

Test Valley Borough Playing Pitch and Sport Facilities Strategies

Report of the Community and Leisure Portfolio Holder

Recommended:

1. That the Test Valley Borough Playing Pitch Strategy (Annex 1 to the report), Sport Facilities Strategy (Annex 2 to the report) and Executive summary (Annex 3 to the report), be approved and published.
2. That an Annual Monitoring report will be produced to keep the strategies current.

SUMMARY:

- The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and Sport and Facilities Strategy (SFS) as linked documents that will continue to guide the Council's current and future strategic direction for sport, recreation and physical activity provision.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and Sport Facilities Strategy (SFS) are key policy documents which are used to set out the approach to protection, enhancement and investment in sport, recreation, and physical activity pursuits across the borough. These strategies will inform the future Local Plan and other Council strategies.
- 1.2 These two strategies work in unison to represent and report on a full range of physical activity pursuits. The PPS and SFS will inform future planning documents to guide the approach for new developments and facilities which reflect the needs of communities.
- 1.3 In line with Sport England guidance, annual reviews will be undertaken to ensure they remain up to date. The new strategies will therefore replace the 2014 and 2015 documents.
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of both the PPS and SFS 2020, The strategies and the action plans they contain will inform the to sport, recreation and physical activity going forward. It will be essential for us to continue a joined up approach to implementation, including with the National Governing Bodies, local sports clubs and communities.

2 Background

- 2.1 In the past six months the value of accessible physical activity pursuits has been emphasised by the impact of Coronavirus. This highlights the importance of having and maintaining clear strategies regarding sport and physical activity provision. This links to wider strategies within the council including the Green Space Strategy which demonstrates the value of green spaces for peoples physical and mental wellbeing and ability to pursue physical activity.
- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that planning policies should be based on robust and up to date assessments of the needs for sport and recreation facilities. Sport England has provided specific guidance on the preparation of Playing Pitch Strategies, with wider guidance of relevant to the assessment of non-pitched based sports and physical activities.
- 2.3 The previous PPS and SFS (known previously as the Sport and Recreation Strategy) were developed in 2014/2015. A vast amount of development has been seen across the borough from the opening of Andover Leisure Centre, to new pitches in both the north and south. Wider forms of physical activity have seen investment including new Skate parks and a new Park Run in Romsey. The next 12 months will also see new pitches at Abbotswood open for public use and the adoption of Ganger Farm Sports Ground and all its facilities.
- 2.4 The guidance provided by Sport England highlights the importance of reviewing and, where relevant, updating such strategies to ensure they remain robust. Taking account of the changes in provision for sports and recreation, it was necessary to update the PPS and SFS. Therefore, the new strategies will replace the previous documents.
- 2.5 To develop the strategies, the Sport England guidance was followed, whilst taking account of locally specific considerations. A consultant was appointed to undertake the preparation of the strategies. Their work was co-ordinated by a steering group including representatives of Sporting National Governing Bodies (Rugby, Football, Hockey, Cricket), Sport England, Energise Me, and the local leisure provider (Places Leisure). Wider community engagement was undertaken with schools, Parish Councils and local sports clubs between February 2019 and December 2019 to inform the strategies.
- 2.6 The outcomes of the PPS and SFS will feed into the preparation of the next Local Plan. The strategies set out the objectives for the facilities and types of provision needed for the sports and physical activities considered, inform the approach to relevant planning applications and highlight future need across the borough.
- 2.7 Both the PPS and SFS are therefore key documents which will inform the Council's priority areas which can be incorporated and implemented over the coming years. In line with Sport England guidance, annual reviews will be undertaken to ensure they remain up to date.

- 2.8 These strategies have been developed as a cross service project between Community and Leisure and Planning Policy to ensure a thorough understanding and value of the outcomes. Thus enhancing the Council's ability to implement both strategies and priorities.

