



ISLE OF MAN STRATEGY FOR SPORT

2026 - 2036



Isle of Man
Government

Reiltys Ellan Vannin



FOREWORD

As Minister for Education, Sport and Culture, I am delighted to introduce the Isle of Man Strategy for Sport 2026 – 2036. Building on the strong foundations of the last decade, this strategy aims to ensure we continue to enrich lives and strengthen communities through accessible opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity.

Sport on our Island has always been more than competition. It promotes health and wellbeing, builds confidence and creates lifelong opportunities. Over the past decade, we have seen its vital role not only in physical health but also in mental wellbeing, particularly for children and young people. Participation, inclusion and belonging can make a real difference, acting as both prevention and early intervention. This strategy recognises that value and sets out how sport and physical activity will continue to play that role in the years ahead.

Our vision is clear: opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity on the Isle of Man should be inclusive and accessible for all, from childhood through to later life. Whether it's a child learning to swim, a teenager gaining confidence through team sport, or an older adult staying active and connected, this strategy aims to provide opportunities for everyone.

Looking ahead to the 2029 International Island Games, we anticipate this to be a proud moment for the Isle of Man. The Games will bring people together, will showcase our Island and inspire the next generation. But the true legacy will be healthier lives, stronger participation across all ages, and facilities that serve our community well into the future.

Aligned with our Government's commitment to sustainability, this strategy prioritises the development of energy-efficient facilities and embraces environmental responsibility. In addition, by working closely with Public Health and other key partners, this strategy will also play a vital role in promoting health, wellbeing and inclusion across government.

Isle of Man Sport, Governing Bodies of Sport and key partners will play a central role in delivering this strategy. Together with the athletes, coaches, volunteers and supporters who make sport possible, we will ensure that sport and physical activity remain a valued and integral part of Island life.

Hon Daphne Caine MHK

Minister for the Department of Education,
Sport and Culture



INTRODUCTION

The Isle of Man Strategy for Sport 2026 - 2036 outlines the vision and direction for sport and physical activity over the next decade. This strategy is built around eight overarching themes, each supported by defined strategic priorities and key actions, which build upon the successes of the past ten years.

The Department of Education, Sport and Culture plays a pivotal role in delivering the ambitions of the Isle of Man Government's Island Plan, which sets out a vision for a secure, vibrant and sustainable future for our Island Nation. Through this strategy, Manx Sport and Recreation will contribute to that vision by providing accessible and inclusive opportunities in sport and physical activity for all, promoting an island of health, wellbeing and active lifestyles.

This strategy also reflects the priorities within the Department of Education, Sport and Culture's Department Plan, aligns with the Department of Health and Social Care's vision and supports the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture's Energy Strategy, alongside the wider Government Climate Change Plan. By creating opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity and focusing on event development from fun community festivals to internationally recognised competitions, this strategy supports the Visit Isle of Man strategic plan, "Our Island, Our Future", which aims to grow the Isle of Man's Visitor Economy through to 2032.

Aligning with these broader priorities of government, this strategy recognises that sport and physical activity are integral to health, education, environmental sustainability and economic development, whilst helping to strengthen community identity and wellbeing.

The 2029 International Island Games is the flagship event of this strategy and the driving force for development and progress. Hosting the International Island Games will drive major investment at the National Sports Centre which will provide modern, accessible and inclusive facilities that meet international standards and deliver long-lasting community benefits. The legacy will not be limited to infrastructure. Thousands of visitors will travel to the Isle of Man to compete, spectate and volunteer, therefore boosting the local economy and showcasing the Island on a global stage. Hosting the International Island Games 2029 will inspire children and young people in our community to engage in grassroots sport, stay active and aspire to take part in future Island Games, Commonwealth Games and even Olympic Games.

This strategy will be implemented with a strong commitment to environmental responsibility. Solar panels, air source heat pumps and energy-efficient systems will be installed across key facilities, while waste reduction and recycling initiatives will ensure that the Island contributes to the Government's climate change targets. An aspiration to deliver the greenest International Island Games to date, will demonstrate leadership in climate responsibility and create facilities that operate more efficiently for years to come.

