

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE

8 OCTOBER 2018

Title:

PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY 2018

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Kevin Deanus]
[Wards Affected: All]**

Summary and purpose:

To seek approval to adopt the new Playing Pitch Strategy 2018.

The evidence within the strategy will be used as a basis to seek developer contributions to contribute towards future sports facility improvements throughout the borough; including Council-owned facilities, areas that are leased out and those facilities managed by other providers such as Schools and Local Clubs.

The strategy provides the Council with a clear understanding of the overall picture of sports facility provision and the needs of the clubs and pitch providers in the borough.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

People – this project will actively engage our sporting customers and identify their future needs as clubs.

Places –supporting the health and well being of our residents by ensuring sporting facilities and opportunities exist for all.

Prosperity – the playing pitch strategy will enable the Council to request s106 and CIL payments from local development to be put towards playing pitches and ancillary facilities, maximizing the use of Council funds.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

Not applicable to this report.

Financial Implications:

Adopting the playing pitch strategy will enable the Council to access developers contributions on new housing developments in the borough, helping to achieve the necessary infrastructure requirements of the increase in residents. Not adopting a strategy will leave the council without a clear justification for requesting contributions, therefore Waverley will potentially be unable to take advantage of opportunities for achieving funding for infrastructure improvements.

Legal Implications:

The implications in respect of the Council's adopted Local Plan are set out within the body of this report.

Background

1. The current playing pitch strategy was adopted by the Council in 2012 and has been used as a basis to justify financial contributions through s106 and Planning Infrastructure Charge (PIC) payments from local developments towards sports facility infrastructure improvements around the borough.
2. According to Sport England guidance the strategy should be reviewed every five years and updated, to reflect any changes in sports pitch provision and the needs of our local clubs. Upon reviewing the strategy, it was found that Sport England had changed the methodology to write playing pitch strategies. It would therefore not support a review of the current strategy based on the old methodology in the Council's Local Plan.
3. We were therefore required to undertake a complete re-write of our playing pitch strategy based on the new methodology. Following a procurement process the Council appointed specialist consultants Knight, Kavanagh & Page (KKP) to undertake the required work.
4. The playing pitch strategy covers the outdoor sports and associated facilities of; Football, Rugby, Cricket, Hockey, Tennis, Bowls and Athletics.

Introduction

5. To conform to the timescale for the Local Plan, the new playing pitch strategy will address playing pitch needs in the fifteen years from 2017 to 2032 (Pitch assessments were undertaken in 2017). A detailed action plan will be developed for the first five years of this period which covers all sports facilities within the borough irrespective of who provides them. This will be continually reviewed and updated in line with the PPS guidance from Sport England with a further formal refresh of the strategy after five years. The objectives of the study were:
 - i) A complete and thorough audit of playing pitch facilities in the borough and those in neighbouring boroughs which influence patterns of participation in Waverley, which includes; what facilities exist, the quality of them and the existence of ancillary facilities such as changing rooms
 - ii) To compile a detailed database of all clubs, including numbers of female and male adult, junior and mini-teams and the competitions in which they play and variants of their games e.g. walking football or T20 cricket
 - iii) To consult and survey to solicit the views of a range of stakeholders including but not limited to; pitch providers including WBC, Town and Parish Councils, educational establishments, private and voluntary sector clubs, pitch users, umbrella organisations such as Sport England, NGBS, Active Surrey, local Sports Councils, Surrey Playing Fields Association and the various leagues

- iv) To calculate the balance between supply and demand for playing fields in and around Waverley and thereby to identify any shortfalls and surpluses now and into the future on a site-specific and sub-area basis
 - v) Identification of priority sites and local standards
 - vi) To agree with the steering group a detailed action plan for the next five years
 - vii) To identify indicative costs and sources of funding
 - viii) To support the Councils local plan and provide a justified evidence base to support requests for s106/PIC/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions from local developments
 - ix) Develop policy options, an action plan and the establishment of local standards.
6. The findings from the work undertaken have enabled an action plan to be drawn up that addresses current needs and also the future needs in regards to the provision of sports pitches and associated facilities and quality improvements. The details of this action plan will enable a direct link to be made to the Council's justification for spending PIC, s106 and CIL monies on sports pitch facility improvements.
7. The full Playing Pitch Strategy & Action Plan and accompanying Assessment Report will be posted on the Council's Website in due course, so that it is accessible to all. An Executive Summary of the Strategy can be viewed in [Annexe 1](#).
8. The current need to find sites for thousands of new households up to the year 2032 is likely to increase pressure for the development of all land in and around urban areas and green spaces including playing fields may become vulnerable. The playing pitch strategy should help to protect these facilities from re-development by identifying the need and demand for such facilities.
9. The forthcoming Community Infrastructure Levy charges will provide opportunities to upgrade pitches and create new facilities, which are directly linked to new developments
10. Any Section 106 planning obligation is subject to negotiation. Under CIL Regulation 122, it is unlawful for the Council to seek a contribution if the obligation does not meet all of the following tests:
- a) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - b) Directly related to the development; and
 - c) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
11. This has been tested at a number of planning appeals, in the past some Inspectors have not been satisfied that the projects identified have met the tests above which has led to the contribution not being achieved. The adoption of the Playing Pitch Strategy would provide supporting evidence to help justify the need for such contributions.

