

CABINET MEETING – 13 OCTOBER 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

Playing Pitch Plan

Author(s):

Executive Director Health Housing and Communities, and the Executive Director City Development

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to present an updated Playing Pitch Plan (PPP) for adoption by Cabinet that will be used as a strategic planning document for sport playing pitches in the city.

Description of Decision:

- a) Adopt the Playing Pitch Plan as a citywide document
- b) Endorse the proposed Action Plan and priorities outlined in the PPP.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? *Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

The PPP will provide a framework from which to guide investment, attracted external funding and subsequently increase satisfaction, participation and volunteering levels in sport and physical activity. In addition, by adopting a strategic joined up approach, this will contribute to maximising the benefits that physical activity can bring to residents. Specifically, the PPP will complement the outcomes associated with the city's approach to develop an **Active Sunderland - a city where everyone is as active as they can be** which was approved by Cabinet in 2018.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

The option exists not to adopt the PPP, however, in doing so, this would result in the loss of potential future investment both for local sports clubs as well as the City Council. In addition, the absence of a robust PPP can lead to a fragmented approach towards facility development, which will significantly challenge the Council's ability to raise standards in satisfaction and participation.

Impacts analysed;

Equality Privacy Sustainability Crime and Disorder

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| Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative values? | Yes |
| Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? | No |
| Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions? | Yes |

PLAYING PITCH PLAN**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HEALTH, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES
AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CITY DEVELOPMENT****1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present an updated Playing Pitch Plan (PPP) for adoption by Cabinet that will be used as a strategic planning document for sport playing pitches in the city.

2. Description of Decision (Recommendations)

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to:
- a) Adopt the Playing Pitch Plan (as provided in Appendix 1) as a citywide document
 - b) Endorse the proposed Action Plan and priorities outlined in the PPP.

3. Background

- 3.1 In 2018 the Council drafted a PPP that examined the key elements for the demand and supply of playing pitches in the city. This plan has served the Council well in terms of assessing playing pitch developments and applying for external funding which included a Football Foundation grant to develop the Sunderland Football Hubs. However, the PPP is now outdated and as part of the agreement with the Football Foundation, it requires updating at least two years after the opening of the Hubs.
- 3.2 There is strong evidence that demonstrates the benefits of regular participation in physical activity and sport, in terms of the contribution to better physical and mental health and wellbeing, skills development and levels of attainment. The challenge now facing the Council and the city is to enhance the conditions and opportunities for more people to become more active more often, whether in informal activity such as going for a swim, cycling, running, walking, or participation in more formal activities such as football, cricket, rugby, hockey, tennis and bowls.
- 3.3 A key priority for the city remains to increase participation in physical activity and sport year on year. Sport England's Active Lives Survey shows that 55.7% of Sunderland's adult residents are active for at least 150mins per week, compared to 61.4% nationally. The priority also remains to reduce levels of inactivity in the city which are 30.5%, compared to 27.2% nationally. The updated PPP will assist in ensuring there are open spaces for residents to participate in sport and physical activity.
- 3.4 The updated PPP sets out a clear 'vision' for playing pitches and provides a framework from which to guide future provision, investment, resources and subsequently increase participation levels in football, cricket, rugby, hockey, tennis and bowls. Further, the PPP examined two key elements:
- a) Supply issues ie. the quantity, quality and accessibility of sports pitches
 - b) Demand issues ie. who uses sports pitches, when are they used and are the pitches overplayed.

- 3.5 All local authorities aspire to adopt a PPP, as this document is continually referred to in external funding applications, strategic facility planning decisions and more formal planning applications such as housing developments. In addition, the adoption of a citywide PPP will not only assist the Council to access external funding, but also support sports clubs with their aspirations.

