

**Bromsgrove Playing Pitch Strategy – 2015-18**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Bullivant
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	John Godwin
Ward(s) Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	N/A
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Non Key Decision

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

The report outlines the key sections and actions contained within the revised Playing Pitch Strategy 2015-18 and seeks member approval for the strategy to be approved and endorsed.

Once approved officers will as part of the normal operation of services look to implement these improvements over the next 3 to 5 years with support from National Governing Bodies for Sport.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 In 2009-12 the Bromsgrove Playing Pitch Strategy was agreed by members and recommendations implemented by Officers. There were a number of outcomes from this work, which have improved the condition and variety of the playing pitches across Bromsgrove and as such created opportunities for residents to enjoy better facilities which contributes to increasing participation. Amongst these are the agreed funding for a new ATP (Astro Turf Pitch) at Bromsgrove Hockey Club, the pitch renovation and new changing room facilities at Barnsley Hall and Braces Lane and the funding for Meadow Park football Club to secure the long term use and enhance the facilities at Harris Brush Works.
- 2.2 The new Playing Pitch Assessment has been developed in line with Sport England's Playing Pitch Guidance October 2013 and supported and endorsed by both the National Governing bodies for sport at a regional level and also Strategic Planning Officers at Bromsgrove District Council. The Assessment has been carried out to establish whether there is sufficient playing pitch provision in Bromsgrove. The Strategy provides the Authority with an evidence base to identify where future investment can be derived from, planning gain and external grant funding. Then can be allocated to improve both the number of pitches and the quality of provision in the future. For example this can be achieved by enhancing the quality of the current pitches through improved drainage and access by investing in car parking and changing rooms.
- 2.3 Within the Strategy there are a number of strategic recommendations and actions for individual sites which consider a range of options across football, cricket, rugby, and hockey. The recommendations will enable the district to make both

quantitative and qualitative improvements to enable facilities to cope with increased usage from significant population growth.

- 2.4 However, it should be noted that Bromsgrove District Council own a small number of pitches identified within the Strategy and the majority of pitches are owned by Schools or Sports Clubs. As such the long term future of sites, sits outside the control of the local authority, particularly cricket and rugby pitch sites which form part of the existing useable provision and have significant influence on the current and future provision. These need to be protected as part of planning policy. NPPF Planning Policy states 'Protection of Existing Facilities -' the loss of existing or allocated playing pitch facilities will not be permitted unless certain conditions are met. Bromsgrove District Council's Leisure and Cultural Services Team are statutory consultees and as such will feedback on any applications that affect the use of playing pitches and will refer to the PPS as a basis to make any comments related to this.
- 2.5 The Strategy references the Bromsgrove District Plan – Proposed Submission Version 2011 – 2030 Policy BDP25.1 and notes that Bromsgrove District Council will support proposals and activities that protect, retain or enhance existing sport, recreational and amenity assets, lead to the provision of additional assets, or improve access to facilities, particularly by non-car modes of transport.

**3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The report outlines the key sections and actions contained with the revised Playing Pitch Strategy 2015 and seeks Cabinet approval for the strategy to be approved and endorsed.

Once approved officers will as part of the normal operation of services look to implement these improvements over the next 3 to 5 years with support from National Governing Bodies. .

**4. KEY ISSUES**

**Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications relating to this report, however in order to implement the improvements within the strategy additional resources or alternative methods of working (internal or external) may be required. In such circumstances individual business cases will be prepared and where applicable, funding requests brought back to members for approval and/or information.
- 4.2 For pitches owned by the Local Authority planning gain funding can be used to support potential schemes to improve the quality of the provision provided. In addition it can also be used as match funding with NGB's to provide larger schemes providing a larger amount of investment to improve provision.

**CABINET**

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- 4.3 For those pitches not within the ownership of the Authority, the Council will act as a facilitator to bring funding streams together to benefit the wider community with a focus on developing the club environment. The Council, through their Sports Development Team will also support clubs to be more sustainable. This can include assisting them with funding applications and to gain quality accreditation.

**5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications within this report. However, the Strategy does recommend that there will be an opportunity to lease pitches and buildings to junior clubs in the future utilising a similar legal model to that currently in place for the use of the Barnsley Hall site.

- 5.2 Any identified investment into pitches and/or infrastructure will require Planning Gain and community use agreements to be developed. As such legal advice and planning support will be needed to ensure that suitable contributions are drawn down and that monies are spent in line with the terms of each agreement.

**6 Service / Operational Implications**

- 6.1 The Strategy will give the Authority the opportunity to identify quantitative deficiencies to meet existing unmet demand and plan for future population growth.
- 6.2 The Strategy has identified qualitative deficiencies to enhance existing provision including playing pitches through investment. For example improving drainage and replacing top surfaces can increase the number of matches that can be played by adult teams as well as providing a suitable facility for junior clubs to use to increase teams and as such participation. It can also result in a lesser need to invest into new pitches and as such lessen the need for investment that can be used to support other schemes. Qualitative improvements will also include enhancing access and infrastructure, including car parking and changing facilities.
- 6.3 In order to maximise investment into pitches and mitigate any future issues with quality, pitches need to be maintained to high standards. This will help to ensure that existing pitches have the capacity to hold more games and less reliance for new pitches to be provided. The Council through applying transformation principles will be able to deliver this aim. For example revising schedules to renovate some pitches and then resting them for a long period of time to give them sufficient time to recover so they are in good condition for future years. Also the Strategy supports the need for local leagues to review the way in which they allocate fixtures, currently the pitches are used well into May which reduces the time needed to maintain them pre-season and as such works against what the Council are trying to achieve above. Finally, the Strategy highlights the potential for pitches to be used for both junior and adult matches through use of different coloured marking. If pitches are well maintained they would have additional capacity to achieve this meaning more games are played on existing pitches so there is less reliance on providing investment for new pitches

- 6.4 To achieve the above, Planning Gain funding can be used as contributory funding for clubs to obtain external grants to create the opportunity for them to be more sustainable so they can then take responsibility for pitches and associated ancillary facilities, such as changing areas. This supports a stronger community infrastructure and potentially reduces the demands on the Councils resources.
- 6.5 There will also be an opportunity to work alongside both schools and clubs to assist with the development of effective dual use agreements that address both qualitative and quantitative shortfalls.
- 6.6 Through improving provision the Authority and its partners can enjoy improved access to all outdoor playing pitches. This will help to support the development of local leagues and clubs to meet their needs and increase participation which has a positive impact on the health and well being of Bromsgrove Residents.

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 There are no direct risk implications relating to this report

**8. APPENDICES**

- 8.1 Appendix 1 - Draft Playing Pitch Strategy and Site Action Plans

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

N/A

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