
REPORT TO:	Housing & Community Services	AGENDA ITEM: 8
DATE OF MEETING:	24th November 2011	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	Mark Alflat (Director of Operations)	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Zoe Sewter Open Space & Facilities Development Manager, zoe.sewter@south-derbys.gov.uk 01283 595753	DOC:
SUBJECT:	Playing Pitch Strategy	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	District wide	TERMS OF REFERENCE: HCS 07

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 To approve the Playing Pitch Strategy.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 The report outlines the findings and recommendations of the Playing Pitch Strategy and seeks approval to adopt the Strategy.

3.0 Executive Summary

3.1 The Playing Pitch Strategy has been produced to provide a strategic framework for pitch sports across the District, and to provide an objective assessment of need for:

- identifying priorities for investment and action
- guiding long term planning policy and decisions
- supporting applications for external funding

3.2 The Playing Pitch Strategy is attached at Annexe A.

4.0 Detail

4.1 In order to plan effectively for the future provision of outdoor sports facilities and to develop a forward plan for improvements to current facilities, VAGA Associates successfully quoted for the commission to produce a Playing Pitch Strategy for South Derbyshire.

4.2 The Strategy will also be an effective tool in helping to protect existing pitches which are threatened by development and provides an excellent evidence base to support applications for external funding for facility improvement projects.

4.3 The sports covered by the Strategy are Football; Cricket; Rugby Union; Tennis; Bowls (crown green and flat green) and Netball.

4.4 In preparing the Strategy, the following tasks were undertaken:

- Audit of all existing pitches in the District which are open to community use, and cataloguing location, condition and accessibility
- Identifying clubs and teams and predicting future demand in reference to both club development and population growth
- Establishing aggregate home games per week, total number of pitches required and peak demands for games by location
- Consultation with all sports clubs to assess current situation in terms of members, teams, development plans and to establish challenges and issues they currently face
- Study of the national trends in each sport, and consultation with National Governing Bodies
- Division of the District into 5 sub-areas to help assess supply and demand and plan for the future on a more local level

4.5 The key findings of the report are:

- 4.5.1 There are 94 individual pitch sites across the District but the quality varies widely and the majority of the best quality grass pitches (e.g. at Repton, Pingle and John Port Schools) are not accessible for community use.
- 4.5.2 The Playing Pitch Model suggests there is currently a sufficient supply of accessible football pitches within the District to accommodate demand, but that the pitches are not always in the localities the teams want to play.
- 4.5.3 The peak demand period for football (Sunday morning) causes practical issues for clubs who frequently have to go outside the District to find a pitch.
- 4.5.4 Only 4 out of 10 Junior football pitches meet the quality standard required, and some junior teams are playing on full size pitches.
- 4.5.5 The majority of football teams train on their main pitches, which results in additional wear and tear and high risk of cancellation of matches in the winter.
- 4.5.6 The Artificial Grass Pitch at Pingle School is operating at over 86% capacity and the facility at Shobnall Fields is nearing capacity.
- 4.5.7 Out of the 15 League Cricket grounds, only 9 reach an acceptable standard (quality of pitch, wicket and size of outfield).
- 4.5.8 Currently only 2 secondary schools (Granville Sports College & William Allitt School) allow community use of their grass football pitches.
- 4.5.9 There is only one Rugby Union Club in South Derbyshire, but there is a shortfall in available pitches at peak demand.
- 4.5.10 The quality of Bowls greens varies across the District and availability of greens doesn't match demand in terms of location.
- 4.5.11 The quality of Tennis courts varies across the District and again availability doesn't match demand in terms of location.

4.6 Recommendations:

- 4.6.1 Devise and implement a rolling programme of pitch improvements.
- 4.6.2 Ensure existing grounds are not lost to development without appropriate replacement provision in place.
- 4.6.3 Develop new pitch facilities to match likely demand generated by future population growth.
- 4.6.4 Ensure each sub-area has a basic provision of facilities including:
 - Adequate basic supply of pitches for football, cricket and bowls
 - A 'Hub club' as a focus, to grow and develop the sport.
- 4.6.5 Explore ways of increasing access to pitches through community use of School sites.
- 4.6.6 Explore transfer of site management responsibility and assets with clubs as appropriate.
- 4.6.7 Improve communications and relationships with clubs to achieve mutual goals and increase participation.

- 4.6.8 Work with clubs and NGB's to secure investment to implement a rolling Action Plan for delivery of the playing Pitch Strategy.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The resources required for delivering the capital elements of the action plan will be sought largely through external grant funding. Opportunities exist within current and future Planning obligations to secure funding for capital investment, either through Section 106 contributions, on-site provision or the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy.
- 5.2 Additionally, the action to improve working relationships with clubs could have a positive impact on revenue costs, with a sharing of resources and responsibilities.
- 5.2 Consultation will take place with the relevant parties on a project-by-project basis.
- 5.3 This Strategy offers an opportunity to review and revise current maintenance and management obligations which could lead to efficiency savings in terms of actual management costs and resources.

6.0 Corporate Implications

- 6.1 The Strategy delivers against the following Corporate Plan Themes:
- 6.1.1 Sustainable Growth and opportunity – this Strategy will help set a clear direction for the vision of the District in terms of the provision of outdoor sport and recreation facilities and will ensure that future provision meets current and future need. This is a key requirement in planning for Sustainable Development and the Strategy will be one of the key evidence bases in the preparation of the Core Strategy in the Local Development Framework.
- 6.1.2 Lifestyle Choices – this Strategy will help deliver the outcome of providing improved leisure facilities and leisure opportunities for the community, and will contribute to the objective of promoting healthy facilities & lifestyles.
- 6.1.3 Value for Money – opportunities highlighted in the Strategy for asset transfer and management of facilities, together with a review of accessible sites and service delivery will ensure the Council is offering best value for money and increasing efficiencies.
- 6.2 The Strategy, once adopted, will be communicated back to the Sports Clubs. National Governing Bodies and the wider public. It will be a public document, which will outline The Council's vision for outdoor pitch provision, and will form the basis for the Facility Strategy and will be a supplementary planning document in the Local Development Framework.

7.0 Community Implications

- 7.1 The Strategy contributes to the delivery of the Community Strategy by delivering against the following themes:
- 7.1.1 Healthier Communities – the delivery of the Strategy will increase participation in active sport and recreation, and will contribute to a healthier and active lifestyle across all communities.
- 7.1.2 Vibrant Communities –working closely with sports clubs to improve their facilities will lead to increased membership of clubs and ultimately provide more opportunities in community and voluntary action.

7.1.3 Sustainable Development – effectively planning for future growth, tested against a robust evidence base, will ensure successful existing and new communities which meet the population’s needs and aspirations.

7.1.4 Children & Young People – by providing improved access to better quality facilities which meet the needs of the District, the delivery of the Strategy will improve the aspirations of children in South Derbyshire and help to create opportunities where all children and young people can achieve their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 If this Strategy is adopted then the aim for all residents to have access to good quality playing pitches for outdoor sports facilities across South Derbyshire, to meet the current need and future demands of residents of the District, and the aspirations of local clubs can be met.

Last reviewed May 2009