
Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 6 November 2012

Report of the Director of Urban Environment

Revision of the Playing Pitch Strategy

1. To provide the Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education Scrutiny Committee with an outline of the approach to be adopted in revising the Playing Pitch Strategy.

Background

2. The intention of this report is to outline the approach that will be taken to refreshing the playing pitch strategy for Dudley and to gain agreement to the guiding principles that will underpin the strategy.
3. The guiding principles below are taken from the 2003-2008 Playing Pitch Strategy and continue to provide a context for the revised Strategy. It is recommended the strategy should concentrate on the following five areas:
 - Changing the use of existing pitches
 - Dual-use facilities and greater use of school pitches
 - Enhancing carrying capacity through improving the quality of facilities
 - Management options, particularly for single pitch sites
 - Development of new pitches

Such an approach would be supported by the four major pitch based sports governing bodies identified below:

The Football Association (The FA)
England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB)
Rugby Football Union (RFU)
English Hockey (EH)

4. Implicit throughout the previous strategy was a concentration on multi-pitch sites which it is recommended should be continued in the new document.

Strategic recommendations from the previous Strategy are attached at Appendix 1.

Supply

5. The supply of public playing pitches managed by the Council has altered little over the past ten years. The Council manages 93 pitches on 40 sites, a mixture of full size, junior and mini-soccer pitches. These are let to a number of leagues who in turn allocate venues to their member clubs.
5. The quality of playing surfaces in general has not improved and a similar situation exists with regards to ancillary provision such as changing rooms, showers and toilets.
6. In certain instances there have been improvements to playing surfaces and to ancillary provision as a consequence of other programmes that have delivered investment. The purpose of the revised strategy is to identify key priorities with a view to making applications for funding to external agencies such as Sport England and The Football Foundation.
7. There has been a significant increase in the supply of artificial grass pitches (AGPs) across the borough as is evident in Table 1 below. This increase in the provision of AGPs has been a noticeable development in many local authorities in the past ten years.

Table 1 – Artificial Grass Pitches with Community Use

Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) with Community Use	
2003	2012
Coseley School Floodlit / Sand filled	Coseley School Floodlit / Sand filled
Hillcrest School Floodlit / Sand filled	Hillcrest School Floodlit / Sand filled
Dell Stadium Floodlit / Sand dressed	Dell Stadium Floodlit / Sand dressed
Leasowes Community College Floodlit / Sand filled	Leasowes Community College Floodlit / Sand filled
Earls High School Floodlit / Sand filled	Earls High School Floodlit / Sand filled
Windsor High School Sand filled / NOT illuminated	Windsor High School Sand filled / NOT illuminated
	Redhill School Floodlit / 3G rubber crumb
	Thorns Community College Floodlit / 3G rubber crumb
	Ellowes Hall School Floodlit / 3G rubber crumb
	Goals Soccer Centre, Halesowen Floodlit / 3G rubber crumb
	Powerleague, Halesowen Floodlit / 3G rubber crumb

8. Sand filled or sand dressed surfaces are generally used for hockey while the more recent introduction of 3G pitches with longer grass pile and rubber crumb are designed for use for football.
9. The situation with regards to school playing pitches is less clear. Consultation should determine the extent of public use of school facilities.
10. Sports grounds owned by, or leased by, sports clubs continue to form a significant contribution to the level of supply. The organisations occupying such premises will be encouraged to contribute to the development of the strategy.
11. In general the upkeep of the facilities on all of these sites is a matter for the resident organisation under the terms of their agreement permitting occupation. However it is understood that a number of these sports clubs aspire to implement developments and these need to be reflected in the strategy.

Sports Clubs at the Periphery of the Borough

12. A significant supply of pitch facilities exists, or is being developed, on the western and southern periphery of the Borough. Table 2 below indicates the locations.

Table 2 – Sports Clubs with Playing Pitches on Borough Periphery

Sports Clubs with Playing Pitches on Borough Periphery
Himley Cricket Club
Dudley Kingswinford Rugby Football Club
Kewford Eagles Football Club
Dudley United Football Club
Stourbridge Rugby Football Club
Old Halesonians Association (rugby / hockey)

13. These clubs draw the majority of their members from within Dudley borough, given the proximity of centres of population, although each one is located in a neighbouring authority area. This was an issue raised by Politicians in connection with the previous Strategy.
14. The developments on the edge of the Borough impact on both demand for playing pitches in the authority

15. All of the supply data once collected will be shared with four principle National Governing Bodies of sport (NGBs) – The Football Association (The FA), the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), the Rugby Football Union (RFU) and England Hockey (EH) along with Sport England and the Black Country BeActive Partnership. Each of these through their local networks will contribute to the development of the strategy.
16. There will also be dialogue with neighbouring authorities and a review of their respective playing pitch strategies as it is recognised that developments in neighbouring authorities can impact on future plans.