This strategy highlights the importance of improving health and wellbeing, recognising that regular physical activity reduces chronic illness, strengthens mental health and improves quality of life. Working alongside Manx Care and the Department of Health and Social Care, Manx Sport and Recreation is committed to delivering accessible programmes that contribute directly to their aim of keeping people healthier for longer and reducing pressure on hospital services. Dedicated programmes will support children and young people referred through the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, provide pathways for older adults to remain active and offer opportunities for people with disabilities and long-term health conditions to increase their levels of physical activity.

By providing our whole population with opportunities to be physically active and lead a healthier lifestyle, this strategy delivers against the 3 core priorities of the Public Health Strategy 2025 – 2030; Healthier Lives Together:

- Starting and Learning Well
- Living and Working Well
- Staying Healthier for Longer

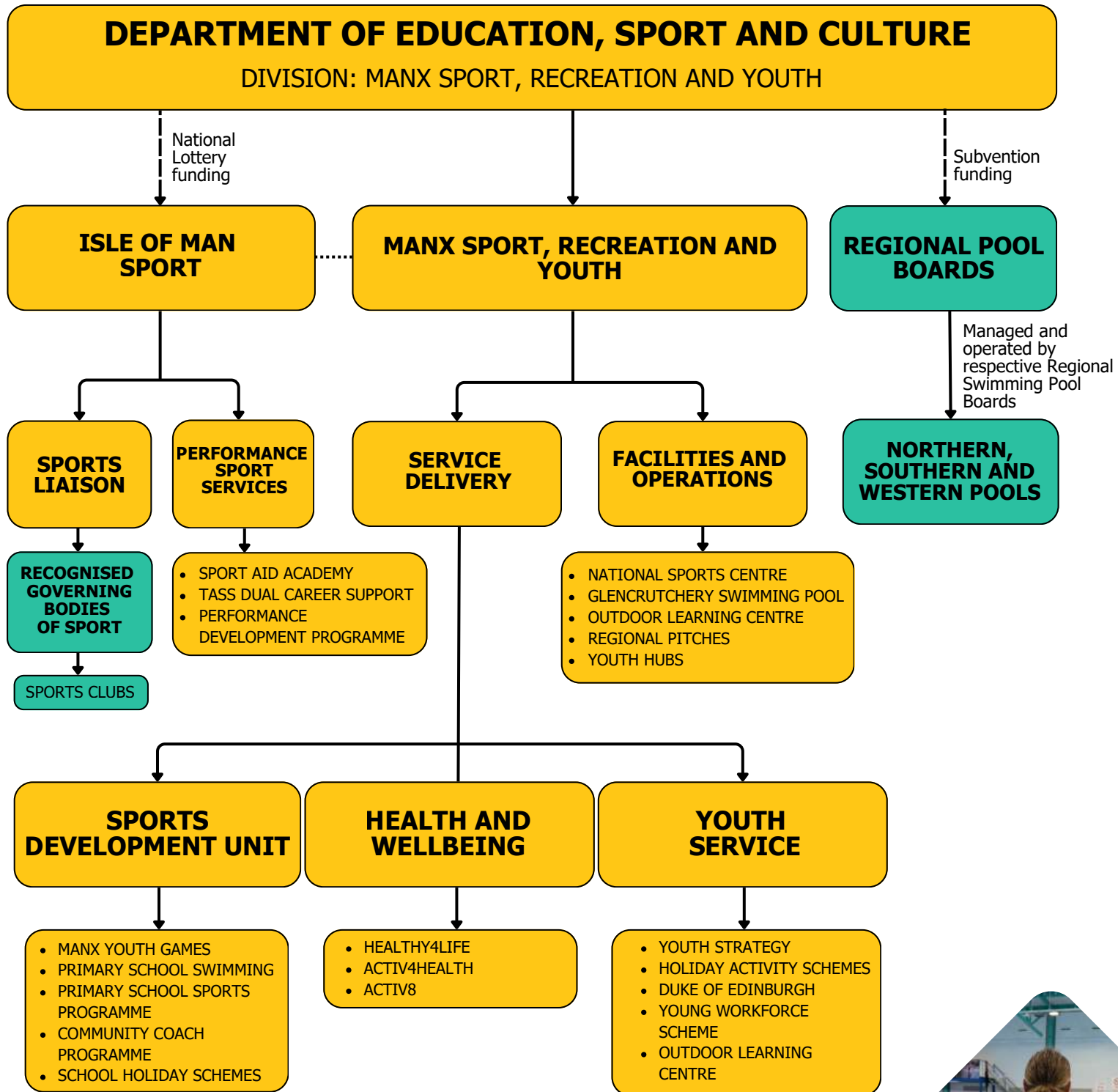
As a key partner, Isle of Man Sport act as an independent forum for the promotion and development of sports and physical activity opportunities on the Island, providing advice and expertise to the Department and working with our Island's Governing Bodies of Sport. Throughout the lifespan of this strategy, Isle of Man Sport and other key partners will play a major role in the delivery of various strategic priorities and key activities.

