor vehicles
- Measures to reduce the impact of motor vehicles:  
Parking and speed restrictions in pedestrian areas that can all be policed
- Public information, guidance and promotion:  
Through media, public venues, health centres, schools and local shops
- Suitable accessible safety barriers:  
Allow access of all physical activity users but with suitable control for livestock and inappropriate vehicular traffic
- Suitable paving definition:  
Contrast, texture, colour and pattern as well as small changes in level.



**Routes do not have to be precisely defined - any access through open space will often be an important route for someone**



**Route development should recognise the need for a range of potential uses**



**Information panel for a measured walk to the end of a pier and back**



**Specially-designed routes can incorporate competitive sport such as orienteering**

## USE OF LANDMARKS

Landmarks can be helpful for people to find their way around confidently. They also create a means in which people can identify with their surroundings and give reassurance that they are in familiar territory, therefore enhancing perceptions of security.

Landmarks come in many forms and are often determined by their local significance. Less significant landmarks such as pubs, post boxes or trees can also be important components to navigate from at a local scale.

The very nature of routes and trails is that they are created to connect two, or often many, places. However, they rarely follow straight lines and meander along streets or through spaces, determined by a number of influencing factors. Not everyone is comfortable with maps or written instructions, they may not be particularly aware, nor even confident with interpretive signage, therefore recognising landmarks provides an alternative means of connection.

Landmarks may include:

- Buildings such as schools, cafes, public houses, places of worship or corner shops
- Road junctions, entrances, gateways
- Street furniture, artwork or sculptural features
- Fences, railings and other contrasting boundary treatments
- Natural elements such as trees or soft landscape features, determined by colour, scale, texture or form.



**Well-lit community spaces can provide connections and meeting points that feel safe and secure**



**Placing furniture just off a route allows space for people to sit down in comfort as others pass by**



**High-quality robust seating and surface materials in a popular pedestrian and cycle-friendly space**



**Consider the location of signage as a method of breaking the route into reasonably even sections, in this case, located next to a bench providing an opportunity to rest**

## LIGHTING

Subject to local circumstances, the provision of safe and secure connections between home and key community spaces during darkness can be important. The following should be considered:

- Avoiding dimly-lit areas that can be associated with anti-social behaviour
- A variety of lighting types to create visual interest
- Lighting signage, waymarking and interpretation
- Floor-mounted and low-level lighting to add to the definition of routes for ease of navigation
- Well-lit meeting places, seating areas, gateways, access points and bus stops to encourage people to travel outside.

## FURNITURE

The design style of street furniture should be chosen to be complementary to the aesthetics of an open space, park landscape or streetscape. This is partly to avoid a 'clutter' of mixed styles that can often create a visual discord on routes and places and to help create a unity over the wider network.

It is important to provide seating along trails, connecting routes and along inclines where people may need to rest at intervals along their journey.

Litter bins should also be provided at regular intervals if there is a local policy for regular emptying and maintenance. Locations should be carefully designed close to seating areas, at junctions, crossing points and close to food outlets. Some people with health issues may need to drink or take specific nourishment at times and may only be able to carry packages or containers for short distances.

Provision of cycle stands, racks and secure storage is often neglected and should be part of a planned network. Strategic locations should be chosen for such equipment to encourage greater use. For example at health centres, visitor attractions, leisure and sports facilities, shops, cafes and other social venues. It is important that people can feel confident about the security of their cycles, whether for short or long stay visits.



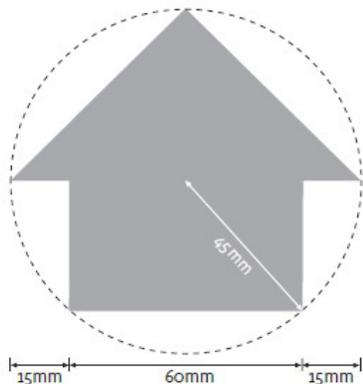
Wayfinding can be designed to be elegant and locally distinctive as well as functional



Directional signs that link pathways and green spaces

	<b>Footpaths</b> Yellow BS 08 E 51
	<b>Bridleways</b> Blue BS 20 E 51
	<b>Restricted byways</b> plum BS 02 C 39
	<b>Byways open to all traffic</b> Red BS 06 E 55 (approximate)

Standard colour code for footpaths, bridleways and categories of byways



Standard directional sign dimensions recommended by Natural England

## SIGNAGE

The waymarking of streets, connecting routes, trails and directional signs should be clear, unambiguous and enable people to move about with confidence and reassurance. The inclusion of distance posts, symbols, coloured or themed markers, and cultural elements can all help with reassurance if strategically located at junctions. They can also help people get more enjoyment from their surroundings and be more active.

Clarity, legibility and accessibility are three key criteria for creating useful signage. Text should be simple, direct and informative and be easy to read with good colour contrast.

Themed routes and trail markings can help to encourage exploration. Local connections, culture, tradition, heritage and wildlife can all stimulate people to move through and beyond their immediate neighbourhood into new areas. The interpretation of such routes and trails is important to add a greater depth of interest and understanding, whilst enhancing the quality of the experience and personal development.

The design of such interpretation can gain great value through the engagement of the local community in the development process. Creative workshops targeted at young people, people with disabilities, the elderly and under-represented groups can prove to be a successful means of engagement. People are encouraged to explore the context of their local environment that can provide great stimulus to education, confidence and social cohesion.

**SEE SPORT ENGLAND DESIGN GUIDANCE NOTE 'WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE FOR SPORTS FACILITIES'**

<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/other-design-guidance/>

**THE DESIGN OF ROUTES SHOULD BE INTEGRATED WITH THE APPROACHES AND ENTRANCES TO OTHER COMMUNITY BUILDINGS**





**Design should consider the economic requirements of maintenance, in this case, cleaning hard surfaces**



**Robust waymarking sign at the junction of a footpath and byway**



**Animal grid and accessible gate incorporated in segregated entrance to shared cycle route and footpath**



**Parks can provide flexibility for a range of physical activity group events**

## MAINTENANCE

Routes in urban areas will tend to have bound surfacing, such as asphalt concrete or concrete block paving, whilst those that run through woodland or other green spaces will tend to be surfaced with un-bound materials such as local gravels, hoggin or limestone. These surfaces are more prone to erosion and, often being edged with narrow timber boards, will need inspecting and repairing on a more frequent basis.

The management of vegetation along the sides of the routes is equally important, as overgrown verges and hedges can reduce accessible widths and compromise user comfort.

Clear, accessible signage, wayfinding techniques and interpretation should always be sustained and not be neglected, damaged or become overgrown. A programme of inspection and reinstatement should be a priority, along with periodic review and renewal programmes to update styles, information and fully-accessible content.

## ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Close links between landowners, user groups, relevant public bodies and voluntary organisations are key to sustainability. Active partnership building should be the priority, bringing those vested organisations and experienced professionals together with enthusiastic and committed local people to manage and maintain routes and wayfinding.



## ALTERNATIVE LANGUAGES AND FORMATS:

This document can be provided in alternative languages, or alternative formats such as large print, braille, tape and on disk upon request. Call the sport england switchboard on 08458 508 508 for more details.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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## USER GUIDE:

Before using this design guidance note for any specific projects all users should refer to the User Guide to understand when and how to use the guidance as well as understanding the limitations of use.

Click here for **'User Guide'**

Click here for current **'Design and Cost Guidance'**

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## FURTHER INFORMATION:

To find out more about Sport England and to get the latest news and information about our various initiatives and programmes, please go to [www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)

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