3 Corporate Objectives and Priorities

- 3.1 The PPS and SFS function as key supplementary planning documents in addition to service led implementable action plans to better provide for the evolving needs of borough residents.
- 3.2 The PPS and SFS provide implementable action plans which help to meet the ambitions of the Corporate Plan, growing the potential of current sport and physical activity provision and identify wider areas which should be protected or enhanced to better meet community needs.
- 3.3 The strategies identify a number of strengths within current provision but also priority areas for action by the Council, national governing bodies, clubs and other organisations. Strength lies in the current pitch stock and facility provision. Although some reconfiguration is required to make the best use of these facilities, there is a good supply of pitches across Test Valley. Another strength is in the quality of the cricket provision, particularly in the south of the borough.
- 3.4 Priority areas include improvement to ancillary provision for local sports teams, an aging supply of unsecured halls provision, and an undersupply of artificial pitches for both football and hockey.
- 3.5 It is important to emphasise that the provision for sport and physical activity is an ongoing and ever changing challenge. In response to Covid-19, there may be clubs and organisations that emerge as priority groups requiring additional assistance not currently identified within the strategies.

4 Consultations/Communications

- 4.1 The development of the PPS and SFS followed Sport England guidance, including their terms of consultation and engagement. The outputs are essential to ensure the PPS and SFS are based on a complete understanding of the current and future needs of specific sports and physical activities. This was led by a consultant who completed consultation with clubs, user groups and other stakeholders (including parish councils) over an eleven month period. The national governing bodies aided in the dissemination of information to relevant sports clubs.
- 4.2 The responses were reviewed by members of the steering group, this included representatives from Sport England, as well as Rugby, Football, Cricket and Hockey National governing bodies. The steering group members are expected to be represented in the annual reviews of the strategies.

5 Options

- 5.1 The consideration is whether or not to approve the Playing Pitch and Sport Facilities Strategies.

6 Option Appraisal

- 6.1 The consideration is whether or not to accept and publish the Playing Pitches and Sport Facilities strategies.
- 6.2 Sport England guidance (on PPSs) sets out that local authorities should approve the output strategies – it is one of the ten stages in PPS preparation. This is to ensure the status of the documents is recognised so as to aid in its implementation and the weight it is afforded in making relevant decisions. In order to comply with the Sport England guidance, it is recommended that the strategies are approved.

7 Risk Management.

- 7.1 Agreeing and implementing up to date strategies concerning Playing Pitches and Sport and Recreation facilities protects existing sites and enabled a better understanding of the borough wide requirements for future changes or development.
- 7.2 These strategies provide the rationale to direct the council in the sport and physical activity provision required – ensuring that required community provision is protected. Without such documents this cannot be demonstrated and our policy position is weakened.

8 Resource Implications

- 8.1 The principal resource in maintaining this document as current is an annual review of provision and demand and management of the steering group. This will require officer time.
- 8.2 There are no direct financial implications of approving these reports – however there is likely to be resources needed to implement specific projects. These will be subject to other Council consideration and approval processes as appropriate – Annual Budget setting, asset management planning, capital planning, grants, CIL bidding etc. Approval in the strategy does not imply financial commitment for project delivery at this stage.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 The Council is expected to maintain a robust assessment of pitch quality and availability to assist Sport England as a statutory consultee. Both these strategies will act as key documents in regards to protecting, enhancing or investing in sport, physical activity or recreation in the future.

10 Equality Issues

- 10.1 By following the Sport England methodology both the PPS and SFS are considered to be inclusive reviews of individuals, organisations and sporting activities across the borough.

11 Other Issues

11.1 Community Safety – N/A

11.2 Environmental Health Issues – N/A

11.3 Sustainability and Addressing a Changing Climate – N/A

11.4 Property Issues – Both the PPS and SFS represent both the management of TVBC own estate, but also reporting on the availability, quality and accessibility of wider privately leased clubs, organisations, and facilities. The action plan highlights the ambitions of these groups and facilities, however does not financially commit the council to these ambitions.

11.5 Wards/Communities Affected – All.

12 Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

12.1 As essential evidence documents for the Local Plan, maintaining a robust audit of supply and demand of all of our sporting infrastructure is essential. Adoption and approval of these strategies will ensure that our evidence base is up to date, enable robust defence of our sports infrastructure evidence of need, and assist in prioritising projects and resources going forward.

Background Papers

Sport England https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport?section=assessing_needs_and_playing_pitch_strategy_guidance

Confidentiality

It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.

No of Annexes:	3	File Ref:	N/A
Portfolio- (Community and Leisure) Councillor I Jeffrey			
Officer:	Kerry Wardell	Ext:	8765
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	9 September 2020