

REPORT TITLE: DISTRICT WIDE PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM –13 JUNE 2018
CABINET – 20 JUNE 2018

REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER: ENVIRONMENT

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

This report seeks approval for a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) which has been produced to inform decision making about the provision of sports pitches for public use across Winchester District. The purpose of the PPS is to:

1. Provide robust evidence on the current and future supply and demand of all outdoor sports pitches within the Winchester district;
2. Provide a clear strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing outdoor sports pitches and ancillary features;
3. Help guide investment, funding bids, planning applications and decision making (for example development of the new Leisure Centre at Bar End); and
4. Provide detail and inform the Local Plan (including the review which must commence this year) and the Winchester Open Space Strategy 2015.

The PPS has been drafted following a thorough assessment of playing pitches across the District as set out in the Assessment Report and covers the period 2018 to 2031 (in line with the adopted Local Plan). It has been produced in accordance with Sport England guidance and meets the requirements of National Governing Bodies ie the Football Foundation, Hampshire County Football Association, England and Wales Cricket Board, Hampshire Cricket Board, Rugby Football Union and England Hockey. In addition, the process is compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Winchester District Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan 2018 to 2031 be adopted.

2. That the Head of Landscape and Open Spaces in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment be authorised to make any incidental textual amendments or corrections necessary before publication.

IMPLICATIONS:

1. COUNCIL STRATEGY OUTCOME

- 1.1 The PPS supports the Local Plan by supplementing the Winchester Open Space Strategy (2015), which itself provides a local assessment of open space types (including sports grounds) against the standard in Local Plan Policy CP7. The PPS provides robust evidence on the current and future supply and demand of all outdoor sports pitches within the Winchester District and ensures this evidence is capable of being scrutinised through examination and meets the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.2 The PPS aligns with the Council Strategy outcome *to improve health & happiness* and supports the objective of providing new leisure facilities in Winchester by identifying current and future supply and demand and identifying actions to deal with any shortfalls.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The outcomes of the Winchester District Playing Pitch Strategy 2018 to 2031 will guide investment decisions for the next 13 years. The majority of the actions/outcomes contained in the PPS have no immediate budget implications and opportunities will be explored in partnership with key stakeholders to identify future funding sources, in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

3. LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no legal implications directly associated with this report. Any legal implications flowing from actions arising from the Winchester District Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan 2018 to 2031 will, as appropriate, be the subject of separate reports to Cabinet where required

4. WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There is a need within the PPS to keep the evidence base and document up to date and to work in partnership to implement the Action Plan. This this will be undertaken by the Landscape and Open Spaces Team.

5. PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The assessment will help to inform the outdoor facilities mix of new facilities at sites across the District. This will include the new leisure centre at Bar End.

6. CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 The Strategy has been overseen by a Steering Group comprising Winchester City Council, Sport England, the Football Foundation, Hampshire County Football Association, England and Wales Cricket Board, the Hampshire

Cricket Board, Rugby Football Union and England Hockey. Consultants preparing the document have engaged with a wide range of stakeholders including pitch operators, schools, sports clubs, the University of Winchester, neighbouring authorities and parish councils.

6.2 Consultation responses from consultees exceeded the 75% response rate Sport England sets as a target. This figures across all sports were:

- a) Football - 76%
- b) Cricket - 91%
- c) Hockey - 100%
- d) Rugby Union -100%
- e) Bowls - 81%.

6.3 As would be expected, most comments were made by respondents in relation to their particular sport.

6.4 Both the Strategy and Assessment Report have satisfied the requirements of Sport England and National Governing Bodies ie the Football Foundation, Hampshire County Football Association, England and Wales Cricket Board, Hampshire Cricket Board, Rugby Football Union and England Hockey.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 The provision of a suitable number of outdoor sports pitches can have environmental impacts both positive and occasionally negative. These relate mainly to facilities ancillary to the pitches themselves such as changing rooms and car parking. Any new or replacement facility development as a result of this assessment should undergo an energy assessment to ensure that the facility is energy and carbon efficient in order to meet planning policy requirements where planning permission is needed. The planning process would also provide opportunity to consider any other environmental impacts for example biodiversity and landscape impact.

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 It is not considered that the PPS requires an Equality Impact Assessment.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
<i>Property</i> Absence of evidence and needs assessment to guide playing pitch provision and ancillary facilities and management	Adopt the PPS to provide an evidence base.	Work with partners to deliver the recommendations. Monitor and keep the PPS up to date.
<i>Community Support</i> Lack of community support which undermines the PPS.	Risk of overlap or duplication of provision. Inefficient use and programming of facilities Investment opportunities missed. Over reliance or expectation on the role of the Council	PPS has been developed in consultation with key bodies such as Sport England. The Council will continue to work with partners to deliver the recommendations.
<i>Timescales</i>		
<i>Project capacity</i>		
<i>Financial / VfM</i> <i>The PPS itself does not require any particular investment by the Council. It can create opportunities for external funding.</i>		Use the PPS to make the case for grants and other third party contributions to secure playing field provision.
<i>Reputation</i> Failure to secure provision of facilities in accordance with the strategy.	Reputation challenge.	Adopt the PPS Continue to work with the Steering group and partners.
<i>Other</i>		

10 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:**Background**

- 10.1 Following a competitive tendering process the consultancy Knight Kavanagh & Page Ltd (KKP) was commissioned to complete an audit of playing pitches and their facilities in the District and to prepare a Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan (PPS) for the period 2017 to 2031 (in line with the current Local Plan).

