

## 7. PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY 2015-31

REPORT OF: HEAD OF LEISURE AND SUSTAINABILITY  
Contact Officer: Elaine Clarke, Community Leisure Officer  
Email: elaine.clarke@midsussex.gov.uk Tel: 01444 477275  
Wards Affected: All  
Key Decision: No  
Report to: Scrutiny Committee for Leisure and Community  
14 January 2014

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### Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the draft Playing Pitch Strategy for Mid Sussex (2015-31) for consideration.

### Summary

2. This report outlines the reasons for producing a Playing Pitch Strategy, a summary of the key findings, recommendations and information regarding the next steps required to adopt the strategy as a working document.

### Recommendations

3. ***The Scrutiny Committee for Leisure and Community is recommended to:***
    - (i) ***consider and comment on the contents and recommendations made in the draft Playing Pitch Strategy, and endorse the strategy to Cabinet and:***
    - (ii) ***note the process for adoption, outlined in paragraph 17-19***
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### Background

4. The need for a Playing Pitch Strategy was identified as a recommendation in the Leisure and Cultural Strategy (2009-20) to assess current and future demand as a result of new housing development. The strategy is required to identify any under or over provision, provide an evidence base for future capital investment and an action plan to implement Council policies.
5. The Playing Pitch Strategy (2015-2031) covers the following organised outdoor sports – bowls, cricket, football, hockey, netball, rugby league, rugby union, stoolball and tennis. It includes an audit of pitches, teams and clubs, information about sites across the District, a number of policy options and recommendations.
6. Information regarding deficiencies and local needs will enable the Council to seek developer contributions and external funding for playing pitch provision in the future.

### Research and Findings

7. The strategy provides some context and outlines local demand (number of teams) and supply (number of community pitches) for each sport. It details expected housing and population growth and uses this information to analyse the future needs.

8. Table 1 shows that current provision is meeting demand but over the course of the strategy population growth will result in shortfalls in junior football, mini-soccer and cricket pitches. There will also be a need for one more ATP suitable for hockey and two more rugby pitches in the south of the District to meet local demand.

Table 1: current and forecast demand

	Bowls	Cricket	Football			Hockey	Netball	Rugby	Stoolball	Tennis
	Adult only	All	Adult	Jnr	Mini	All	All	All	All	All
Total pitches	12	38	54	41	24	8	33	13	12	108
<b>Current Shortfall / Surplus</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Forecast Shortfall / Surplus</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>59</b>

9. There are a total of 773 adult, junior and mini teams taking part in organised sport across the District at 343 community playing pitches at 91 recreation sites. The Council owns under half of these sites, the others are owned by community groups, the local education authority or private schools, sports clubs, town and parish councils.
10. To address the needs identified through the site specific analysis and review of demand, the strategy outlines the following four policies:
- additional pitches - to address the projected shortfall calculation in junior football, mini soccer hockey and cricket pitches plus any geographic anomalies which have been identified through individual club feedback.
  - relocate facilities - consider the relocation of some facilities to allow for expansion, improvements and to release land for housing
  - upgrade and improve – refurbish and develop existing facilities to meet the needs of users
  - retain and maintain – ensure the level of provision and current quality standards are upheld.
11. The cost of providing additional pitches, upgrading and / or relocating existing facilities will be funded through developer contributions and external funding sources. Each project will be considered on an individual basis and Council owned sites will be linked to the Asset Management Plan.

## Recommendations

12. The strategy concludes that the Council should protect, enhance and provide playing pitches and ancillary facilities and makes ten recommendations.

13. The Council should seek to provide additional pitches to meet increased demand. This could partly be achieved by working in partnership with Burgess Hill Town Council and supporting Haywards Heath Town Council to deliver new facilities at the Centre for Community Sport and St Francis Sports Ground respectively.
14. The Council should aim to upgrade and improve the sites identified in the Action Plan. The Action Plan should be updated annually and priorities (including those identified through neighbourhood plans) should be detailed in the Council's Infrastructure Development Plan.
15. To maintain provision a District wide quality assessment of playing pitches and sports pavilions should be carried out every three years. The strategy should be reviewed every three years. This will involve working with national governing bodies, sports clubs, town and parish councils and other providers.
16. The strategy also recommends producing a framework for transferring sites to community ownership and exploring opportunities for greater use of school sites.

### **Next steps**

17. It is important that the Playing Pitch Strategy is adopted prior to March 2015 when the District Plan Pre-Submission is finalised so it can be used as part of the evidence base.
18. Feedback from the Scrutiny Committee for Leisure and Community will help to inform the draft and the final version will be presented to Cabinet on 9 February 2015 for approval.
19. Projects identified in the action plan will be included in the Infrastructure Development Plan which will accompany the Pre-Submission District Plan when it goes out to public consultation in May/June 2015.

### **Policy Context**

20. The Corporate Plan 2014-15 (section 2b), identified 'providing input into the planning process, in order to respond to leisure and community needs brought about by residential developments within the district', as a key project.
21. Policy DP22 of the draft District Plan supports the provision of additional facilities and the protection of existing facilities and states that details about provision, including standards, will be set out in an appropriate planning document.
22. The Council's Leisure and Cultural Strategy (2009-20) recommended that a playing pitch strategy should be undertaken to determine the need for additional provision taking the projected housing and increased population forecasts into account.

### **Financial Implications**

23. Adoption of the strategy will not incur any additional revenue costs directly however any revenue costs for new facilities will be considered as part of any business case. Capital improvements will be funded through developer contributions and external funding sources.

### **Risk Management Implications**

24. The main risk is that the Council may be unable to deliver the new facilities and improvements identified within the strategy due to lack of funds or partnership engagement. Projects will be delivered in partnership with users of the facilities and priority will be given to sites with local support and community involvement.

### **Equality and Customer Service Implications**

25. The Council provides outdoor playing pitches for community use that are accessible to all residents irrespective of age, disability, gender, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy or maternity. The strategy aims to maintain and enhance Council provision and provide additional sport facilities that are accessible to all members of the community. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this strategy that highlights the need to regularly review disabled access and information about the age ranges and facilities suitable for male and female players at each site.