

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

7 February 2017

Subject: Wiltshire Playing Pitch Strategy

Cabinet Member: Cllr Jonathon Seed and Cllr Toby Sturgis

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary

This report considers the background and context to the development of the Council's first Playing Pitch Strategy, which comprises four documents; the Wiltshire Playing Pitch Strategy; the Action Plan; the Community Area Profiles; the full needs assessment.

The Playing Pitch Strategy has been developed to support the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the need for a single Wiltshire-wide open spaces standard. The Playing Pitch Strategy forms Part 3 of the wider Wiltshire Open Spaces Study. Both documents will also provide a useful evidence base for neighbourhood planning groups in developing their plans, and for town and parish councils in identifying local priorities to be delivered through CIL funding. The needs assessments within the documents will also be used to inform and support the Council's planners in negotiations with developers.

The strategy has been developed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and informed by the former guidance provided in 'Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation', and its Companion Guide 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities', which is a tried and tested methodology.

In September 2014, a Steering Group was established to progress the development of the Playing Pitch Strategy. Membership of the group included Wiltshire Council officers, Sport England, the National Governing Body (NGB) officers for football, cricket, rugby and hockey (county development managers and regional strategic facility development managers) and the county sports partnership.

Taking full note of guidance produced in 2013 by Sport England, the study audited over 300 sites that have a record of being used for sports pitches. Over 600 sports pitches in total were assessed catering for over 900 teams playing football, rugby, cricket and hockey. In addition formation has been collated through a series of consultations with the respective NGBs, pitch providers, local clubs, education providers and league secretaries.

This has led to the production of four key documents:

- i. **The Strategy:** An overarching document providing context and

- guidance for the future provision and protection of pitch sport opportunities within Wiltshire
- ii. **Action Plan (Part 1):** The generic actions relating to the steering group's objectives
 - iii. **The Community Area Profiles (Action Plan Part 2):** 18 separate profiles, based on Community Board areas, providing a summary review of each community area
 - iv. **The Needs Assessment:** The technical report examining overall supply and demand for pitch sports and is therefore the detailed 'evidence base' used to inform the other documents

Following a six week public consultation, November 2016 – January 2017, the Wiltshire Playing Pitch Strategy is complete and ready for formal adoption by the council.

Proposals

Cabinet is requested to determine the following:

1. Formally adopt the Wiltshire Playing Pitch Strategy, Action Plan, Community Area Profiles and Needs Assessment and to inform decision making and policy development.

Reason for Proposals

A Playing Pitch Strategy for Wiltshire is an important document that underpins the core strategy and provides robust evidence for organisations such as Sport England who are statutory consultees in the planning process. Whilst not a statutory requirement in itself, the Playing Pitch Strategy is vital in providing an informed evidence base for the protection and future development of formal outdoor space.

The Playing Pitch Strategy will help to influence a variety of local authority functions, policy development and decision making in respect of the community playing pitch stock, including planning policy and planning applications, educational provision, funding, facility and asset management, development of pitch based sports, public health and the management and maintenance of provision.

The presence of a Playing Pitch Strategy is seen as best practice by the Department for Culture Media and Sport and Sport England.

Dr Carlton Brand
Carolyn Godfrey

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

7 February 2017

Subject: Wiltshire Playing Pitch Strategy

Cabinet Member: Cllr Jonathon Seed and Cllr Toby Sturgis

Key Decision: Yes

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report considers the background and context to the development of the Council's first Playing Pitch Strategy, which comprises four documents; the Wiltshire Playing Pitch Strategy; the Action Plan; the Community Area Profiles; the full needs assessment. Cabinet is requested to formally adopt the Wiltshire Playing Pitch Strategy and associated documents that will be used in decision making and to inform the development of planning policy.

2. Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2.1 The Wiltshire Playing Pitch Strategy is relevant to the following areas of the Business Plan:

2.2 Outcome 5 of the council's 2013 - 17 Business Plan states that: 'People in Wiltshire have healthy, active and high quality lives'. To deliver this, the Council will ensure that 'public health is integrated into the heart of all services'. (Key action 10).

