

Draft Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Mark Egerton, Strategic Planning Manager, and Sue Whiteside, Principal Planning Officer
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All wards

Executive Summary

The Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies will form part of the Council's evidence base for the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, and will inform development management decisions. They will also provide the Council with an evidence base for future budgetary needs or grant funding applications. The strategies assess the quantity, quality, accessibility and availability of Maidstone Borough's indoor and outdoor sports facilities and playing pitches. They forecast the borough's needs for new and improved sports facilities and pitches to 2031, and set out options for how needs may be delivered. The strategies are at a stage where input from SPST and HCL Committees is required, to consider the implications arising from recommendations and action plans.

This report makes the following recommendation to this Committee:

1. That the Committee notes that the strategies will form part of the Council's evidence base, and that comments on the documents be referred to Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee for consideration prior to re-engagement with key stakeholders and all ward Councillors.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Heritage Culture and Leisure Committee	04 September 2018
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	11 September 2018
Policy and Resources Committee	21 November 2018
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	8 January 2019

Draft Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Background

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 10 July 2018, Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee (SPST) resolved to refer the Draft Sports facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies report to Heritage Culture and Leisure Committee for consideration, prior to re-engagement with stakeholders. SPST further resolved to refer the Draft Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies to Policy and Resources Committee for its November meeting, so that future capital budget allocations can be considered.
- 1.2 In its consideration of the strategies, SPST Committee noted that:
- These strategies, once agreed would form an evidence base for the local plan review.
 - The methodology followed to bring the evidence together to form these strategies had been developed by Sport England.
 - The sporting infrastructure outlined as required by the Borough could be funded through Section 106 contributions, Community Infrastructure Levy, Capital Budgets, private organisations or grant funding.
 - Sport England recognised that not all need could be met, and that although District Councils were responsible for Leisure Services this was a discretionary function and as such was a choice for each Council as to how much demand could be met.
 - The strategies should be referred to the Heritage Culture and Leisure (HCL) Committee for comment as although these documents were evidence for the Local Plan Review, HCL Committee was responsible for Sport and Leisure in the Borough.
 - Once this draft strategy had been approved by the Committee and comments made by HCL, a wider consultation was due to take place on the strategy.
- 1.3 SPST Committee made the following comments:
- There were a number of factual inaccuracies in the document which ward members would be able to assist the strategy authors to correct.
 - It was not clear whether the Council's Health and Wellbeing team had been involved in the writing of these strategies.
 - Concerns were raised about the cost of the list of potential infrastructure projects and upgrades, and it was suggested that some prioritisation should take place if the Borough Council was to commit to funding these projects.
- 1.4 Factual inaccuracies in the document will be addressed through re-engagement with the key stakeholders who assisted in developing the strategies, and through consultation with ward Councillors. The Council's Health and Wellbeing Team was aware of the work being undertaken on the

strategies, and will be involved in the development of the strategy going forward.. The identified needs for new facilities are not prioritised in the strategies because these will be considered as part of the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan. Priorities for improvements to existing facilities will be considered by the Council’s relevant committees in due course.

Introduction

- 1.5 The National Planning Policy Framework requires local authorities to deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs (NPPF, paragraph 70). Planning policies and decisions should provide for new and improved sports venues, and also guard against the loss of facilities.
- 1.6 The strategies will form part of the Council’s evidence base for the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, and will inform development management decisions. They will also provide the Council with an evidence base for future budgetary needs or grant funding applications.
- 1.7 Consultants PLC¹ were appointed to prepare a Sports Facilities Strategy and a Playing Pitch Strategy for the borough.
- 1.8 The strategies are at a stage where input from SPST and HCL Committees is required, to consider the implications arising from recommendations and action plans. The timetable proposed is set out in Table 1.

