

Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies

Stage 1: Equality Impact Assessment

1. What are the main aims purpose and outcomes of the policy change and how do these fit with the wider aims of the organization?

In accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Sports Facilities Strategy and the Playing Pitch Strategy identify current supply and demand for sports facilities/pitches throughout the borough, and forecast future demand to 2031 based on the population growth set out in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (adopted 2017). Using a base date of 2016, the balance between supply and demand for each type of facility is assessed, in terms of the quantity, quality, accessibility and availability of the borough's indoor and outdoor sports facilities and playing pitches. The strategies ascertain the need for new facilities and upgrades to existing facilities, and include a number of alternative options/recommendations as to how future demand may be met.

The strategies have been prepared by consultants PLC, using Sport England guidance, and have been developed in consultation with 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, and MBC's Strategic Planning and Leisure teams.

The objectives of the strategies are to:

- Provide an evidence base for use in planning, investment and sports development decisions.
- Refer to, and be in general accordance with, relevant national (including the National Planning Policy Framework), regional, sub-regional and local policies and priorities.
- Provide a clear picture of existing supply, surpluses, deficit and anticipated future demand for pitches by sport and age bracket.
- Assess the current supply of playing pitches including private facilities, with insight into the quality of these facilities and services, identifying possible future supply, including broad location and opportunities for opening up private sites for community use.
- Make reference to provision of facilities immediately adjacent to the Borough to ensure a full picture of local provision is available.
- Identify ways to increase opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity.
- Consult with key established user groups such as local teams, the local Sport and Physical Activity Alliance, the governing bodies of the pitch sports (NGB's), schools and education establishments and local key partners to apply local feedback to contextualise the results.

The strategies form part of the evidence base for the review of the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2017, but also inform the Council's future work streams and bids for external grant funding.

2. How do these aims affect our duty to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited by the act.**
- **Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**
- **Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

During the preparation of the strategies statistical data was collected from a variety of sources, including Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Sport England, parish councils, and the sports providers and club users of facilities who have assisted in developing the strategies.

- Age: Data was collected on age, i.e. adult and youth club users.
- Sex (gender): Data was collected on sex, i.e. male and female users.
- Disability: Data was collected on access by disabled users.

The strategies concluded that, in some cases, the capacity of existing facilities could be extended by improvements to playing surfaces to increase carrying capacity, provision of floodlights for some outdoor facilities, and extended and reconfigured changing facilities to cater for simultaneous adult/junior and male/female usage. Further, poor quality or a lack of changing facilities reduces the quality of the playing experience, and may present child protection issues in relation to simultaneous male and female and adult and junior use of changing provision, deterring some potential participants. The extent of full disabled access to each facility, including the provision of access ramps, dedicated changing, toilets and car parking was considered as part of the overall qualitative assessment of facilities.

There is no evidence to support the following characteristics:

- Race
- Religion or belief
- Gender reassignment
- Marital and civil partnership status
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Sexual orientation

3. What aspects of the service change including how it is delivered or accessed could contribute to inequality?

The strategies will be published on the website as part of the Council's technical evidence base. The findings and recommendations of the strategies will be given consideration through the review of the Maidstone Borough

Local Plan and as part of the work programme for HCL Committee. Their implementation could have implications for three of the nine protected characteristics: age, sex and disability.

The potential for inequality during the preparation of the Local Plan review is mitigated by (a) a minimum of two rounds of mandatory public consultation in accordance with national planning regulations, and (b) the Council's Statement of Community Involvement which sets out how the Council will undertake consultation on its plans. HCL Committee will introduce appropriate measures for any recommendations implemented through its work programme.

The equality impact will therefore be considered in more detail at a later stage as part of the democratic decision making processes. Public consultation will support and inform consideration of equalities impact so any necessary mitigations can be identified.

4. Will the policy have an impact (positive or negative) upon the lives of people, including particular communities and groups who have protected characteristics? What evidence do you have for this?

The implementation of the strategies through the Local Plan review and the HCL Committee work programme should have a positive impact for all residents, including those with protected characteristics, because the provision of new and improved sports facilities and pitches will be of benefit to all sectors of the community.

Local priorities as outlined in Kent Sport's 'Toward an Active Framework 2017' 9 key themes focus on Age, Sex and Disability and Diversity in general. Alignment with these local equalities priorities going forward and an ongoing commitment through consultation to build on our equalities evidence base should help ensure a positive impact.

This impact assessment will remain a live document that is revisited and updated going forward on this basis.

If the answer to the second question has identified potential impacts and you have answered yes to any of the remaining questions then you should carry out a full EQIA set out as stage 2 below.

Stage 2: Equality Impact Assessment

Name of Policy/Service/Function
Purpose
What are you trying to achieve with the policy / service / function?
Who defines and manages it?
Who do you intend to benefit from it and how?
What could prevent people from getting the most out of the policy / service / function?

How will you get your customers involved in the analysis and how will you tell people about it?

Evidence

How will you know if the policy delivers its intended outcome / benefits?

How satisfied are your customers and how do you know?

What existing data do you have on the people that use the service and the wider population?

What other information would it be useful to have? How could you get this?

Are you breaking down data by equality groups where relevant (such as by

gender, age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity)?

Are you using partners, stakeholders, and councillors to get information and feedback?

Impact

Are some people benefiting more – or less - than others? If so, why might this be?

Actions

If the evidence suggests that the policy / service / function benefits a particular group – or disadvantages another - is there a justifiable reason for this and if so, what is it?

Is it discriminatory in any way?

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Is there a possible impact in relationships or perceptions between different parts of the community?

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What measures can you put in place to reduce disadvantages?

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Do you need to consult further?

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Have you identified any potential improvements to customer service?

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Who should you tell about the outcomes of this analysis?

Have you built the actions into your Service Plan or Policy Implementation Plan with a clear timescale?
When will this assessment need to be repeated?