2.3 Outcome 4 states that 'Everyone in Wiltshire lives in a high-quality environment'.

2.4 Leisure Services are an intrinsic part of the Council's wider Public Health services. These services are able to build on existing links between each other and other Council services to maximise opportunities to promote healthy behaviours, choices and environments to help Wiltshire's population stay active. This includes access to both open space and formal sports pitches to support healthy lifestyles.

3. Main Considerations for the Council

3.1 The Playing Pitch Strategy is being developed to support the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the need for a single Wiltshire-wide open spaces

standard. The Playing Pitch Strategy forms Part 3 of the Wiltshire Open Spaces Study.

- 3.2 The strategy has been developed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and informed by the former guidance provided in 'Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation', and its Companion Guide 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities', which is a tried and tested methodology.
- 3.3 The formation of Wiltshire Council as a Unitary Authority has highlighted a lack of consistency between the former district playing pitch strategies, policies and underlying evidence bases covering different parts of Wiltshire, several of which date back to the early 2000s.
- 3.4 The existence of a robust, evidence based and up-to-date Playing Pitch Strategy covering the entire local authority area will help to influence a variety of local authority functions, policy development and decision making in respect of the community playing pitch stock, including planning policy and planning applications, educational provision, funding, facility and asset management, development of pitch based sports, public health and the management and maintenance of provision.
- 3.5 Sport England is a statutory consultee in the planning process; and, both Sport England and the National Governing Bodies of Sport are potential funders of capital projects for sports. A prerequisite of funding by these organisations for major capital projects involving playing pitches is that 'a playing pitch study/strategy of an acceptable standard' should be available. Therefore it is essential that a strategic document is robust and can be referred to in future consultations.
- 3.6 The presence of a Playing Pitch Strategy is seen as best practice by the Department of Culture Media and Sport and Sport England.

4. Background

- 4.1 In 2014, Spatial Planning (with the support of Leisure Services), appointed a company called Ethos to undertake an Open Spaces Audit in order to inform a new policy for the Wiltshire Core Strategy. The aim of the Open Spaces Audit was to provide a robust assessment of needs and deficiencies in open spaces, upon which emerging policy within the revised Wiltshire Core Strategy should be based. In addition, an up to date evidence base was created which will be maintained to aid implementation of the policies and the provision of open spaces during the plan period (up to 2026). The Open Spaces audit covers more informal recreational spaces.

- 4.2 Due to the inconsistencies between the former districts Playing Pitch Strategies and no county-wide approach for Wiltshire as a unitary authority, Ethos was also commissioned to prepare a Playing Pitch Strategy for the Council as part of the wider study of open spaces in Wiltshire.
- 4.3 Leisure Services has worked in partnership with Spatial Planning to develop both the Open Spaces Study and the Playing Pitch Strategy, both of which will be used as evidence bases for the review of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. Both documents will also provide a useful evidence base for neighbourhood planning groups in developing their plans, and for town and parish councils in identifying local priorities to be delivered through CIL funding. The needs assessments within the documents will also be used to inform and support the Council's planners in negotiations with developers.
- 4.4 In September 2014, a Steering Group was established to progress the development of the Playing Pitch Strategy. Membership of the group included Wiltshire Council officers, Sport England, the National Governing Body (NGB) officers for football, cricket, rugby and hockey (county development managers and regional strategic facility development managers) and the county sports partnership.
- 4.5 The approach to undertaking the project has taken full note of guidance produced in 2013 by Sport England. The guidance has five discrete stages, incorporating 10 individual steps, as summarised below.

Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach (Step 1)

Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision (Steps 2 & 3)

Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views (Steps 4, 5 & 6)

Stage D: Develop the strategy (Steps 7 & 8)

Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date (Steps 9 & 10)

- 4.6 The study audited over 300 sites that have a record of being used for sports pitches. Over 600 sports pitches in total were assessed catering for over 900 teams playing football, rugby, cricket and hockey. The playing pitch quality assessment information collated includes:
- Site name, location and reference details
 - Ownership and management type
 - Number and type of pitches

- How accessible the pitches are to the community
 - The quality of the pitches and ancillary facilities
 - How the site and its pitches are maintained
 - The current level of protection and security of tenure
 - Views of users, providers and other parties.
- 4.7 Information has been collated through a series of consultations with the respective NGBs, pitch providers, local clubs, education providers and league secretaries, and included:
- Sports Clubs (Matches & Training)
 - Casual and other demand
 - Educational demand
 - Displaced demand
 - Unmet and latent demand
 - Trends and changes in demand
 - Future demand