Date	Committee	Purpose
10.07.2018	SPST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial consideration of recommendations and action plans arising from the strategies • Referral to HCL Committee for comments
04.09.2018	HCL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial consideration of recommendations and action plans arising from the strategies • Refer recommendations to SPST Committee
11.09.2018	SPST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of HCL recommendations prior to re-engagement with key stakeholders
21.11.2018	P&R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be made aware of the strategies so that future capital budget allocations can be considered
08.01.2019	SPST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of the final strategies, including recommendations and action plans

Table 1: Committee programme for reports

Methodology

- 1.9 The strategies have been prepared following Sport England guidance², gathering information on:
 - Supply and demand
 - The local population profile

¹ Ploszajski Lynch Consulting Ltd.

² Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance (2014), Sport England

- Sports participation
- Unmet, latent, dispersed and future demand
- Local activity priorities
- Sports specific priorities.

1.10 The strategies also take account of spare capacity on sites, and examine rising or falling trends in demand for individual sporting activities. The data has helped to build a picture of the level of provision, looking at four key elements: **the quantity, quality, accessibility and availability of Maidstone Borough's indoor and outdoor sports facilities and playing pitches**. The key findings and implications arising from the assessments were developed around a framework of 'protect, enhance and provide', resulting in recommendations and actions for new and improved facilities. Nonetheless, overall, Maidstone Borough is currently well provided for in terms of its sports provision.

1.11 A base date of mid-2016 is used to calculate the quantitative need for additional new facilities arising from the borough's population growth to 2031, as set out in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan. The mid-2016 data can be used as a base for future updates of the strategies, for example, to reflect growth beyond 2031 that may arise as a result of the review of the Local Plan. The strategies should also be regularly reviewed to reflect rising and falling trends in demand for sports facilities.

1.12 The qualitative assessment identifies actions that are needed to bring existing facilities up to an acceptable standard and, where appropriate, estimated costs for improvements to facilities or feasibility studies are included. Lead organisations and partners, including Maidstone Borough Council as a landowner and provider of sports facilities, are identified as the delivery agents for actions.

1.13 GIS accessibility mapping was used to identify the spatial distribution of existing facilities and catchment areas, taking account of access to cross-boundary sports provision.

1.14 The availability of facilities also formed part of the assessment, reviewing potential spare capacity, opening times, and pricing levels.

1.15 The documents have been prepared in consultation with key stakeholders, and in accordance with Sport England guidance. These include:

- Sport England
- Maidstone Leisure Trust
- Local sports facilities providers
- Neighbouring local authorities
- Kent Sport
- The governing bodies of sport
- Local sports clubs
- Parish councils
- Schools
- Maidstone Borough Council's Strategic Planning and Leisure teams.

Outputs: Quantitative Needs and Provision of New Facilities

1.16 One of the main themes throughout the strategies is a need to protect the loss of existing sports provision. Policy DM19 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan sets out the standards expected for the provision of open space and recreation as part of proposals for new development. Policy DM20 is clear that proposals which would lead to a loss of community facilities will not be permitted unless demand within the locality no longer exists or a replacement facility acceptable to the council is provided.

1.17 A breakdown of the quantitative needs for new sports facilities and sports pitches for the borough is set out in Table 2.

Facility or Pitch	Needs
Sports Halls	1.6 x 4-badminton sized sports halls
Swimming Pools	1 x 25m 4-lane pool
Health & Fitness Facilities	187 equipment stations
Squash Courts	No projected additional needs
Indoor & Outdoor Tennis	No projected additional needs
Indoor & outdoor Bowls	No projected additional needs
Athletic Tracks	No projected additional needs
Football	4 x Adult pitches
	4 x Youth 11v11 pitches
	4 x Youth 9v9 pitches
	2 x Mini-soccer 7v7 pitches
	2 x Mini-soccer 5v5 pitches
	0.77 x 3G turf pitch
Cricket	3 x grass pitches or 3 x artificial turf wickets
Rugby Union	1.5 x pitches
Rugby League	1.5 x pitches
Hockey	0.6 x artificial grass pitches
American Football	No projected additional needs
Lacrosse	0.5 x pitch and 0.1 artificial grass pitch

Table 2: Quantitative needs for new sports facilities and sports pitches

1.18 The capital and revenue costs of new facilities can be provided through a number of means, including S106/CIL contributions from new development. A common theme throughout the strategies is the need to ensure that larger sports projects are included under the CIL Regulation 123 List, which identifies infrastructure types or projects that will be, or may be, entirely funded through CIL. The Council's CIL Regulation 123 List includes social and community infrastructure, which covers sports provision. There may also be opportunities for grant funding new facilities.

