

Report to Cabinet

16 September 2015

Subject:	Revised Playing Pitch Strategy (Key Decision Ref. No. LVS002)
Presenting Cabinet Member:	Leisure and the Voluntary Sector

1. Summary Statement

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the revised Playing Pitch Strategy.
- 1.2 Since 2006, the Council has been using a Playing Pitch Strategy to inform planners and others about the needs analysis for sports provision in the borough. The analysis components have a limited lifespan of ten years and require cyclical updating on a ten year programme. However, Sport England have devised new needs assessment criteria and have advised the Council that the Strategy needed updating.
- 1.3 During the financial year 2014/15, Sport England provided £5,000 towards the cost of a new Strategy. Following a competitive tender process, leisure consultants Knight Kavanagh Page were appointed at a total cost of £18,600 to assist development of the revised Strategy.
- 1.4 The benefits of producing a Strategy are considerable:

(a) Corporate and strategic

- It ensures a strategic approach to playing pitch provision. During times of change for local authorities, a playing pitch strategy will provide direction and set priorities for pitch sports.
- It provides robust evidence for capital funding. As well as proving the need for developer contributions towards pitches and facilities, a playing pitch strategy can provide evidence of need for a range of capital grants. Current funding examples include the Sport England Lottery Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund (for park improvements), the Football Foundation and the Big Lottery Fund along with health grants.

- It helps deliver government policies for social inclusion, environmental protection, community involvement and healthy living.
- It helps demonstrate the value of leisure services during times of increasing scrutiny of non-statutory services.
- It helps the Best Value process through:
 - consultation with pitch-based sports clubs, providers and organised leagues
 - challenging the current system for sports pitch ownership, management and maintenance
 - comparison with other local authorities through various benchmarks (team generation rates, the National Playing Field's Association Six Acre Standard, local standards and other performance indicators)
 - competition, perhaps for pitch maintenance contracts.
 It also encourages continuous improvement through monitoring, auditing and benchmarking.

(b) Planning

- It provides a basis for establishing new pitch requirements arising from new housing developments.
- It is one of the best tools for the protection of pitches threatened by development.
- It links closely with work being undertaken on open spaces to provide a holistic approach to open space improvement and protection.

(c) Operational

- It will improve the authority's asset management, which should result in more efficient use of resources and reduced overheads.
- It highlights locations where quality of provision can be enhanced.

(d) Sports development

- It helps identify where community use of school sports pitches is most needed.
- It provides better information to residents and other users of sports pitches. This includes information about both pitches and sports teams.
- It promotes sports development and can help unlock latent demand by identifying where the lack of facilities might be suppressing the formation of teams.

1.5 The following Strategy aims are based on the key issues emerging from the Assessment Report. It is recommended that the following are adopted by the Council and its partners to enable it to achieve the overall vision of the Strategy:

- AIM 1

To protect the existing supply of sports facilities where it is needed for meeting current or future needs

- AIM 2

To enhance outdoor sports facilities through improving quality and management of sites

- AIM 3

To provide new outdoor sports facilities where there is current or future demand to do so

1.6 A playing pitch strategy links closely with the local authority's other strategies.

1.7 The report falls outside of the scope of the need for an Equality Impact Assessment. Any individual actions arising out of the PPS will have an impact assessment.

Further details are attached for your information

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the revised Playing Pitch Strategy for Sandwell, as set out in Appendix 1, is approved and adopted as the policy document that informs future sports provision for the borough.

2.2 That subject to 2.1 above, the Playing Pitch Strategy for Sandwell is used to secure future external funding for improvements to sports provision in the borough.

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3. Strategic Resource Implications

- 3.1 The cost of commissioning the Playing Pitch Strategy was £18,500 with £5,000 as a grant from Sport England. £13,500 was found from within existing revenue budget by Parks and Countryside Service in financial year 2014/15.
- 3.2 With Sport England approval for the revised Playing Pitch Strategy this does potentially unlock grant funds available that can be considered for allocating for sports provision. This additional requirement can be built into future capital budgets when the overall Leisure business plan is reviewed as part of the 2016/17 budget setting process.

4. Legal and Statutory Implications

There are no Legal or Statutory implications directly connected to the Playing Pitch Strategy.

5. Implications for the Council's Scorecard Priorities

Great Place – Sport provision that meet people's current and future needs
- providing better health.

6 Background Details

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Source Documents

Sandwell Playing Pitch Strategy

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