4. Current Position

- 4.1 The PPP has been developed to include an overarching, needs driven, strategic plan for the following sports - football, cricket, rugby union, rugby league, hockey, tennis and bowls.
- 4.2 A comprehensive supply and demand assessment was undertaken in consultation with a range of stakeholders including sports clubs, schools, further education providers and National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGB's).
- 4.3 Following a detailed consultation with stakeholders an Action Plan was developed to help drive forward change. In addition, the Plan acknowledges that each playing pitch has an important role in delivering the relevant sport development pathway. However, it should be noted that not all sites can serve all purposes and not all localities have land availability, or demand to support and sustain each type of playing pitch provision.
- 4.4 Indicative costs have been listed within the PPP for improvement work. In most instances, match funding will be required to progress with projects.
- 4.5 An important feature of the updated PPP is the recommendation to support clubs with aspirations of managing their own sites. Local clubs are often much more effective at engaging people because they are close to and often accountable to their community. Where the Council has no alternative aspirations for a site, community asset transfers can have many advantages including:
- Help local authorities meet policy objectives
 - Make better use of underused assets
 - Opportunities for clubs to access funding for which local authorities cannot apply
 - Give sports clubs and community organisations more security and sustainability
 - Be a catalyst for getting people more involved as clubs volunteers.

It should be noted that club aspirations for leases will only be considered in line with:

- a) The Council's community asset transfer policy
- b) National and local planning policy
- c) Other alternative site options for clubs
- d) The Council's own aspiration for a site.

- 4.6 Following the adoption of the PPP, work will be expedited to develop a portfolio of projects to improve facilities, in consultation with Elected Members, NGB's and external funding agents.

5. Reason for the Decision

- 5.1 By adopting the PPP, Cabinet will provide a framework from which to guide investment, attract external funding and subsequently increase satisfaction, participation and volunteering levels in sport and physical activity. In addition, by adopting a strategic joined up approach, this will contribute to maximising the benefits that physical activity can bring to residents. Specifically, the PPP will complement the outcomes associated with the city's approach to developing an 'Active Sunderland'.

6. Alternative Options

- 6.1 The option exists not to adopt the PPP, however, in doing so, this would result in the loss of potential future investment both for local sports clubs as well as the City Council. In addition, the absence of a robust PPP can lead to a fragmented approach towards facility development, which will significantly challenge the Council's ability to raise standards in satisfaction and participation.

7. Impact Analysis

- 7.1 No impact analysis is required at this stage, however impact assessments may be undertaken as development projects progress.

8. Other Relevant Consultations

8.1 Financial Implications

- 8.1.1 Whilst there are no immediate financial implications, as project ideas develop requests for funding support from the Council may arise and these will be considered on a case-by-case basis. It is the intention that wherever possible, external funding sources will be sought, particularly where expenditure proposals are of a 'one-off' nature, and this does not compromise the Council's ongoing revenue commitment.

- 8.1.2 The disposal of disused sites provides an opportunity to generate Section 106 contributions to support the implementation of the PPP.

- 8.1.3 The disposal of any Council owned sites (freehold or leasehold) will be assessed in accordance with existing Council policies and will be subject to further Cabinet approvals. Mitigation strategies may be prepared where necessary.

8.2 Risk Analysis

- 8.2.1 The risks surrounding this plan are summarised below:

- Failure to secure the allocated funds and other funds to support phased developments, within the tight timescales. This can be mitigated through early consultation with NGB's such as the Durham FA and the Football Foundation.
- Failure to drive forward the necessary partnership working to ensure projects succeed. This will be mitigated through formalised agreements combined with ongoing consultation and discussions.
- Failure to identify any supporting maintenance requirements. In response, all funding applications require a sustainable business plan that will be consistent with Council's budget planning framework.
- Potential for disposal (freehold or leasehold) of assets which could generate a capital return and alternative outputs for the Council.

8.3 Policy Implications

- 8.3.1 The PPP will form part of the evidence base for the Council's Local Plan.

- 8.3.2 It is proposed that by adopting the PPP this will complement the city's approach to an developing an '*Active Sunderland - a city where everyone is active as they can be*'.

8.4 Implications for Other Services

- 8.4.1 The development of this plan has been in consultation with the Council's Planning Policy and Environmental Service areas, to ensure the proposals are not developed in isolation, reflect the changing needs of the city's sports pitches and the Council's own aspirations.

8.5 The Public

- 8.5.1 Following a wide stakeholder engagement process particularly with local sports clubs, further consultation will be necessary when developing individual projects for facility improvements.

9. **List of Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Playing Pitch Plan

10. **Background Papers**

There were no background papers relied upon to compile this report.