



Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 21st August
2018

To Cllr McGuinness – Portfolio Holder for Communities and Voluntary Sector and Environment and Cllr Ball - Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Leisure and Culture

ADOPTION OF THE PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY AND ASSOCIATED ACTION PLAN

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Cllr McGuinness – Portfolio Holder for communities and voluntary sector and environment Cllr Ball - Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Leisure and Culture	All	Yes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides an overview of the cross cutting Playing Pitch Strategy which sets out actions and recommendations to maintain and improve the future delivery of sports pitches (playing fields) and associated sports facilities between 2018 and 2033. The strategy covers the sports of Football, Cricket, Hockey, Bowls, Rugby Union and Rugby League. The strategic vision sets out how the document will help the council and its partners to secure access to high quality opportunities for sport and recreation, and also ensure our associated planning policies are based on a robust and up-to-date assessment of the needs for sports and opportunities for new provision.

2. Sport England, who are a statutory consultee on relevant planning applications, place great weight on locally prepared and robust playing pitch strategies to inform planning applications and Local Plans, and can object to Local Plans which lack this evidence. This playing pitch strategy will contribute toward the Local Plan evidence base lowering the risk that Local Plan is found unsound at

examination.

3. The strategy has been prepared with input from internal and external stakeholders. Internally colleagues from Planning, Leisure Services, Public Health and Streetscene have contributed to the work and externally stakeholders from the Sheffield and Hallamshire FA, The Football Foundation, Yorkshire Cricket Board, The ECB, the RFU, the RFL and England Hockey; and Sport England have provided a significant contribution with regard to their specialist areas.

4. The playing pitch strategy is an integral element of Get Doncaster Moving the boroughs physical activity and sport strategy designed to enable a greater proportion of Doncaster residents to become more active and subsequently improve health. The strategy will also allow DMBC and our stakeholders to be more strategic in applying for funding to the Football Association, Sport England and other funders potentially resulting in greater investment.

5. The vision has three overarching objectives which will **'Provide, Protect, and Enhance'** playing fields, sports pitches and associated recreational facilities within the borough.

EXEMPT REPORT

6. Not applicable

RECOMMENDATIONS

7. It is recommended that Cllr Ball and Cllr McGuinness the Cabinet members for Public Health, Leisure and Culture; and Communities, Voluntary Sector & Environment respectively, approve the adoption of the Playing Pitch Strategy and associated Action Plans. Adoption of the strategy will ensure there is a strategic coordinated approach to the protection, provision and delivery of the playing pitches around the borough providing the facilities required to improve the health and well-being of our residents.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

8. Across Doncaster there are high levels of obesity and ill health within the community and levels of sport and physical activity, although increasing are low compared to the national and regional average. Corporately Doncaster council is signed up to getting people more physically active through our get Doncaster moving programme. The council's 'Growing Together' programme says we will support everyone to become more active and take part in activities and pursuits they enjoy. Doncaster MBC has also recently been chosen by Sport England as one of twelve local authorities to participate in a local delivery pilot to tackle inactivity (2018 - 2022). The document will provide a sound evidence base to assist with this work by helping to identify existing provision, where opportunities to increase participation exist and where there is a need to enhance the facilities.

BACKGROUND

What is the Playing Pitch Assessment and Strategy?

9. The Playing Pitch Strategy and associated assessment provides the council with all the relevant information required to assess sports pitch (playing field) provision in the borough and develop a strategy with a vision, actions and

recommendations to address identified issues. The Playing Pitch Assessment is an extensive document informing the development of the strategy. Comprehensive consultation was carried out with input from local clubs, league secretaries, National Governing Bodies and external stakeholders. The Playing Pitch Strategy includes a complete audit of sites with quality information, summarises issues and sets out actions and recommendations to maintain and improve the future delivery of sports pitches (playing fields) and facilities until 2033. It also includes a complete audit of teams playing or wanting to play within Doncaster. For each sport the assessment summarises the supply of facilities, outlines current demand, and projected demand, evaluates the adequacy of provision to meet current and projected demand and identifies key issues for the playing pitch strategy to address.