5. Consultation and Strategy Adoption Process

5.1 The Playing Pitch Strategy Steering Group signed off Stages A, B, C and D of the draft Playing Pitch Strategy process resulting in the production of four key documents:

- **The Strategy:** This is an overarching document providing context and guidance for the future provision and protection of pitch sport opportunities within Wiltshire (Appendix 1).
- **Action Plan (Part 1):** This document has the generic actions relating to the steering group's objectives (Appendix 2).
- **The Community Area Profiles (Action Plan Part 2):** This document has 18 separate profiles, based on Community Board areas, providing a summary review of each community area (Appendix 3). These profiles only show sites which are priorities 1-3.
- **The Needs Assessment:** This document is the technical report examining overall supply and demand for pitch sports and is therefore the detailed 'evidence base' used to inform the other documents (Appendix 4).

5.2 The vision and key aims of Wiltshire's Playing Pitch Strategy are:

'To achieve the best possible quality, quantity and type of playing pitch provision to meet the varying needs of Wiltshire's residents, throughout the local authority area.'

- *Provide an evidence base that underpins the statutory land-use planning process in respect of its forward planning and development control functions (i.e. the Core Planning Strategy)*
- *Underpin the development of a range of council policies and strategies, including the development plan framework; leisure strategies; public health strategies and community infrastructure plans.*

- *Support the overall management, protection, improvement and conservation of the playing pitch stock to the best advantage of the residents of Wiltshire.*
- *Create an environment for sport and healthy physical activity which helps to improve the health and wellbeing of the population, increase participation levels and reduce inactivity and inequalities*
- *Inform the council in its negotiation and securing of Section 106 agreements, and other developer contributions.*

5.3 Whilst the Playing Pitch Strategy information will be used to underpin the Core Strategy, the Strategy itself should be formally adopted by the council in its own right and in this respect the Playing Pitch Strategy requires Cabinet approval.

5.4 Notwithstanding the significant amount of consultation and development already undertaken in the preparation of the draft strategy, action plan and needs assessment, Wiltshire Council recognises the vital importance of local knowledge. Therefore, prior to formal adoption by Cabinet the Council has sought the views of local communities and other interested parties about the issues and priorities identified for each of the Community Areas together with correcting any omissions or inaccuracies in the base data. Public consultation was undertaken on the draft Wiltshire Playing Pitch Strategy documents from 22 November using the Council's on-line consultation portal for a period of six weeks and 5 days, closing 09 January 2017. It was also advertised via the Community Area Board Networks. Consultees included: town and parish councils, developers, statutory consultees and the National Governing Bodies of Sport.

5.5. Comments were received from 27 organisations, two of whom also incorporated comments from appropriate sub-groups. Feedback was generally positive and supportive of the development of the Strategy. Specific comments were made regarding the accuracy of the some of the data, including formal names of recreation grounds and suggestions of potential developments from local sports clubs and organisations. This information has been checked by the NGBs and amendments made to the final version of the Community Area Profiles (Action Plan Part 2). There is nothing received in the consultation that changes the fundamental principles of the Wiltshire Playing Pitch Strategy.

5.6 As part of the consultation process, the Environment Select Committee, also provided comments on the draft strategy and endorsed its production, at its meeting on 13 December 2016. Please see section 6 for the outcomes of this meeting.

6. Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

- 6.1. As part of the process for adopting the Wiltshire Playing Pitch Strategy, Cllr Jerry Kunkler presented an overview of the strategy to the Environment Select Committee on 13 December 2016. The committee was invited to comment on the draft strategy and endorse its production. Officers answered queries and noted points for further clarification.
- 6.2 The Environment Select Committee resolved to:
 - 6.2.1 Endorse the draft Wiltshire Playing Pitch Strategy with comments made.
 - 6.2.2 For the Environment Select Committee to receive annual updates on the implementation of the Wiltshire Playing Pitch Strategy.

7. Safeguarding Implications

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding implications associated with the Playing Pitch Strategy.