Conclusion

12. The Playing Pitch Strategy 2018 provides the Council with an evidence-based document that presents an up to date pitch of sports facility provision and demand in the Borough.
 13. The adoption of the Playing Pitch Strategy will ensure a strong link is made with local developments, to provide either; sport facility quality improvements, or, new.
 14. Adopting the Playing Pitch Strategy and its action plan will put the Council in an ideal position to use existing accumulated developer contributions towards sporting infrastructure and to continue to successfully argue for future contributions via CIL and section 106 funds from future local developments.
 15. These funds can be used towards maintenance, quality improvements, additional pitch provision and other facility improvement works in relation to increasing demand from development on playing pitches and associated facilities.
 16. Should this strategy not be adopted, the Council would be without a document that sets out a robust justification for spending s106, PIC and CIL monies on the Council's own sports pitches, and also on those pitches managed by other organisations. This would create the possibility of challenge from developers where the Council requests financial contributions when considering development.
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Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive endorses the Playing Pitch Strategy 2018, including the findings and action plan within it, and recommends it Council for adoption.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY 2018

This is the executive summary for the Councils Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS), which covers all sports facilities whether they are owned and managed by the Council or by other providers. Both the Strategy and the preceding Assessment Report have been produced in accordance with Sport England guidance and both have achieved sign off from National Governing Bodies (NGBs). The study covers the period up to 2032, in line with the emerging Local Plan.

Scope

The project provides guidance and support in order to understand and assess the need for outdoor sports facilities. It provides a strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing provision and covers the following sports:

- ◀ Football pitches
- ◀ Cricket pitches
- ◀ Rugby union pitches
- ◀ Hockey pitches (sand/water-based AGPs)
- ◀ Third generation turf pitches (3G pitches)
- ◀ Outdoor bowling greens
- ◀ Outdoor tennis courts
- ◀ Outdoor athletics tracks

Vision

A vision has been set out to provide a clear focus with desired outcomes for the PPS. It seeks to support the Council and its partners in the creation of:

'An accessible and sustainable network of sports facilities that provides and promotes local opportunities and a healthy, active lifestyle for Waverley residents at all levels of play from grassroots to elite'

Headline findings

The existing position for all sports is either that demand is broadly being met or that there is a shortfall. In terms of the future position, current shortfalls will expand and new shortfalls will emerge in respect of some facility types in some areas. For example, it is predicted that increased demand for football and rugby union will exacerbate current shortfalls and significantly reduce any pockets of already limited spare capacity. As such, there is a need to protect all existing outdoor sports facilities, or to deliver an equal or better quantity and quality of provision to offset any loss of provision prior to the loss taking place.

Theoretically, surpluses and shortfalls expressed for pitch sports could be largely addressed via pitch quality improvements at existing sites; however, the extent of increased capacity achievable through this route would clearly depend upon practical opportunities arising and funding being identified to deliver and sustain enhancements. Given current budget restraints, significant quality improvements are considered to be

unlikely, meaning that other opportunities need to be explored such as greater use of sites currently unavailable for community use (e.g. educational sites) and/or pitch re-configuration.

Notwithstanding the above, clear shortfalls are identified in relation to 3G AGPs. These cannot be alleviated without new provision. Given this, there is a distinct need to explore the feasibility of future provision at strategic sites in Waverley to meet this demand. Given that resource to improve the quality of grass pitches is limited, increased 3G provision could help reduce grass pitch shortfalls via transfer of play, thus reducing overplay, which in turn can aid grass pitch quality improvements.