Why do we need a Strategy?

10. We need the strategy for a number of reasons. It identifies the locations of, and assesses the quality of all playing pitches and associated facilities in the borough. The strategy identifies ownership, community / club use and whether it is secure or not. It also includes information on where the community use of school sports pitches is feasible and most needed to contribute toward provision. This information can also be used to identifying where the lack of a facility is not meeting community needs and /or may be suppressing the formation of local teams. The Strategy covers three main objectives as mentioned earlier. Protect, Provide and Enhance.

11. The National Planning Policy Framework requires all councils to have robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessment work and strategy will provide the council with all the relevant information to help inform the development and implementation of specific planning policy. The document will contribute to the evidence base to support the Doncaster Local Plan which will protect playing pitches at a local level when complete. It will influence policies related to green infrastructure, leisure, outdoor sports facilities and health and well-being. It will also improve evidence required to protect and enhance existing provision and inform planning application consultation responses affecting existing playing fields or creation of new sports facilities / playing fields.

12. The strategy will improve on our existing information helping respond to budget pressures, with a view to ensuring the efficient management and maintenance of pitch provision. It also provides information on local needs and priorities by identifying current, lapsed and disused sites and provides recommendations as to whether the current maintenance and management regimes are appropriate or require change. The information in the strategy will contribute toward ensuring sports facilities are effectively managed and maintained, that best uses are made of existing resources and also allow us to be more strategic in accessing funding.

13. The assessment and strategy will support the delivery of Get Doncaster Moving strategy and the Doncaster Physical Activity and Sport Strategy 2014 – 2020, and complement existing work to review leisure facility provision to provide the information, guidance and recommendations required to allow people to become more active and subsequently improve the health and well-being of local residents. Working with stakeholders we will be able to address shortcomings in training facilities to support team development and provide creative solutions to

help clubs raise standards. There is also the potential for mutual benefit between clubs and education providers to share resources and sustain or increase participation.

14. *Next steps*

- Undertake member's workshop
- Develop communications strategy for the report
- Ensure that the findings of this assessment are considered when making decisions relating to playing fields
- Ensure appropriate policy requiring the protection of pitches is included within emerging local plan
- Work with smaller clubs to ensure that any availability at peak times is maximised by offering to other/larger clubs
- Prioritise the provision of synthetic pitches across all sports
- Review existing grounds maintenance procedures against 'best practice'
- Provide ongoing support to improve quality of existing facilities. This should include support to identify opportunities for capital investment
- Build a relationship with schools and ensure that appropriate agreements are in place to maximise community use
- Retain a strategic reserve of pitches to enable rest and rotation in the event of quality and quantity issues
- Review pricing policy for sites
- Review opportunities to reinstate lapsed sites
- Work with clubs to provide appropriate training facilities where there is evidence of need
- Support improvements to pitches where these are required through the provision of capital funding and/or preparing/supporting external funding bids to facilitate qualitative improvements.
- Support improvements to clubhouses where these are required through the provision of capital funding and/or preparing/supporting external funding bids to facilitate qualitative improvements

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

15. It is considered there are two main options available:
- Option 1: Support the adoption of the Playing Pitch Strategy (recommended)
 - Option 2: Do not support the adoption of the Playing Pitch Strategy. (To not adopt the Playing Pitch Strategy would impact on the soundness of the Local Plan, not provide a strategic approach to the delivery of playing

pitches and subsequently impact on the health and wellbeing of Doncaster residents.)

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

16. Option 1 will ensure the council has a strategic approach to the provision, enhancement and delivery of playing pitches which will help contribute toward a healthy local workforce within the borough. It will also provide the evidence required to inform planning applications, planning consultation responses and Local Plan soundness.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

17.

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	None
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	The Strategy will contribute toward 'Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport'
	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or 	None

	<p>better</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	
	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	None
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	The strategy makes recommendations which could help the council to operate within our resources and deliver value for money by reviewing the pricing strategy for sports pitches

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

18. The strategy identifies numerous issues relating to supply, demand and adequacy of provision associated with each sport. Key issues include the number and quality of facilities available and their protection. It also makes recommendations that help support and increase participation and the range of facilities where required. The strategy provides a range of recommendations to address the identified issues. Should the strategy and recommendations not be approved there is a risk of facilities not meeting future demand, nor being able to access funding to help support clubs and increase participation.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials...HL Date...04/07/18.]