The overarching themes of this strategy set clear direction, supporting participation for all, developing sustainable facilities, strengthening skills, improving governance, embracing technology and supporting athlete pathways. The development of community engagement and social inclusion will make sure no one is left behind.

Over the lifespan of this strategy, the Isle of Man will be recognised not only as the birthplace of the International Island Games, but as a nation that has used sport and physical activity to improve health, protect the environment, grow its economy and inspire its people.

The 2029 International Island Games will stand as a milestone in this journey, but its legacy will be reflected in stronger communities, healthier lives and facilities that serve generations long after the final medal has been awarded.

ORGANISATIONAL CHART



Key

 Associations operating independently of DESC



KEY STRATEGIC THEMES



1. HOST THE 2029 INTERNATIONAL ISLAND GAMES

2. PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR ALL

3. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

4. SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

5. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABLE RESPONSIBILITY

6. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND GOVERNANCE

7. SPORTING PATHWAYS FROM GRASS ROOTS TO ELITE

8. DIGITALISATION AND SERVICE INNOVATION





1.

HOST THE 2029 INTERNATIONAL ISLAND GAMES

Deliver a world class international sports event which showcases the Island's sporting infrastructure and biosphere to inspire a generation to engage in sport, creating lifelong memories for those that compete, coach, spectate, volunteer and visit.



INTERNATIONAL
ISLAND GAMES
ASSOCIATION





1.1 REFURBISH AND ENHANCE THE NATIONAL SPORTS CENTRE

- 1.1.1 Seek capital funding to enhance the National Sports Centre outdoor facility portfolio, ensuring that international standards for certification are met.

1.2 VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND RETENTION

- 1.2.1 Deliver bespoke 'Games Makers' training to ensure all athletes, officials, volunteers and spectators enjoy a high-quality Manx experience.
- 1.2.2 Attract and retain new volunteers who continue to contribute to sport across the Island long after the International Island Games have been delivered.

1.3 TEAM PREPARATION AND LEGACY BUILDING

- 1.3.1 Identify and provide funding to support International Island Games sports in preparing for the event.
- 1.3.2 Capture and share the knowledge, best practices, and positive experiences gained through hosting and participating in the International Island Games.
- 1.3.3 Deliver the International Island Games at a time which maximises the number of local children and young people that can watch and experience the event.

1.4 EDUCATION AND CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

- 1.4.1 Work with local schools to partner them with an Island that will be visiting the Isle of Man to take part in the International Island Games to foster cultural awareness and exchange.
- 1.4.2 Deliver Mini-International Island Games festivals with local schools.

1.5 ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESSION

- 1.5.1 Work with Governing Bodies of Sport to identify and support athletes with potential to progress into high-performance sport.





2.

PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR ALL

Provide opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity for all, promoting lifelong participation to develop an active and healthy population.

2.1 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION

- 2.1.1 Provide accessible opportunities for all young people to take part in sport and physical activity in term time and during each school holiday period.
- 2.1.2 Deliver accessible and varied exercise classes tailored to the needs of the Island's adult population.
- 2.1.3 Develop, expand and deliver the Learn to Swim programme.
- 2.1.4 Work with recognised Governing Bodies of Sport ensuring Isle of Man Sport funding is used to deliver against agreed Priorities and Objectives to increase participation in sport across all levels.