Furthermore, whilst the supply of hockey suitable AGPs is currently deemed sufficient to meet demand, any significant growth will result in the need for additional provision or for existing provision to be made more readily available (e.g. by floodlighting non-floodlit pitches or by making pitches unavailable to the community available).

Sport-by-sport recommendations

A number of relevant scenarios have been tested against key issues for each sport, resulting in the following recommendations.

Football

- ◀ Protect existing pitch quantity (unless suitable replacement provision is agreed upon and provided).
- ◀ Ensure that all teams play on pitches of the correct size and explore reconfiguration to accommodate more youth 11v11 pitches where possible.
- ◀ Increase use of 3G pitches to raise available pitch capacity to address future shortfalls.
- ◀ For overplayed pitches assessed as poor/standard quality, prioritise investment and review maintenance regimes to bring them up to an appropriate standard to sustain use and improve quality (first and foremost via the FA's Pitch Improvement Programme, utilising an IOG Regional Pitch Advisor for support).
- ◀ Provide security of tenure for clubs using unsecure sites via community use agreements.
- ◀ Work to accommodate latent and future demand at sites which are not operating at capacity or at sites which are not currently available for community use.
- ◀ Improve ancillary facilities at key sites currently serviced by poor provision e.g. Weybourne Recreation Ground and Monkton Lane.
- ◀ Where appropriate, develop partnerships and/or lease arrangements with large, sustainable, development-minded clubs to manage their own sites.
- ◀ Ensure adequate provision to meet increased demand generated by housing developments, by securing appropriately calculated developer contributions using the Sport England demand calculator.
- ◀ Create additional pitches within the locality of large housing developments where there is an identified need through consultation with the FA.

3G pitches

- ◀ Protect current stock of 3G pitches.
- ◀ Create additional 3G pitches within each analysis area, first and foremost to satisfy football training and match play demand, ensuring that planning conditions are met.

- ◀ Encourage a partnership-based approach between the FA and the RFU to ensure the increase in 3G pitches helps alleviate rugby grass pitch shortfalls.
- ◀ Support proposals to develop World Rugby compliant 3G pitches at Farnham and Horsham rugby clubs and maximise usage among multiple rugby clubs.
- ◀ Ensure that all new 3G pitches are constructed to meet FA/RFU recommended dimensions and quality performance standards to meet performance testing criteria.
- ◀ Transfer as much football match play as possible onto 3G pitches, focusing on mini and youth 9v9 demand as well as demand currently attracted to council sites.
- ◀ Ensure that all existing and future 3G pitches are FA tested every three years to go onto and remain on the FA register.
- ◀ Ensure that 3G pitches suitable for rugby activity are tested every two years to sustain World Rugby compliance.
- ◀ Encourage all current and future providers to implement sinking funds to ensure long-term sustainability.
- ◀ 3G provision on the Dunsfold Aerodrome development is considered a priority by the Football Foundation.
- ◀ Create additional pitches within the locality of large housing developments where there is an identified need through consultation with the FA and RFU.
- ◀ Surrey FA and the Football Foundation have identified two new sites to establish 3G pitches and reduce the current shortfall. These are located at Snoxhall Playing Fields (Cranleigh) and Farnham Heath End School (Farnham).

Cricket

- ◀ Protect the existing quantity of cricket squares.
- ◀ Work with clubs and grounds staff to review quality issues with regard to pitches to ensure that, going forward, the quality of sites assessed as poor or standard is improved and that the quality of sites presently assessed as good is sustained.
- ◀ Ensure security of tenure for all clubs with lease arrangements in place by ensuring agreements have over 25 years remaining.
- ◀ Work with clubs without secure lease arrangements to provide longer term security.
- ◀ Work with key stakeholders and clubs to improve ancillary provision where issues are identified, notably at Churt Cricket Club.
- ◀ Consider options to increase and improve stock of suitable practice facilities, particularly at sites currently without such provision.
- ◀ Address overplay via increasing NTP stock, installing them alongside grass wickets in order to reduce pressure on grass wickets.
- ◀ Alternatively, if space allows, explore the feasibility of extending grass wicket squares with additional wickets at overplayed sites.
- ◀ Where sites remain overplayed, explore the feasibility of transferring demand to sites with actual spare capacity.
- ◀ Create additional pitches within the locality of large housing developments where there is an identified need through consultation with the ECB.

