

Report To:	CABINET
Date:	21ST FEBRUARY 2023
Heading:	PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY
Executive Lead Member:	CLLR RACHEL MADDEN, EXECUTIVE LEAD MEMBER FOR LEISURE, HEALTH AND WELLBEING
Ward/s:	ALL WARDS
Key Decision:	NO
Subject to Call-In:	YES

Purpose of Report

To approve consultation with stakeholders on the Draft Playing Pitch Strategy for a minimum of six weeks following approval by Cabinet.

Recommendation(s)

1. To approve consultation with stakeholders on the Draft Playing Pitch Strategy for a minimum of six weeks following approval by Cabinet.
2. To delegate authority to the Director Place and Communities to make any minor amendments to the Strategy following consultation and to then complete the adoption process.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

The Playing Pitch Strategy is a supporting document and part of the evidence base for the Local Plan. The previous Strategy is now out of date and it is good practice to have an up to date document which will support the strategic development and improvement of outdoor sports facilities and funding applications.

Alternative Options Considered

Not to adopt the new Strategy – rejected – the Strategy has been prepared and is required for the Local Plan. The Strategy also provides strategic direction for outdoor sports facilities.

Detailed Information

The Strategy has been developed in accordance with national planning guidance, in order to provide a robust evidence base for future playing pitch provision within Ashfield. The Strategy forms part of the evidence base for the Council's Emerging Local Plan.

A comprehensive process is undertaken to collect and analyse the data required for a Playing Pitch Strategy. This includes:

- Review of previous Playing Pitch Strategy (adopted 2017)
- Engaging with Sport England and the National Governing Bodies for outdoor sports, such as the Football Association and England Rugby
- Mapping of facilities and pitch provision
- Undertaking a consultation with sports clubs, schools and local leagues
- Assessing the condition of outdoor sports provision across the District
- Assessing survey results and calculating current and future demand for facilities
- Developing an action plan to address the key issues identified.

The Strategy provides evidence on the supply and demand for sports pitches arising from new development and the existing population, to ensure that suitable provision can be made in the future.

The Playing Pitch Strategy covers the public, private, educational, voluntary and commercial sectors and covers the following outdoor sports provision: Football, Rugby Union, Cricket, Hockey, Tennis, Bowls, Netball and AGP (artificial grass pitch) provision.

The previous Strategy had established a vision and focus for three key areas and these have been updated and incorporated into the new Strategy:

Vision

To ensure adequate distribution of good quality sports facilities across the District, both now and in the future, to support and increase participation in sport and improved health and wellbeing.

The Playing Pitch Strategy provides a focus for three key areas:

- Sustainable long-term management of outdoor sports facilities
- Evidence of need and priorities to support funding bids for continued improvement of facilities
- Provision of new facilities through the development process where a need has been identified.

The following aims have been identified:

1. **ACCESS & PROVISION** - protect existing outdoor sports facilities and provide new facilities where there is current or future anticipated demand
2. **QUALITY & MANAGEMENT** - improve the quality of existing facilities.

These aims will be achieved through adoption of the Local Plan and implementation of the Strategy Action Plan with site specific projects incorporated into the Council's Green Space Programme.

The draft Strategy is included at Annex 1.

Following approval of the draft strategy by Cabinet the strategy will be sent to stakeholders for review and comment for a period of six weeks. Sport England and the National Governing Bodies for the relevant sports have already provided feedback on the results of the consultation and background work.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

The Playing Pitch Strategy contributes to realising the Council's vision for the Cleaner Greener priority of the Corporate Plan, through the following Key Projects, Programmes and Initiatives-

1. Continue to review, improve and rationalise green space facilities.

Legal:

The Strategy forms part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan. [RLD 25/01/2023]

Finance:

There are no direct financial implications arising from approval of this draft Strategy. [PH 26/01/2023].

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	N/A
General Fund – Capital Programme	N/A
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	N/A
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	N/A

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Not updating the Playing Pitch Strategy to support negotiations with developers for open space provision and external funding strategies to secure third party grants.	The Strategy provides an up-to-date evidence base for future development and investment in sports pitches and associated facilities.

Human Resources:

No implications identified.

Environmental/Sustainability

The Strategy will support the Council's ongoing programme of rationalisation of outdoor sports facilities. This includes retrofitting of solar panels, improving insulation and LED lighting to support carbon reduction. Rationalising of pitch sites will also reduce mowing, allowing grass to grow longer, supporting wildlife.

Equalities:

An Equality Impact Assessment Screening has been undertaken to determine if the draft strategy may result in a negative impact on the people representative of the protected characteristics. The screening showed that there would not be a negative impact.

Other Implications:

No implications

Reason(s) for Urgency

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Exemption

Not applicable

Background Papers

Annex 1 – draft Playing Pitch Strategy

Report Author and Contact Officer

Sarah Daniel
Assistant Director Place and Wellbeing
sarah.daniel@ashfield.gov.uk
01623 457249

Sponsoring Director

Robert Docherty
Director Place and Communities
robert.docherty@ashfield.gov.uk
01623 457183