Demand

17. On the face of it there appears to have been an increase in demand for junior football and for girls football with a corresponding decline in demand for traditional adult 11-a-side competitive football, a fact confirmed by The FA. Changes being introduced by The FA in terms of pitch sizes and small sided games are likely to change patterns of demand which will need to be taken into consideration in the preparation this strategy.

Table 3 below confirms the dimensions for pitches for different types of football activity that will be in operation from 2014/15 onwards.

Table 3 – The FA Recommended Pitch Sizes

The FA Recommended Pitch Sizes			
Age Grouping	Type	Recommended size including runoff	Recommended size without runoff
		(safety area around pitch)	(safety area around pitch)
		Length x width (yards)	Length x width (yards)
Mini soccer U7/U8	5v5	46 x 36	40 x 30
Mini soccer U9/U10	7v7	66 x 46	60 x 40
Youth U11/12	9v9	86 x 56	80 x 50
Youth U13/14	11v11	96 x 61	90 x 55
Youth U15/U16	11v11	106 x 66	100 x 60
Youth U17/18	11v11	116 x 76	110 x 70
Over 18 (senior ages)	11v11	116 x 76	110 x 70

18. Consultation with The FA and with local football leagues through the Football Forum will substantiate these assertions.
19. The involvement of the representatives from the organisations who attend the Football Forum and their constituent bodies will be crucial in confirming demand information and also in the identification of venues that are in use for their activities.

20. Annual Football Participation Reports produced by The FA will also inform the development of the strategy. The football data that follows is from The Football Association - Football Participation Report: Dudley 2011/12

Dudley has **162** affiliated clubs with a total of **448** teams of which **414** play in Dudley

Of the **414** teams operating in Dudley **104 (25.1%)** are adult teams, **200 (48.3%)** are youth teams (all formats) and **110 (26.6%)** are Mini-Soccer teams.

71.9% or **223** of the **310** Youth and Mini teams play in a club that has achieved a Charter Standard Award as compared to a national average of **75.6%**.

The number of teams **has decreased by 44 teams** overall in Dudley from season 2010/11 to season 2011/12. This comprises:

- a decrease of 30 adult teams
- a decrease of 13 youth teams (all formats)
- a decrease of 1 Mini-Soccer team

It is anticipated that the 2011/12 data will become available during the development of the strategy and this will inform the content.

21. In the three other pitch sports demand will be assessed through consultation with NGBs and through dialogue at a local level.
22. Sport England will act as a 'critical friend' throughout the process and will ensure that a robust assessment in line with national guidance results in a strategy to be implemented over the next five years.
23. NGBs will be consulting with Sport England over the content of their Whole Sport Plans (WSPs) for 2013-17 with sign off due for late 2012. WSPs outline how and where each NGB intends to invest grant from Sport England.
24. The FA has identified Dudley and the Black Country sub-region as a priority area for investment from the WSP. The FA WSP is focused on revenue programmes at this point in time with a submission to Sport England for capital resources due to be considered separately.
25. The eight key areas identified by The FA in the WSP for future revenue investment are:
- Just Play
 - Small Sided
 - Women and Girls
 - Children and Young People

- Disability
- Women and Girls Talent
- Disability Talent
- Raising Standards

Details for each of the eight strands will be made available once the WSP has been finalised and confirmed.

26. The revision of the playing pitch strategy and the priorities identified in the final document will be key in providing evidence to support bids for both capital and revenue funding by the Council and its partners.

Finance

23. There are no immediate costs associated with the work being undertaken to revise the playing pitch strategy.
24. Investment programmes provide the opportunity for the Council and partner organisations to bid for funding for their projects. The strategy is intended to provide the strategic framework that guides future investment priorities.