Rugby union

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of rugby union pitches.
- ◀ Reduce overplay via improved maintenance and/or the installation of new/better drainage systems, particularly at club sites.
- ◀ Support proposals to develop new World Rugby compliant 3G pitch at Farnham RFC and maximise usage of this new provision from multiple clubs. Alternatively, support the establishment of a WR compliant 3G pitch at Farnham Heath End School,

ensuring Farnham Rugby Club are provided with a formal community use agreement to provide the Club with access to the pitch.

- ◀ If overplay remains, consider providing additional World Rugby compliant 3G pitches to satisfy demand from Guildford and Haslemere Community rugby clubs, preferably in partnership with FA developments (Rugby Share programme).
- ◀ Explore the feasibility of supporting changing room improvements at Cranleigh Rugby Club and Woolmer Hill Recreation Ground.
- ◀ Create additional pitches within the locality of large housing developments where there is an identified need through consultation with the RFU.

Hockey

- ◀ As a minimum, protect the 12 full size AGPs currently in use by hockey clubs for hockey.
- ◀ Explore resurfacing carpets that have reached or are reaching the end of their lifespan (normally ten years).
- ◀ Ensure that providers have sinking funds in place to ensure pitches can be refurbished when required and to guarantee long-term sustainability.
- ◀ Ensure any future demand can be accommodated on the current supply of pitches.
- ◀ Should demand increase to a level that cannot be accommodated, pursue the creation of additional pitches.
- ◀ Development of any new provision should be placed at sites with existing hockey provision, with accessible and appropriate ancillary facilities.
- ◀ Pursue long-term security of tenure for all clubs through community use agreements.
- ◀ Explore installation of floodlighting on those pitches where the provision is absent.
- ◀ Ensure that no 3G pitch conversions take place that are detrimental to hockey.
- ◀ Priorities relocating football from key hockey sites to new 3G provision to help meet growing hockey demand at peak training times. Hockey development in the Area would benefit from consolidating hockey to a few sites, rather than spreading provision to alternative sites.

Bowls

- ◀ Explore re-designation of the green at Guildford Rugby Club.
- ◀ Protect remaining greens for continued bowling activity.
- ◀ Improve green quality at sites assessed as standard quality and maintain the quality of greens assessed as good.
- ◀ Sustain current ancillary provision quality and seek improvements if and when deterioration occurs.

Tennis

- ◀ Protect all tennis courts.
- ◀ Support clubs operating above recommended capacity by securing access to additional (existing) courts where required.
- ◀ Explore floodlighting additional club courts to increase capacity.
- ◀ Improve quality at well used council sites to increase and encourage recreational play.
- ◀ Consider Clubspark scheme as a way to improve courts and to increase and record usage.
- ◀ Consider creation of additional tennis courts linked to large housing developments, such as at Dunsfold Aerodrome.

Athletics

- ◀ Protect facilities at Charterhouse Club and Woolmer Hill Recreation Ground.
- ◀ Consider extending the track at Woolmer Hill Recreation Ground to better cater for the needs of Haslemere Border AC.
- ◀ Support the Parkrun event as well the Run Together group and the Couch to 5k group to sustain and increase participation.

Aims

Based on the headline findings and sport by sport recommendations, the following overarching aims and their associated recommendations are considered key.

These are based on three Sport England themes:

- ◀ To **protect** the existing supply of outdoor sports facilities where it is needed for meeting current and future needs;
 - ◀ Ensure, through use of the PPS, that outdoor sports facilities are protected through implementation of local planning policy.
 - ◀ Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs through a range of solutions and partnership agreements.
 - ◀ Maximise community use of education facilities where needed.
- ◀ To **enhance** outdoor sports facilities and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites;
 - ◀ Improve quality.
 - ◀ Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites).
 - ◀ Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding.
 - ◀ Secure development contributions.
- ◀ To **provide** new outdoor sports facilities where there is current or future demand to do so;
 - ◀ Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate current and future demand.
 - ◀ Rectify quantitative shortfalls through the current pitch stock.

Delivering the Strategy

The PPS seeks to provide guidance for maintenance/management decisions and investment made across Waverley. 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 the Borough can be satisfied.

It is important that there is regular annual monitoring and review against the actions identified in the Strategy. This monitoring should be led by the local authority and supported by all members of the steering group. As a guide, if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years, Sport England and the NGBs would consider the PPS and the information on which it is based to be out of date.