1.19 The needs identified under each sport's category do not necessarily all have to be provided through allocations in the local plan or the development management process. The strategies explain how needs may be met, for example, by improving access or upgrading existing facilities to extend play time through:

- Replacing grass pitches with 3G or 4G artificial pitches
- Use of spare capacity at under-used facilities
- Providing additional artificial cricket wickets on existing sites

- Expansion of existing sports sites
- Commercial provision of fitness stations in gyms
- Improving and extending community access to school facilities.

Outputs: Qualitative Needs and Action Plans

- 1.20 Action plans in the strategies are broken down into key strategic actions, such as protection of existing facilities or funding for future needs, but also include site-specific actions for each facility within the sports categories. The action tables highlight the issues associated with each facility including the need for qualitative improvements, but also where weekend community access or the use of formal community use agreements would improve facilities. The tables list what actions (if any) are needed for each facility, and identify lead organisations and partners for the delivery of the actions. Where relevant, estimated costs are included in tables. Actions are also prioritised: high, medium or low.
- 1.21 The lead organisation for delivering actions varies according to land ownership and the type of action. Many clubs operate without security of tenure so the use of the facility can be stopped at any time – liaison with the providers of sports facilities to establish security of tenure can overcome this difficulty. Other actions may include the need for improvements to facilities or a requirement to undertake feasibility studies, which are the responsibility of the landowner.
- 1.22 Consideration must be given to the recommendations and action plans set out in the strategies, which may have staffing and budgetary implications for the Council as one of the providers of sports facilities and pitches, and as a landowner.
- 1.23 The Committee will be aware that, given the condition of the Maidstone Leisure Centre and the short length of time remaining on the lease, measures are already in place to review its future. The Council may wish to take a wider 'first principles' approach to the review, and to potentially use the opportunity to undertake a joint review of the needs of Maidstone Rugby Club and Mote Cricket Club. Reports will be presented to relevant committees in due course.
- 1.24 The Council is identified as lead organisation for the actions set out in Table 3.

Facility or Pitch	Location	Action	Priority	Estimated Costs
Various	Various	Liaison with providers of sports venues in respect of securing formal Community Use Agreements for local clubs (priorities vary according to individual facilities)	Various	[Staffing]
Various sports activities	Maidstone Leisure Centre	Feasibility study to establish the case for replacement or refurbishment of all on-site facilities	Medium	£20k
Tennis	Clare Park	Resurface tennis courts (with external partnership funding)	Medium	£20k

Facility or Pitch	Location	Action	Priority	Estimated Costs
Football	Elmscroft Park	Feasibility study for pitch improvements	High	£5k
Football	Gatland Recreation Ground	Feasibility study for pitch improvements	High	£5k
Football	Mallards Way	Feasibility study for pitch improvements	High	£5k
Football	Shepway Green	Feasibility study for pitch improvements	High	£5k
Hockey	South Park	Resurface South Park hockey pitch and review options for making additional pitch provision	High	£100k
American Football	Shepway Green	Improve pitch quality and resurface MUGA	Medium	£10k [pitch drainage] £20k [MUGA]
All Sports	Various	Feasibility study to establish the options for expanding local pitch capacity, including an option of providing artificial grass pitches shared with more than one sport.	High	£20k

Table 3: Qualitative needs and actions for which the Council is identified as the Lead Organisation

1.25 Similar actions are to be delivered by other lead organisations, predominantly key stakeholders who have helped to develop the strategies. These organisations may require support to investigate security of tenure and/or to seek external funding for new/improved provision.