Law

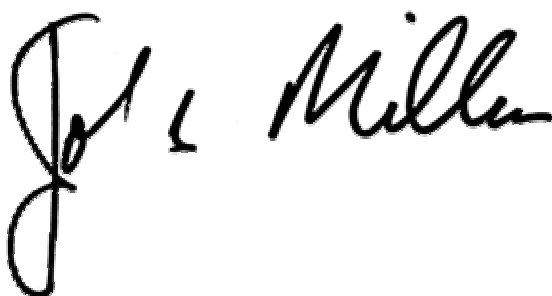
25. Section 111 of the Local Government Act, 1972 enables the Council to do anything that is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharging of its functions as a Local Authority.
26. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 empowers the Council to take action to implement measures it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the Borough.

Equality Impact

27. The proposals contained in this report are in full accordance with the Council's Equality and Diversity policies.

Recommendation

28. It is recommended that Scrutiny Committee:-
 - Provides comments to the Cabinet Member of Environment and Culture on the approach being outlined for the revision of the playing pitch strategy.



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Background documents:

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council Playing Pitch Assessment & Strategy
2003-2008; Strategic Leisure Limited October 2003

The FA Guide to Pitch and Goalpost Dimensions; The Football Association
2012

Sport England 13-17 Plan Birmingham County FA – Ready, Willing and Able
Assessment; The Football Association October 2012

Appendix 1

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council Playing Pitch Assessment & Strategy 2003-2008

Strategic Planning Recommendations

Strategic Planning – Recommendation 1
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Promote the overall value and benefits of playing pitch provision, and its contribution to open space in the local area. Ensure that the “dual” function of playing pitches and their value as part of the Borough’s stock of greenspace is considered through a wider Greenspace Strategy for the Borough as part of the Council’s response to Planning Policy Note 17 (PPG17). An overarching Greenspace Strategy is vital in assessing the role and value of all greenspace across the Borough. In some cases assessment of informal open space may identify potential sites for formal playing pitch development.

<i>Strategic Planning – Recommendation 2</i>
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Seek to use the planning policy process to prioritise facility development and future provision in line with the identified priorities in this strategy. E.G Use priorities for investment identified as a guide for Section 106 funding
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<i>Strategic Planning – Recommendation 3</i>
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The Playing Pitch Assessment data should be updated on an annual basis and a repeat of the strategy development undertaken every 5 years. Annual updating should include repeating quality inspections to monitor changes to quality of pitches

<i>Strategic Planning – Recommendation 4</i>
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Seek to develop the overall use of education pitches for community use, and in so doing, develop appropriate support to facilitate access and use especially for junior teams.
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Strategic Planning – Recommendation 5
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The Council should continue to use the Football Forum, and local sports development groups established for Rugby Union and Cricket to identify issues with facilities. In the case of football, the forum should be used to investigate limiting the use of some sites towards the end of a season to enable renovation works to be undertaken.

Strategic Planning – Recommendation 6
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Liase with neighbouring authorities regarding new pitch developments in areas close to the Dudley Borough border to assess the likely impact in supply and demand

Strategic Planning – Recommendation 7
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Liase with neighbouring authorities regarding pitch hire charges to ensure that fees and charges are comparable.
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Strategic Planning – Recommendation 8
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Investigate, in consultation with the Football Forum the introduction of pitch hire charges that reflect the quality of pitches, charging less for provision rated lower.

Facility Development

<i>Facility Development – Recommendation 1</i>
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Seek to improve the overall quality and quantity of existing and new ancillary accommodation with particular emphasis on the need to provide adequately for juniors and women, girls and disabled users. This needs to be done in accordance with the identification of priorities for investment and improvement. (At end of report)

<i>Facility Development – Recommendation 2</i>
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Prioritise investment in ancillary facilities on key multi pitch sites as a more economical use of resources, particularly in relation to ancillary facilities
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Facility Development - Recommendation 3
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Ensure that where provided, informal kick about areas are maintained and adequately provide for informal play – this is to ensure that informal use of formal pitches is kept to a minimum in order to sustain quality
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Facility Development – Recommendation 4
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Linked to the review of leisure facilities, ensure that there is adequate access to floodlit training facilities to support the overall development of pitch sports at local level
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Facility Development – Recommendation 5
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The Council should increase the current level of investment in pitch renovation and improvements to ancillary facilities
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SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

Sports Development – Recommendation 1
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Team Generation Rates (TGR's) should be used as a benchmark for future measurement and monitoring of sports participation within the borough, and within the 5 committee areas. They should be used to prioritise sports development focus
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Sports Development - Recommendation 2
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Team Generation Rates (TGR's) in the Dudley borough should be compared with those surrounding boroughs to provide an indication of levels of participation which can be used to develop county wide priorities for future sports development initiatives and external investment
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