- 10.2 The primary purpose of the PPS is to provide a strategic framework which identifies what provision exists and how this can be improved to meet the needs of existing and future residents across the Winchester District. This is achieved by assessing the current levels of provision across the public, private, education, voluntary and commercial sectors and comparing this with current and likely future levels of demand. By using modelling techniques endorsed by Sport England the PPS can then produce a supply and demand assessment of playing pitch and other outdoor sports facilities.
- 10.3 The PPS looks at pitch provision in relation to football, rugby union, bowls, hockey and cricket when played on grass (including artificial grass surfaces). These are the sports which Sport England identifies as sufficiently important to determine levels of playing field provision. Other sports can, of course, be played on those areas. Provision for rugby league was not assessed as there is no evidence it is played this far south.

Context

- 10.4 The Winchester District Local Plan (adopted in March 2013) includes policies which seek to ensure the provision of publicly accessible recreational facilities to meet any existing shortfalls and population growth. Pitches may be provided in a number of different ways and by different types of organisation.
- 10.5 The Local Plan is supported by the Winchester Open Space Strategy (2015) which provides a local assessment of all types of open spaces against the standard set in Policy CP7. It identified a mixture of deficits and surpluses across the District, with an 11ha shortfall of sports grounds (ie those areas where use is predominantly sport) in Winchester town, but an overall surplus of 13ha of sports grounds across the wider District.
- 10.6 The Council has also completed a Sports Facility Needs Assessment for built facilities which was approved by Cabinet on 13 November 2017

Methodology

- 10.7 The PPS assessment and strategy have been prepared in accordance with Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance 'An approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy'. The study area is the Winchester District (including the Winchester section of the South Downs National Park). Sub areas or analysis areas have been identified where appropriate to allow a more localised assessment of provision and examination of playing pitch supply and demand.
- 10.8 A variety of consultation methods were used to obtain information about supply and demand from providers of facilities, leagues, clubs, county associations and national/regional governing bodies of sport. Issues identified by clubs returning questionnaires were followed up by telephone or face to face interviews.

- 10.9 All identified outdoor sports facilities were assessed and a quality rating recorded within the audit. These quality ratings were used to help estimate the capacity of each facility to accommodate competitive and other play, within the supply and demand assessment.
- 10.10 Future demand was estimated from population projections and housing growth by applying national standard formula for participation rates. The propensity for future populations to participate in pitch sports, feedback from teams and National Governing Bodies specific sports development targets were also considered.
- 10.11 The capacity of each playing pitch was determined to indicate how many match equivalent sessions per week it can sustain. This was compared to the number of matches actually taking place and an understanding of spare capacity or overuse was identified. Once capacity was determined on a site by site basis, spare capacity was calculated on an area by area basis.
- 10.12 Modelling scenarios were then used to look at whether existing provision could cater for unmet, displaced and future demand.

Summary of findings

- 10.13 In the main, grass pitch provision for sport in Winchester is in line with the current needs of the District's population, although improvement in the quality of rugby pitch provision has been identified as desirable.
- 10.14 When taking into consideration population growth, shortfalls have been identified for grass football pitches for youth and mini football match equivalent sessions. This does not mean there is a need for increased playing field provision because these shortfalls can be offset by improving the quality of the existing stock of pitches and by increasing access to provision that is not currently available to the community, such as at school sites.
- 10.15 The Football Association has national aspirations to increase the number of artificial grass pitches primarily designed for football across. Because of their high carrying capacity, this would significantly reduce pressure on existing grass pitches. There is no obligation for the City Council to provide these but if appropriate the Football Association and Football Foundation will work to deliver increased stock.
- 10.16 It is anticipated that significant growth in participation at Winchester Hockey Club may generate a need for an additional artificial grass pitch primarily designed for hockey. Cricket pitches are adequately provided for.
- 10.17 Across and adjoining the Winchester District there are three large housing developments each of which will include dedicated playing pitch provision sufficient to meet the demand arising from its own population.

Delivering the Strategy

- 10.18 There is a clear planning requirement to ensure that existing playing fields, pitches and ancillary facilities are protected and enhanced, and only in exceptional cases will the loss of playing field land be permitted. This is true even where there is sufficient provision as there is for most sports across the District. Where possible additional or improved facilities will be delivered by sports organisations, education establishments and parish/town councils. The PPS is a partnership document and requires stakeholders and partners to be involved in its delivery.
- 10.19 The PPS will assist the City Council in maintenance and management decisions and investment made across all the sites over its lifespan. By addressing the issues identified in the Assessment Report and using the strategic framework presented in the Strategy, the current and future sporting and recreational needs of Winchester can be satisfied.
- 10.20 The Steering Group (as detailed in 6.1) will continue to meet, to ensure the delivery and implementation of the PPS recommendations and actions, as well as ensuring the evidence and data remain up to date.

Monitoring

- 10.21 Regular annual monitoring and review against the actions identified in the strategy will be led by the City Council. This is essential to ensure the PPS remains up to date. If the stakeholders fail to monitor and review the PPS, Sport England and the National Government Bodies will consider the PPS and the information on which it is based to be out of date and no longer a reliable source of evidence.

11 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 11.1 Cabinet could decide not to adopt the Playing Pitch Strategy. This option is not recommended as access to and provision of playing pitches and their facilities and the programmes they support are an important contributor to the health and wellbeing of communities in the district. The strategy is an important tool which can inform future investment and management decision with respect to play pitch provision across the District.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

Other Background Documents:-

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 Playing Pitch Assessment

Appendix 2 Playing Pitch Strategy – Members attention is drawn to the Executive Summary (pages 2 to 7) within the Strategy.