

PLAYING PITCH STUDY

REPORT OF: HEAD OF CORPORATE RESOURCES
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Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: No
Report to: Scrutiny Committee for Community, Customer Services and Service Delivery
Date of Meeting: 8th July 2020

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of these papers is to set out the Playing Pitch Study for the District and the associated indicative implementation plan.

Recommendations

2. **The Committee are asked to consider the Playing Pitch Study and the associated indicative implementation plan and refer it to Council with their comments.**

Background

3. In February 2015, MSDC Cabinet adopted a Playing Pitch Strategy (2015-31) as a working document. The 2015 document forms part of the evidence base for the Local Plan. The document was not, however, formally approved as Council policy and due to limited consultation with Sports' National Governing Bodies (NGBs), it was not approved by Sport England.
4. In July 2018, the Council engaged consultancy support to produce an updated Study of the District's Playing Pitches. The study followed Sport England methodology in assessing current demand and supply of provision for football, tennis, hockey, bowls, rugby, cricket, athletics and identifying future development needs, priorities and options for each sport, to inform future development.
5. This revised document, covering the period 2019-31, has been endorsed by Sport England and agreed with the NGBs.

Action Plan and Delivery

6. The study has identified 30 MSDC and 19 community owned sports sites that are recommended for capital investment. A full list of the sites is included, as Appendix A.
7. Of the MSDC sites, 22 are recommended for improvements in the short to medium term (2019-24) with 12 sites assessed as needing improvements in the longer term (2025-29). Eight projects at MSDC sites were identified by the Steering Group as Sport England priorities.
8. Seven of the identified sites already have improvement projects underway. Two projects will be delivered directly by Estates and the remaining five (three of which are on MSDC land) are being led by user groups who are supported by the Council through the release of S106 funds via the Facility Grants process

9. Some of the improvements identified by the study are relatively straightforward and would best be progressed as collective work packages rather than as individual projects. These include schemes relating to pitch drainage, tennis floodlighting and ClubSpark Technology.
10. In four areas (East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood, Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common, Hassocks and Burgess Hill) the suggested improvements will require scoping and further consideration of the options prior to decisions being made as to the specific projects which should be progressed.

Covid-19

11. The impact of the coronavirus outbreak on sport and physical activity has been huge and many clubs have had to temporarily close and will need to operate under Covid-19 Secure restrictions as they re-open.
12. The Government is working with the National Governing Bodies to produce sport specific guidance as needed in future. The sector will need support to come through this difficult period and Sport England has provided funding and advice to help sports clubs deal with the immediate priorities.
13. Health and physical fitness are more important than ever, and good outdoor sports facilities will provide opportunities for people of all ages to return to sport as lockdown eases. It may be appropriate to design or modify some facilities to allow for greater social distancing in the future.

Financial Implications

14. The Community Services Team have a role to work with all partners to deliver appropriate new developments at community owned sites and support them through the Facility Grants scheme to release S106 funds if appropriate. This forms part of the core business of the unit so can be accommodated within existing resources.
15. The delivery of the programme of Capital works will need to be supported by the Landscape and Leisure and the Estates Teams who will assume the role of Business Change Managers for the Programme as it relates to MSDC owned sites. With appropriate planning and programme management this should be able to be accommodated within the existing officer resource.
16. Funding for the majority of the identified projects is, or will become, available via S106 and/or external grant funding within the timeframes outlined. Where funding is not or doesn't become available or where new funding opportunities emerge, it will be necessary to amend the delivery timescales and potentially the scope of individual projects. The Programme Team will need to establish Outline or Full Business Cases for each project as appropriate prior to agreement to proceed. The majority of projects can be delivered through design and build contracts but a budget of up to £30,000 pa. will be needed to fund some technical feasibility and design work.

Risk Management Implications

17. The Council is holding a significant amount of Formal Sport S106 which is allocated to specific sites. There is a minor risk that if officers do not progress with a programme of infrastructure improvements these funds will need to be returned to developers. The delivery of an improvement programme funded through developer contributions will provide positive benefits and increased opportunities for local communities to engage in local sport and physical activity

18. The production of the Study and associated Implementation Plan involved extensive consultation with Town and Parish Councils, NGBs, sports clubs, Sport England and schools. Consultees are expecting the study to be published, as is common practice nationally, and if it is not made publicly available it may undermine confidence in the Council's commitment to sports development. The lack of an adopted, published Study and associated Plan will also negatively impact the ability of local organisations to externally fundraise.

Equalities and Customer Service Implications

19. The Study and plan should have no negative impacts for staff or service users under the Public Sector Equality Duty, however an Equality Impact Assessment is currently being undertaken.

Other Material Implications

20. None

Background Papers

Playing Pitch Study
Playing Pitch Indicative Implementation Plan

Appendix A

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| 2020-24 | |
| Ansty Recreation Ground* (P) | Ardingly Rec |
| Ashurst Wood Recreation Ground (P) | Balcombe Cricket Club |
| John Pears Field, Ashurst Wood* (P) | Beech Farm Field, Cuckfield |
| Balcombe Recreation Ground | East Grinstead Rugby FC* |
| Leylands Park / Burgess Hill Town FC | East Grinstead Sports Club (P) |
| Centre for Community Sport / The Triangle (P) | East Grinstead Tennis & Squash Club |
| Southway Rec, Burgess Hill (P) | GAC Stadium, East Grinstead* |
| Whiteman's Green, Cuckfield* (P) | Imberhorne Upper School, East Grinstead |
| Cuckfield Recreation Ground | Adastra Park, Hassocks |
| Haven Field, Crawley Down | Downlands School, Hassocks |
| King Georges V Field, Crawley Down | Oathall Community College, Haywards Heath |
| Imberhorne Lane Rec, East Grinstead (P) | Crawley Down Cricket Club* |
| King Georges Field, East Grinstead | |
| Clayton Green, Hassocks | |
| London Road Rec, Hassocks | |
| Beech Hurst Gardens, Haywards Heath | |
| Tim Farmer Rec, Haywards Heath | |
| Victoria Park, Haywards Heath* | |
| Berrylands Rec, Hurstpierpoint | |
| Court Bushes Rec, Hurstpierpoint (P) | |
| Fairfield Rec, Hurstpierpoint | |
| Lindfield Common* | |
| 2025+ | |
| St Johns Park, Burgess Hill* | Bolney Cricket Club |
| Worlds End Rec, Burgess Hill | St Pauls Catholic College, Burgess Hill |
| East Court Rec, East Grinstead | Hardy Memorial Field, Haywards Heath |
| Mount Noddy, East Grinstead | St Francis Sports Ground, Haywards Heath (P) |
| Haywards Heath Recreation Ground | Horsted Keynes Rec |
| Hickmans Lane, Lindfield | North Lane Rec, West Hoathly |
| Finches Field, Slaugham | King George Playing Field, Copthorne (P) |
| Hook Lane, West Hoathly | |

*projects underway

(P) Sport England priority project