

## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Executive  
**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019  
**Report for:** Decision  
**Report of:** Executive Member for Culture & Leisure

### Report Title

Trafford Playing Pitch Strategy Review, Long Term Security of Tenure and Local Football Facilities Plan.

### Summary

To present the refreshed PPS, provide an update on the Long-Term Security Tenure process and provide an update on the Local Football Facilities Plan.

### Recommendation(s)

- 1. Note the conclusion of Playing Pitch Strategy 2019 review.**
- 2. Approve the proposed review of maintenance processes for pitch based sports in Trafford.**
- 3. Approve the development of a strategic investment portfolio to be managed by the Playing Pitch Strategy Steering Group.**
- 4. Note and approve the Long Term Security of Tenure process and delegate responsibility to the Corporate Director for Place to finalise the process for the clubs included within this report to receive a 25 year lease.**
- 5. Note the process for the LFFP and approve delegation of responsibility to the Corporate Director for Place to further develop proposal for site investment in Trafford under this scheme.**
- 6. Note and approve the process for decision making for schemes related to the Playing Pitch Strategy.**

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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Background Papers: None.

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and Wellbeing Strategy</li> <li>• Trafford Moving: Trafford Sports &amp; Physical Activity Strategy</li> </ul>
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance</li> <li>• National Planning Policy Framework</li> </ul>
Financial	The strategy will inform the spend of the capital budget allocated to this scheme and may inform future investment.
Legal Implications:	None as a result of this report but Legal will support implementation of the strategy where needed.
Equality/Diversity Implications	The associated strategies in this report have been subject to equality impact assessments where necessary. Considerations have been made to increase provision for underrepresented groups as part of the support of Sport NGB plans.
Sustainability Implications	None
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	
Risk Management Implications	<p>The risk management will be conducted as per current long term agreements.</p> <p>Planning application decisions, draft land allocations and draft planning policies are likely to be considered inadequate by Planning Inspectors if based on old information.</p>
Health & Wellbeing Implications	Improve spaces and places to engage in sport and physical activity.
Health and Safety Implications	None

## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 This report serves to provide an update on Trafford's Playing Pitch Strategy, which was adopted in 2017. More specifically an overview of the strategy's purpose, the strategy refresh commissioned in 2019 and two associated schemes the Long-Term Security of Tenure process and the Local Football Facilities Plan.

## 2. Playing Pitch Strategy

- 2.1 Trafford's Playing Pitch Strategy provides a strategic framework which ensures the provision for outdoor playing pitches meet the needs of Trafford's current and future population. The strategy has been developed in accordance with Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework, providing a robust and objective justification for future provision in the borough, supporting decisions on planning and internal and external investment. The strategy is a core consideration by any National Governing Body of sport when considering investment in the borough.
- 2.2 Trafford's strategy has three core aims to protect existing supply, enhance playing pitches and ancillary facilities and provide new playing pitches to

support current and future demand of Trafford's residents. The strategy is structured around data from, National Governing Bodies of Sport, community support clubs, pitch quality ratings and population and housing growth data.

2.3 Trafford Council has ownership of the strategy and the implementation of the strategy and associated action plan. The council is supported by representatives from National Governing Bodies of Sport, Trafford Leisure and Sport England. Background Paper 2 sets out the structure and governance of the strategy. It is also important to note the strategy contributes to the wider council priorities and strategies such as the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the borough's sport and physical activity strategy: Trafford Moving. Delivery of the strategy is also supported by two Task & Finish Groups and one Working Group.

2.4 The Maintenance Task and Finish Group is responsible for delivering recommendations and actions that relate to the protect and enhance aims of the strategy and has begun a process of review of the current maintenance process and offer in Trafford, with a view to understanding the current position and implementation of best practice to protect and enhance existing and new facilities in the borough.

2.6 The Investment Task and Finish Group is responsible for considering investment opportunities to meet the third aim of the strategy, which is to provide new facilities, when and where the need is identified. The group will consider options to secure internal investment, through capital budgets and S106 contributions and external investment from Sport England, the Football Foundation and any other funding body. The groups will liaise to develop a strategic investment portfolio which will inform and prioritise investment and maintenance to meet the outcomes set out in the Playing Pitch Strategy. The Local Football Facilities Plan Working Group is detailed in section 4.

## **2.7 PPS: Review**

2.8 A key action undertaken by the PPS Steering Group is to maintain and update the data that informs the strategy recommendations and actions. As part of Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance a PPS has an effective duration of between 3-5 years before an update is required. The data that was contained in the strategy adopted by Executive in October 2017 was obtained in 2016, therefore given the guidance a refresh of the data was commissioned by Trafford Council and carried out by Knight, Kavanagh & Page between January and April 2019.