2.2 EARLY ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING

- 2.2.1 Contribute to the delivery of the Public Health Strategy through a programme of accessible sport and physical activity opportunities for all young people to start and learn well within Primary Schools and the wider community.
- 2.2.2 Provide a programme of tailored sport and physical activity opportunities for young people with disabilities and/or those who attend Specialist Provision Centres.
- 2.2.3 Collaborate with key stakeholders to deliver an equitable programme of Primary School swimming lessons to all Key Stage 2 pupils and those pupils attending Specialist Provision Centres, ensuring progression in aquatic skills.
- 2.2.4 Monitor and review Primary School Swimming to ensure that the programme effectively supports pupils in achieving the Swim England Award 6 standard.
- 2.2.5 Work with key stakeholders to deliver sporting events for all young people.

2.3 RESEARCH, DATA AND FEEDBACK

- 2.3.1 Facilitate and share targeted research, surveys and data collection across the organisation including a Sports Participation Survey to assess levels of physical activity among young people and "Your Sport Reviews" delivered in conjunction with Governing Bodies of Sport, promoting healthy, active lifestyles for all and shaping future programme developments.
- 2.3.2 Gather feedback from service users and stakeholders to help shape and improve future programme development.

2.4 TARGETED INITIATIVES

- 2.4.1 Work with Public Health Isle of Man and other key partners to provide targeted initiatives in sport and physical activity aimed at supporting healthy ageing.
- 2.4.2 Provide accessible sport and physical activity opportunities for Looked After Children and Young Carers.
- 2.4.3 Support targeted delivery of sport and physical activity programmes at the Outdoor Learning Centre for young people facing socio-economic challenges.
- 2.4.4 Contribute to the delivery of inclusive sport and physical activity opportunities within the Youth Strategy.
- 2.4.5 Work with Isle of Man Sport to support Governing Bodies of Sport to provide opportunities for under-represented groups within our community to participate in sport and physical activity.





3.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Use sport and physical activity to provide a range of inclusive and accessible opportunities that empower individuals to make healthier lifestyle choices, improving physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing.



ACTIV8 
EMPOWERING WELLNESS, INSPIRING CHANGE


ACTIV4HEALTH





3.1 POLICY INTEGRATION AND STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

- 3.1.1 Strengthen and safeguard existing partnerships with key stakeholders, ensuring alignment with the Isle of Man Government People Strategy and Public Health Isle of Man priorities.
- 3.1.2 Explore new opportunities for service and resource expansion.
- 3.1.3 Contribute to the delivery of Public Health Isle of Man's core priorities; Starting and Learning Well, Living and Working Well and Staying Healthier for Longer.

3.2 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCHEMES

- 3.2.1 Develop and deliver the Activ8 programme, the Isle of Man Government physical activity, health and wellbeing initiative to strengthen workforce resilience and productivity, ensuring alignment with department objectives.
- 3.2.2 Explore and deliver new opportunities to develop and grow the Healthy4Life scheme.
- 3.2.3 Collaborate with the Community Wellbeing Service to expand the Adult Activ4Health scheme.
- 3.2.4 Provide accessible pathways through Activ4Health to support young people referred by the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service in engaging with sport and physical activity.

3.3 TARGETED OPPORTUNITIES

- 3.3.1 Collaborate with stakeholders to deliver inclusive regional physical activity programmes tailored to the needs of identified priority groups within the community.
- 3.3.2 Develop and deliver new opportunities for older adults to engage in regular sport and physical activity.
- 3.3.3 Work with Public Health Isle of Man and other key partners to provide targeted initiatives in sport and physical activity aimed at supporting healthy ageing and reducing health inequalities.
- 3.3.4 Develop and deliver accessible sport and physical activity programmes for adults with disabilities, including those in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.





4.

SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

Maintain, modernise and enhance the Department's sporting infrastructure to provide accessible, inclusive and environmentally sustainable facilities which maximise participation, performance and good governance in sport and physical activity for our community.





4.1 PREPARATION FOR THE 2029 INTERNATIONAL ISLAND GAMES

- 4.1.1 Develop business cases for capital funding to refurbish the National Sports Centre Athletics Track, Grandstand and the Bowl Pitch.

4.2 FACILITY MAINTENANCE

- 4.2.1 Request an increase to the Minor Capital Funding to maintain modern, fit-for-purpose facilities for future generations.
- 4.2.2 Ensure all facilities have appropriate planned, preventative maintenance programmes in place and up to date.
- 4.2.3 Ensure all statutory inspections of Department of Education, Sport and Culture facilities are carried out in accordance with legislation and best practice.

4.3 FLEXIBLE FACILITY DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

- 4.3.1 Ensure the Department's design of flexible, accessible and inclusive spaces can accommodate a variety of sports, physical activity and community events to maximise participation.
- 4.3.2 Ensure accessibility for people with disabilities which supports inclusive participation at the National Sports Centre.
- 4.3.3 Develop a new fitness and exercise space within the Grandstand redevelopment project.
- 4.3.4 Work in partnership with the Football Association and Football Foundation to access funding to develop new 3G pitches across the Island.
- 4.3.5 Establish and develop a new Sports Hub in Castletown, incorporating new sports facilities at Castle Rushen High School as part of the school's redevelopment.
- 4.3.6 Work with key stakeholders to develop sports facility provision across the Island.





5.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABLE RESPONSIBILITY

Manage and develop facilities and programmes that are energy efficient, environmentally responsible and sustainable.

5.1 SUPPORT THE ISLE OF MAN CLIMATE CHANGE PLAN

5.1.1 Utilise the National Sports Centre estate to support the Manx Utilities Authority in achieving renewable energy targets through solar generation.





5.2 IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY ACROSS FACILITIES

- 5.2.1 Work with the Climate Change Transformation Board to improve the energy efficiency of the Department's facility portfolio.
- 5.2.2 Access climate change funding to enable the implementation of green energy schemes.
- 5.2.3 Install Air Source Heat Pumps at the National Sports Centre to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels.
- 5.2.4 Support Regional Swimming Pool Boards in delivering a decarbonisation programme.

5.3 GOVERNMENT ENERGY AND CLIMATE POLICIES

- 5.3.1 Upgrade all lighting across the National Sports Centre by incorporating LED technology in both indoor and outdoor facilities.
- 5.3.2 Replace and improve the mechanical, electrical and ventilation infrastructure across the National Sports Centre estate.
- 5.3.3 Explore the implementation of energy-efficient Building Management Systems to reduce overall energy consumption.

5.4 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- 5.4.1 Ensure environmental sustainability and climate change considerations are embedded in the planning and delivery of the 2029 International Island Games.
- 5.4.2 Implement a recycling and waste reduction programme across facilities and events.
- 5.4.3 Develop educational initiatives to raise awareness of sustainability, helping staff, customers and stakeholders, understand their role in supporting the Isle of Man Climate Change Plan.





6.

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND GOVERNANCE

Create and deliver high-quality opportunities underpinned by principles of good governance, safeguarding and inclusion that equip athletes, volunteers, professionals and the wider workforce with the knowledge, skills and values to ensure safe, inclusive and positive experiences in sport and physical activity across our community.





6.1 ESTABLISH THE NATIONAL SPORTS CENTRE AS A PREMIER TRAINING DESTINATION

- 6.1.1 Develop and deliver accredited qualifications and training programmes for the leisure, health and fitness industry.

6.2 DEVELOP A SKILLED AND QUALIFIED WORKFORCE

- 6.2.1 Facilitate a comprehensive programme of continuous professional development opportunities for our workforce and the wider community.
- 6.2.2 Ensure our tutors and trainers have opportunities to maintain their qualifications up to date and support progression.
- 6.2.3 Support employees to ensure all certifications and qualifications remain current and valid.

