



Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>CABINET - 2 NOVEMBER 2023</b>
Subject	<b>PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Paul Hodgkinson - Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture Email: <a href="mailto:paul.hodgkinson@cotswold.gov.uk">paul.hodgkinson@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
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Summary/Purpose	To consider the findings and recommendations proposed by consultants commissioned to develop a Playing Pitch Strategy for the District and to approve the Strategy.
Annexes	Annex A – Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan Report
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Endorse the findings of the consultants and approve the Playing Pitch Strategy, including the key recommendations and site specific action plan;</li><li>2) Authorise officers to work in partnership with other organisations to establish the feasibility and funding sources for the projects identified within the strategy and to prepare business cases, where opportunities arise, and bring them forward for consideration;</li><li>3) Note that the resources needed to develop these partnerships and implement the action plan will be met from existing resources by reprioritising existing work.</li></ol>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Make our local plan green to the core</li><li>● Support health and wellbeing</li></ul>
Key Decision	No



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Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	Consultation was undertaken with Town and Parish Councils, local schools and sports clubs during the strategy development.



## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report sets out the headline findings of the pitch assessments conducted in the development of the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and provides a vision for future improvements and prioritisations of formal outdoor playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities to support the needs of existing and future residents in the district.
- 1.2 Cabinet is asked to endorse the finding and approve the strategy for adoption.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Sport England's guidance specifies that in order for a Playing Pitch Strategy to be robust and up to date they must be updated every three years. The Council last completed a PPS in 2017.
- 2.2 The main reasons for updating the Cotswold PPS are:
  - a. To contribute to the partial update of the adopted Local Plan 2031;
  - b. To inform the development and implementation of planning policy and infrastructure planning work;
  - c. To provide a robust and up to date evidence base to assist the Council in determination of planning applications in the provision or loss of playing pitches;
  - d. To provide justification and evidence base for developer contributions and external funding bids involving playing pitches, an up to date PPS would be a requirement of any investment from organisations such as the Football Foundation; and
  - e. To identify opportunities for improving access to playing pitches, whilst supporting the delivery ambitions contained in the Corporate Plan (supporting health and wellbeing and making the local plan green to the core), the Strategic Outcomes Planning Model (Active Cotswolds), sporting governing bodies' objectives and partial update to the Local Plan 2031.
- 2.3 Consultants Knight, Kavanagh and Page (KKP) were appointed on behalf of the Council to deliver a PPS in accordance with Sport England's PPS and Assessing Needs and Opportunities guidance, which involved a five-staged stepped approach:
  - Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach.
  - Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision.
  - Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views.
  - Stage D: Develop the Strategy.
  - Stage E: Deliver the Strategy and keep it robust and up to date.
- 2.4 Annex A represents Stage D of the process. Stages A-C are covered in a preceding assessment report and Stage E is ongoing once the study is complete.
- 2.5 The strategy covers the whole of Cotswold District Council's administrative area, but the assessment and action plan is broken down into smaller subsections known as analysis areas; North, Mid and South. Cross boundary issues were also considered when determining the



level of imported and exported demand, recognising, for example, that people travel to make use of strategic facilities irrespective of administrative boundaries.

- 2.6 In terms of scope, the assessment focused geographically on all local provision, regardless of ownership and management arrangements, including grass playing pitches (Football, Cricket, Rugby Union, Rugby League and Polo) and artificial turf pitches (Hockey and third generation artificial grass pitches). The assessment considered the number of pitches/facilities and took into account the size, quality, location, accessibility and capacity of the provision as well as accompanying ancillary facilities e.g. changing rooms.
- 2.7 This is a short to medium term strategy, which will provide the evidence base to support the future funding applications and is aligned to the Local Plan to 2031.

### 3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1 The quantitative assessment for each of the sports listed in 2.6 is that for each sport is either that demand is being met or that there is a shortfall. Please see table 1 for a summary of the findings:

*Table 1: Quantitative Sport specific headline findings*

Sport	Supply/demand balance
Football (grass)	Current supply is broadly sufficient to accommodate demand, although it is anticipated that over the life of the local plan shortfalls will emerge.
Football (3G)	Shortfall is apparent in all three analysis areas, with the south area having the largest shortfall. Overall there is a need for a further three full sized 3G pitches in the district.
Rugby Union	There are insufficient levels of senior rugby pitches to accommodate the current and future demand, this currently equates to 5.75 match equivalent sessions per week.
Cricket	Broad position for cricket provision is actual spare capacity at peak times.
Hockey	Sufficient supply.
Polo	Sufficient supply.
Rugby League	No demand so no provision required.

- 3.2 For the most part, the shortfalls identified above can be met by better utilisation of current provision including improvements to pitch quality, re-configuration of pitches, installing



additional sports lighting, improving ancillary facilities or enabling access to existing unused provision, such as at unavailable school sites. However, there is a shortfall of 3G pitches that can likely only be met through increased provision.

- 3.3 In parallel to the sport specific recommendations, a site by site action plan addresses the key issues identified and provides further detailed recommendations for each location – see Annex A.
- 3.4 If the recommendations and site specific action plans are approved, the feasibility and viability of projects will need to be established. Issues such as facility ownership, capital cost and sources of funding will be key considerations, as all projects will be reliant on external funding in order to be delivered. In addition to this, partnerships with various stakeholders such as town and parish councils, national governing bodies of sports and local sports clubs will need to be established to work through the prioritisation of future projects.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 That Cabinet resolves to:
  - a. Endorse the findings of the consultants and approves the Playing Pitch Strategy, including the key recommendations and site specific action plan;
  - b. Authorise officers to work in partnership with other organisations to establish the feasibility and funding sources for the projects identified within the strategy and to prepare business cases, where opportunities arise, and bring them forward for consideration; and
  - c. Note that the resources needed to develop these partnerships and implement the action plan will be achieved from existing resources by reprioritising existing work.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 As set out in the report, delivery of the strategy will be achieved through a reprioritisation of existing work within the Communities group with no requirement for additional budget or resources.
- 5.2 Although not all the actions within this strategy will result in a financial implication to the Council, there are some potential implications for the District. Based on the housing growth between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2031, the district is expecting to deliver 3,394 additional dwellings which would result in a population growth of 8,146 by 2031 (assuming occupancy of 2.4 persons per dwelling), which will increase match and training demand on pitches. When this is translated into associated capital costs needed this is estimated at £1.4m for new pitch provision and £2.6m for ancillary facilities such as changing rooms.
- 5.3 The strategy will be used to provide evidence in securing external sources of grant funding and Section 106 contributions, which can be used to support individual business cases.



5.4 If the strategy is approved, further reports will be submitted to Cabinet identifying sources of funding for consideration and approval to progress the recommendations in the strategy as opportunities arise.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. However, the strategy is an important component of the wider evidence base supporting the Local Plan making process. This strategy together with other assessments, studies and strategies help to ensure future growth and planning policies are fully justified; i.e. the Strategy helps to ensure updates to the adopted Cotswold District Local Plan passes the National Planning Policy Framework's test of soundness (NPPF 2023, paragraph 35).

## **7. RISK ASSESSMENT**

7.1 Failing to adopt and update a Playing Pitch Strategy would disadvantage the Council when bidding for future external funding and seeking developer contributions, towards specific projects and schemes. It would also directly affect the Council's ability to keep the Cotswold District Local Plan up-to-date.

## **8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.1 Any projects emerging from the Playing Pitch Strategy, will be assessed individually for equalities impact.

## **9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None at this time.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 None

(END)