Delivery and Review

1.26 The strategies will be delivered by a variety of means and by a number of organisations that have contributed to the development of the strategies. New and improved sports provision may be funded through CIL or S106 contributions from new development, but it will also be important to consider alternative means of providing for the borough's needs. A proportion of needs may be met through an upgrade or expansion of existing sites to extend play time, by providing for alternative secure access arrangements to schools to extend opening times, or by applying for grant funding that may be available for the delivery of new and improved facilities.

1.27 Monitoring and reviewing the strategies will be an important part of delivery, particularly given the range of organisations involved.

1.28 The recommendations and actions set out in the Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies will have an impact on staff resources and budgets, but the strategies provide a sound up-to-date evidence base to support the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan and provide the Council with an evidence base for future budgetary needs or grant funding applications.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Option A: The Committee could recommend to SPST Committee that the Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies are not taken forward. The risks associated with Option A at this point are low, but these will increase over time as the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan progresses through its preparation and consultation stages to examination, when the Inspector will consider whether the evidence supporting the local plan is adequate and up-to-date. Further, Option A does not provide the Council with an evidence base for future budgetary needs or grant funding applications.
 - 2.2 Option B: The Committee could note the strategies and refer comments to SPST Committee for consideration prior to re-engagement with key stakeholders and consultation with ward Councillors.
-

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Option B is the preferred Option. The Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies provide a sound up-to-date evidence base to support the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan. The strategies also provide the evidence for future budgetary needs or grant funding bids.
-

4. RISK

- 4.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. That consideration is shown in this report at paragraph 2.1. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 The key stakeholders listed in paragraph 1.15 have contributed to the preparation of the Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies.
 - 5.2 If the recommendation in this report is approved, HCL Committee's comments will be considered by SPST Committee at its meeting on 11 September 2018. Subsequently, following re-engagement with key stakeholders and consultation with ward Councillors, a report seeking approval of the final strategies will be presented at a meeting of SPST Committee on 8 January 2019.
-

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 The timetable for communication and implementation of the decision is set out in paragraph 1.8.
-

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve corporate priorities by encouraging good health and wellbeing, and by ensuring the borough has good leisure facilities to meet the needs of residents and attract visitors. We set out the reasons other choices will be less effective in section 2.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Risk Management	Risks are already covered in the risk section 4.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Financial	<p>The report identifies potential new spending of up to £210,000. This includes (with priorities):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feasibility studies for pitch improvements 4x£5k (high) - Feasibility study to look at options for expanding existing pitch capacities for all sports £20k (high) - Resurface South Park hockey pitch £100k (high) - Drain and resurface MUGA at Shepway Green £30k (medium) - Resurface Clare Park tennis courts £20k (medium) - Feasibility study for Maidstone Leisure Centre £20k (medium). <p>The Council has made no budgetary provision for these amounts but there may be potential for obtaining contributions through S 106 agreements or CIL.</p> <p>This list does not include identified needs for new</p>	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

	facilities that are likely to be allocated as part of the Local Plan Review, and which may be provided through improvement/expansion of existing facilities, or funded by S106/CIL contributions. Certain facilities may also be eligible for grant funding.	
Staffing	We will need access to extra expertise to deliver the recommendations, as set out in section 3. The strategies contain actions to liaise with current sports providers to secure tenure for sports clubs. The Council is not the only lead organisation for delivering actions, and some support may be needed. Monitoring of the actions will be important as part of the delivery of the strategies.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Legal	There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.	Cheryl Parks, Mid Kent Legal Services (Planning)
Privacy and Data Protection	Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with the General Data Protection Regulations and locally adopted policies.	Cheryl Parks, Mid Kent Legal Services (Planning)
Equalities	An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed in conjunction with the consultants before the strategies are completed to ensure the needs of residents with protected characteristics are fully considered.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Crime and Disorder	There are no specific implications for a negative impact on crime and disorder	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and

	arising from the recommendation in this report.	Development
Procurement	The procurement of consultants has followed the Council's financial procedures rules.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development [Section 151 Officer]

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Draft Sports Facilities Strategy
- Appendix 2: Draft Playing Pitch Strategy

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers to this report.