6.3 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- 6.3.1 Develop and deliver the Manx Sport and Recreation Coach Award for young people.
- 6.3.2 Develop and deliver a comprehensive Coach Education Programme and continuous professional development opportunities for coaches at all levels.
- 6.3.3 Provide targeted training opportunities to promote inclusive coaching, safeguarding, welfare, and disability awareness.
- 6.3.4 Support Governing Bodies of Sport to deliver against Isle of Man Sport's strategic priority and objective to improve and develop coaching, volunteering and officiating to enhance performance across all levels.
- 6.3.5 Maintain and develop online access to trusted information, practical resources, and best practice guidance for the sporting community.
- 6.3.6 Offer industry-relevant work experience opportunities across the organisation to support career development.

6.4 GOVERNANCE AND SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS

- 6.4.1 Support Governing Bodies of Sport to deliver against Isle of Man Sport's strategic Priorities and Objectives.
- 6.4.2 Ensure all recognised Governing Bodies of Sport meet Isle of Man Sport's recognition criteria.
- 6.4.3 Work with Governing Bodies of Sport and other funded partners to ensure minimum governance and safeguarding standards are met.





7.

SPORTING PATHWAYS FROM GRASS ROOTS TO ELITE

Working with Isle of Man Sport and other key partners, establish the Isle of Man as a global leader in athlete identification and development, by promoting excellence and best practice in sport, physical activity and governance.





7.1 IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1.1 Develop and deliver the Isle of Man Sport Aid Academy.
- 7.1.2 Develop and deliver the Isle of Man Sport Performance Development Programme.
- 7.1.3 Support education institutions to achieve and maintain the Sport England Dual Career Accreditation Scheme requirements.

7.2 SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

- 7.2.1 Work with key partners to ensure financial support is available to all athletes within our programmes.
- 7.2.2 Develop appropriate initiatives for athletes and their support networks throughout their career and beyond.
- 7.2.3 Develop additional support opportunities for coaches and athletes who are not part of the performance pathway.
- 7.2.4 Support and assist Isle of Man Sport with guidance and information to determine how funding is allocated across recognised sports on the Island.
- 7.2.5 Work with all recognised Governing Bodies of Sport to deliver Isle of Man Sport's strategic Priorities and Objectives.
- 7.2.6 Develop and maintain effective communication channels that share relevant research, insights and best practice across our sporting community.
- 7.2.7 Further develop Sporting Parent, Coach and Athlete webinars, podcasts, forums and communities of practice.

7.3 ATHLETE PATHWAYS

- 7.3.1 Strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders including Isle of Man Commonwealth Games Association, Island Games Association of Mann and National Governing Bodies of Sport on and off-Island to develop performance athlete pathways.
- 7.3.2 Identify and develop performance pathways for Para and disabled athletes.
- 7.3.3 Develop opportunities for current or previous high-performance athletes to engage with and contribute to the performance pathway.





8.

DIGITALISATION AND SERVICE INNOVATION

Embrace digital innovation to enhance access and engagement in sport and physical activity, whilst strengthening marketing, improving customer experience, boosting community engagement and increasing organisational productivity.





8.1 ENHANCE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

- 8.1.1 Procurement of a new Leisure Management System.
- 8.1.2 Offer mobile-first member journeys, improve facility access, develop digital onboarding and improve customer communications.

8.2 DIGITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- 8.2.1 Support digital organisational change in line with the Cabinet Office's Government Transformation Programme and Service Modernisation goals.
- 8.2.2 Ensure all new digital platforms are accessible and user-friendly.
- 8.2.3 Support customers and staff in effectively using digital applications.

8.3 EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

- 8.3.1 Use Artificial Intelligence to analyse usage patterns and inform scheduling, staffing and resource allocation.
- 8.3.2 Adopt new tools and provide staff with training on emerging technologies to support their roles, improve workflows and enhance daily operations.

8.4 MARKETING AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- 8.4.1 Deliver targeted, data-informed marketing campaigns across digital and traditional marketing channels to increase participation and boost public engagement.





MANX SPORT & RECREATION

MSR.GOV.IM

MORE PEOPLE MORE ACTIVE MORE OFTEN