19. Local Plan - The Strategy will underpin key sections of the emerging Local Plan relating to Open Space. Providing a robust evidence base for decisions is a required element of the Local Plan Process. By providing a robust strategy that is endorsed by Sport England, the Council will i) be better placed to defend any challenges to the Local Plan which may be presented by developers; and ii) reduce the risk that the Local Plan is found unsound at Examination.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that where one makes a determination under the Planning Acts “the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.” The formal adoption of the Playing Pitch Strategy will ensure that the Strategy is part of the plan and thus a material planning consideration which will carry weight when determining future planning decisions under the Planning Acts.

The National Planning Policy Framework - states that “Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.” Adoption of the Strategy would ensure that the Council meet this requirement.

Consultation - the consultation responses must be taken into account in finalising the decision. The process has complied with the established consultation principles:

- Consultation should occur when proposals are at a formative stage;
- Consultations should give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration;
- Consultations should allow adequate time for consideration and response;

The decision maker must demonstrate that it has considered the consultation responses (as set out in paragraph 5 above), or a summary of them, before taking its decision.

Equality Act - the decision maker must also comply with the Public Sector Equality duty to consider the need to promote equality for persons with “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and have due regard to:

- i) eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation;
- ii) advance equality of opportunity
- iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

In order to do this the decision maker will need to have sufficient information about the effects of the proposed changes on the aims of the Equality Duty. The Equalities implication section (paragraph 15 below) is designed to assist with compliance with this duty and so the decision maker must take that into consideration and the public sector equality duty before taking the decision.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [BC- Planning/RT-Street Scene/OB- Leisure - Date 06/07/2018]

20. There are no direct financial implications in relation to this report. Anything specifically arising as a result of the adoption of the Playing Pitch Strategy should be managed within existing budgets or subject to a separate report.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials...CR Date...04/07/2018]

21. There are no direct HR Implications in relation to this report and the proposed adoption of the Playing pitch strategy and associated action plan

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: PW Date... 03/07/18]

22. There are no anticipated technology implications in relation to this report

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials...CEH Date ...07/07/18]

23. Doncaster has had persistent low levels of physical activity in comparison to the regional and national averages. High levels of inactivity have a negative impact on the health of people, economies and the environment. Higher levels of physical activity are associated with positive outcomes such as reduced crime, pollution and traffic. Productivity, school performance, property values, health and well-being improve drastically with an active population.

24. The Playing Pitch Strategy will positively contribute toward the vision of the Physical Activity and Sport Strategy to develop ‘Healthy and Vibrant Communities by providing opportunities for physical activity and sport’. It will contribute to the actions of the strategy by providing an evidence base for strategic decision making in relation to sporting facilities.

25. A Health Impact Assessment would be required to be completed for any proposals to dispose of playing pitches to ensure the full health and equality implications are considered and mitigated

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials...HMCC Date...07/07/18]

26. Decision makers must consider the Council’s duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty at s149 of the Equality Act 2010. The duty requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the act, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a “protected characteristic” and those who do not share that protected characteristic. The strategy makes recommendations to boost youth female football, retain and support male and female disability teams. The governing bodies we have been working with also have specific policies to encourage good relations between protected groups.

CONSULTATION

27. The Playing Pitch Assessment which precedes and informed the development of the strategy identifies comprehensive consultation with input from local clubs, league secretaries, National Governing Bodies, internal and external stakeholders over the course of a year. See paragraph 3 of the executive summary for detail.



Town and Parish councils have also recently been consulted on draft strategy. This wide-ranging and inclusive consultation has resulted in completed strategy to be approved for adoption.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

28. Playing Pitch Strategy Executive Board Summary
Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plans July 2018¹
Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report April 2018¹

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¹ To be supplied if required