8. Public Health Implications

- 8.1 Outcome 4 of the Council's Business Plan 2013 – 2017 states that 'Everyone in Wiltshire lives in a high quality environment'.

Leisure Services are an intrinsic part of the Council's wider Public Health services. These services are able to build on existing links between each other and other Council services to maximise opportunities to promote healthy behaviours, choices and environments to help Wiltshire's population stay active. This includes access to both open space and formal sports pitches to support healthy lifestyles.

9. Procurement Implications

- 9.1 There are no procurement implications associated with the adoption of the Playing Pitch Strategy. If in delivering the strategy such procurement requirements arise then these will be undertaken in consultation with the Strategic Procurement Hub and in accordance with the Council's Contract and Procurement Regulations, part 10 of the Constitution.

10. Equalities Impact of the Proposal

- 10.1 The Playing Pitch Strategy identifies where there is potential under provision of facilities and opportunities for the development of new sites. The strategy will therefore help to increase participation in sports across the county, particularly in areas with greater deprivation.
- 10.2 The Playing Pitch Strategy supports "Sporting Future - A New Strategy for an Active Nation". This cross-government strategy seeks to address flat lining levels of sport participation and high levels of inactivity in this

country. Funding will partly be targeted at groups who have low participation rates to encourage those who do not take part in sport and physical activity to get involved. This includes supporting women, disabled people, those in lower socio-economic groups and older people.

11. Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

11.1 From an environmental perspective the Playing Pitch Strategy seeks to protect formal green space, where that space is used for pitch sports and where feasible that the relevant space is enhanced to incorporate better drainage, layout and access.

12. Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

12.1 The adoption of a Playing Pitch Strategy will negate certain risks associated with not having a strategy. The Playing Pitch Strategy provides clarity regarding priorities for Wiltshire. It provides underpinning documentation to the Core Strategy regarding green space; give sports organisations including Sport England and National Governing Bodies of sport robust needs based evidence to support funding and planning applications; provides strategic direction to support the use of developer contributions and secures existing playing pitch space through planning policy regulations.

13. Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

13.1 Adopting a county-wide Playing Pitch Strategy may appear to suggest a loss of local influence however local sports clubs and the county National Governing Bodies of sport have been engaged in the development of the strategy and consultation of the draft strategy to mitigate this. In addition any future improvements, or developments will be made with the clubs, and land owners/lessees fully engaged in the process.

14. Financial Implications

14.1 There are no direct financial implications as part of the Playing Pitch Strategy itself. The strategy provides an ongoing planning document that allows the strategic improvement and development of sports pitches to be delivered by a multitude of partners and funding bodies.

14.2 It is anticipated in Year 1, following the adoption of the Strategy that the NGBs will identify their priority development areas, which the Steering Group will agree. It will be for the partners to work with local clubs, sports associations, town and parish councils to support developments, developers to recognise the strategic need for their developer contributions and for the council to identify the best use of S106 and CIL funding and therefore secure the appropriate contributions from developers. Any new developments or expenditure would need to be considered against available funding before being agreed.

15. Legal Implications

- 15.1 The adoption of a sound evidence based and up-to-date Playing Pitch Strategy covering the entire local authority area will help to influence a variety of local authority functions, policy development and decision making in respect of the community playing pitch stock, including planning policy and planning applications, educational provision, funding, facility and asset management, development of pitch based sports, public health and the management and maintenance of provision.
- 15.2 It is important, if and when adopted, as part of its implementation thought is given to ensuring that the master copy is easily accessible to all officers to ensure that all officers are working with the latest version and it can meet the strategic purpose of being a source document in such decision making

16. Conclusions

- 16.1 A Playing Pitch Strategy for Wiltshire is an important document that underpins the core strategy and provides robust evidence for organisations such as Sport England who are statutory consultees in the planning process. Whilst not a statutory requirement in itself, the Playing Pitch Strategy is vital in providing an informed evidence base for the protection and future development of formal outdoor space.

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Date of report: 07 February 2017

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Wiltshire Playing Pitch Strategy
- Appendix 2: Action Plan Part 1 (generic actions to deliver the strategy)
- Appendix 3: Community Area Profiles (Action Plan Part 2)
- Appendix 4: Needs Assessment

Background Papers

None