

# West Berkshire Playing Pitch Strategy

<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Executive
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	13 February 2020
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Rick Jones
<b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>	23 February 2020
<b>Report Author:</b>	Jim Sweeting
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	EX3870

## 1. Purpose of the Report

To adopt the Playing Pitch Strategy developed for West Berkshire.

## 2. Recommendation

That Members adopt the Playing Pitch Strategy for West Berkshire.

## 3. Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary			
<b>Financial:</b>	None			
<b>Human Resource:</b>	None			
<b>Legal:</b>	None			
<b>Risk Management:</b>	None			
<b>Property:</b>	Where property is owned and managed by West Berkshire Council the strategy will help with the identification of emerging issues (whether physical or capacity) and provide a framework for remedial actions to be carried out and the potential of linking into grant funding where available.			
<b>Policy:</b>	The Playing Pitch Strategy will support the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 73 and 74) and local Planning Policy in helping to determine playing pitch provision to support developments.			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed		X		

decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?				
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>	X			The playing pitch strategy will help determine the requirements for playing pitches to support planned developments and thus retaining an element of open space within development areas.
<b>Health Impact:</b>	X			The playing pitch strategy will help protect current playing fields and consider appropriate provision for future developments – this will help maintain and develop facilities for physical activity and the benefits associated with such activity.
<b>ICT or Digital Services Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Council Strategy Priorities or Business as Usual:</b>	X			The playing pitch strategy supports the strategic priority to Develop Local Infrastructure, including housing to support and grow the local economy. Specifically the strategy will help enhance the arts, culture and leisure offering in the district by protecting playing pitches and providing requirements to support future development.
<b>Data Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	<p>The process has been managed by key players in relation to playing pitches – namely Sport England, The Football Association (through the Berks and Bucks FA), The England and Wales Cricket Board, England Hockey and the Rugby Football Union.</p> <p>In producing the strategy the appointed consultants met with a number of Parish/Town Councils, Schools, Clubs and other providers/users.</p> <p>Internal officers involved in the process have come from Transport and Countryside, Planning Policy and Sport and Leisure</p>			

## 4. Executive Summary

- 4.1 A playing pitch strategy is an evidence based document that Sport England recommends Council's produce to guide investment, development and improvement in pitch sport facilities and meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraphs 73 and 74)
- 4.2 The process followed was the 2013 Sport England Playing Pitch Strategy guidance which has been developed to provide consistency in approach and provide good practice in terms of methodology adopted.
- 4.3 The West Berkshire Playing Pitch Strategy has been produced following a full audit of facilities across the district (including those in the voluntary and private sectors), pitches were formally assessed in relation to current quality, any issues and accessibility.
- 4.4 Following the assessment of supply work was carried out with National Governing Bodies of sport to identify local clubs to determine current demand and short term development proposals in relation to new teams.
- 4.5 Approved modelling then was carried out against population projections through to 2036 and a range of scenarios as identified by the sports involved and their growth plans moving forward.
- 4.6 The completed strategy was formally signed off by all the partners involved in December 2019 and once adopted will help support the planning process especially in relation to new developments and proposals which impact upon playing pitches. It should also help in the relation to Sport England's role as a mandatory consultee on applications involving playing pitches.

## 5. Supporting Information

### Introduction

- 5.1 Following the production of a playing pitch strategy for West Berkshire – Members are asked to formally adopt the strategy which will allow it to support Local Planning Policy together with the national Planning Policy framework (paragraphs 73 and 74)

### Background

- 5.2 In 2017 Sport England had raised a number of questions in relation to a number of projects being discussed at that point in time. It was suggested that developing a Playing Pitch Strategy would provide an evidence based document which would assist project managers (and planners) to assess the impact of proposals on provision of playing pitches for sport.
- 5.3 The Council was successful in applying for a grant to assist the process and underwent a procurement exercise which led to the appointment of 4Global Consulting Ltd to lead on the work.
- 5.4 The process followed the 2013 Sport England Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance (as recognised best practice) and incorporated the following steps:

- (a) Stage A: Scoping and initiating project including the formation of a project group to steer the project. This comprised representation from the Council, Sport England, The Football Association (FA) – represented by the Berks and Bucks FA, The Rugby Football Union, The England and Wales Cricket Association and England Hockey.
- (b) Stage B: A detail assessment of the supply of playing pitches in West Berkshire – this included provision in all sectors and those which were not available for community use. On completion this was signed off by the project group.
- (c) Stage C: Following liaison with the National Governing Bodies (NGB's) information was gathered on the number of teams currently generated by each club in the area with follow up meetings held with a large number of clubs to assess planned developments for growth or change in demand. On completion this stage was signed off by the project group.
- (d) Stage D: Modelling of future supply and demand based on approved modelling techniques in relation to projected population growth/demographic change. This also included scenario testing as identified by the various partners. On completion the end strategy was agreed and signed off by the project group.
- (e) Stage E: This follows the adoption of the Playing Pitch Strategy and allows for follow up meetings of the project group to monitor progress against the identified priorities of the Playing Pitch Strategy and to update and review the plan as required.

5.5 Stage D was completed in November 2019 and the final sign off from all project group partners was in December 2019. The Playing Pitch Strategy is presented in Appendix A.

5.6 4Global as the final part of their work will provide access to a cloud based resource to allow any notified changes to be updated in the data resource which will help facilitate future refreshes of the document as they become necessary.

5.7 The NGB's are the formal representative organisations for the clubs in each sport and act as the voice for the clubs within the process.

## 5.8 **Proposals**

The playing pitch strategy as developed and signed off by the partners of the project group be adopted by West Berkshire Council. The strategy then to form part of the Planning Policy Guidance documents. This will allow for evidence based responses to be given towards planning proposals and help assist the consultation process with Sport England in their role as a statutory consultee, especially in relation to proposals which impact on playing pitches and their provision.

## 6. **Other options considered**

6.1 Not adopting the Playing Pitch Strategy – this would lead to a position whereby independently acquired evidence could not be used to support actions in relation to proposals – leading to more issues in relation to statutory consultations (especially with Sport England) and increased risk of challenge to decisions. The alternative would be

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to pay for evidence to be collected on a case by case basis which would increase cost and not allow proposals and their impact to be viewed on a district wide level.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 Following the development of the Playing Pitch Strategy for West Berkshire, and the sign off by all of the project partners involved in the process an evidence based document is now available to support Local Planning policy and the National Planning Policy Framework (especially paragraphs 73 and 74).
- 7.2 The strategy will provide the information to inform responses to proposals and to assist when dealing with Statutory Consultees on matters impacting on playing pitches.

## **8. Appendices**

Appendix A – West Berkshire Playing Pitch Strategy – dated November 2019

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### **Background Papers:**

None

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### **Subject to Call-In:**

Yes:  No:

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### **Wards affected: All**

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### **Officer details:**

Name: Jim Sweeting  
Job Title: Sport and Leisure Manager  
Tel No: 01635 519251  
E-mail Address: [jim.sweeting@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:jim.sweeting@westberks.gov.uk)

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