2.9 The conclusions of this refresh are appended below, the full report is attached in Appendix 1

1. The indicative positions identified for each sport within the Trafford PPS 2017 remain true.
2. There has been no notable capital or partnership into facilities since. Improvements have been to ancillary facilities and have been club driven and self-funded.
3. There has been no identified change to local authority maintenance regimes or withdrawal of the local authority (Trafford Leisure) managed supply for formal outdoor sport.
4. There has been a change in strategic direction in the case of some sports, particularly

football, with greater focus now being paid to opportunities at education rather than open filed playing filed sites with regards to development of 3G pitch provision.

5. Identified demand across the sports has remained approximately static notwithstanding increase/decrease at some individual clubs/age groups.

- 2.10 The refresh also takes account of variables that would affect the supply and demand of pitched based sports that were not considered in the 2017 report; the main addition is an analysis of indoor football provision in the borough, to mitigate for any reduction in provision in future years, should a reduction occur. The update also takes into account any revisions to the aims and objectives of sport National Governing Bodies, which are aligned to Sport England funding cycles.

### **3 Long Term Security of Tenure**

- 3.1 As alluded to in the introduction to the report a key recommendation of the 2017 report was to establish a process for community clubs to secure long tenure on sites where they can demonstrate exclusivity of use for sporting purposes. Since 2017 this process has been further developed by officers with the support of National Governing Bodies of Sport to create a process that does not disadvantage any of the parties involved in the process and secure the use of pitches and growth of Trafford Community Clubs.
- 3.2 The primary purpose of the scheme was to provide where appropriate the tenure of a 25 year lease to satisfy the funding requirements of National Governing Bodies of sport when funding facilities based projects. There have been a number of instances where a lack of tenure has meant community clubs have not been able to access significant investment, which could have benefited communities across Trafford.
- 3.3 The purpose has also been expanded to include the option for clubs to take ownership of their own maintenance schedules, within an agreed plan, with that sport's National Governing Body. Tenure would be offered to clubs at a peppercorn rent. The saving that this would provide clubs would then be invested in improving the clubs facilities and pitches and allow clubs to establish reserves for more costly future investment, any agreements would be enshrined within the lease agreement.
- 3.4 Allowing clubs to also opt into taking ownership of their facility maintenance will improve the frequency and quality of maintenance on pitches within a tenure scheme; this will serve to improve the quality of pitches across the borough given that only 21 out of 211 pitches maintained and operated by the authority, in the 2017 report are rated as good. This approach will also counter the decreasing capacity of the pitch maintenance program offered by Trafford Council and its partners Amey and Trafford Leisure.
- 3.5 Since the approval of the scheme 10 community clubs are at a point of moving towards a long-tenure process and officers have been working with these clubs for 18 months to develop business plans to support the drafting of Heads of Terms and Community Use Agreements. The community sport clubs are listed below.
- Altrincham & District Athletics Club
  - Broadheath Central Athletics Club
  - Crossford Bridge Management Association

- Lowry Community Sports & Fitness Partnership
- Sale Sports Club
- Trafford FC
- Unicorn Athletic JFC
- Timperley Villa JFC
- Trafford Athletics Club
- Altrincham JFC

#### 4 **Local Football Facilities Plan**

- 4.1 Since the adoption of Trafford's PPS in 2017 the Football Association have developed a 10 year plan for facilities investment and have embarked on publishing plans for all the Local Authorities in England as part of a national scheme worth 1 billion over 10 years. It is important to note the Local Football Facilities Plan is produced and managed and led by the Football Association and Trafford Council is considered a key stakeholder.
- 4.2 The Football Association began the process with Trafford in January 2018. The purpose of the plan is to develop a strategic hierarchy of investment in Trafford. The Football Association's plan aligns with the sports national strategy to increase and sustain playing numbers and as such prioritises four key types of facility investment, non-turf pitches (3G), grass pitch investment, ancillary facilities and the informal playing surfaces (Multi-Use Games Area's). The management of this plan is delivered by the LFFP working group.
- 4.3 To inform the plan, data from Trafford Playing Pitch Strategy has been used to identify sites for potential investment in Trafford that meet the outcomes of the plan. The sites identified were informed through consultation with community clubs and stakeholders responsible for the delivery of Football in Trafford. The sites suggested all have the opportunity to positively affect growth within football in Trafford and meet the recommendations of the PPS refresh.
- 4.4 The sites listed, once the plan is published, will inform the local investment opportunities, which will be led by the Football Foundation. The basis of the funding available will involve contributions from the Football Foundation, which could range from between 50-80% of the full cost of the scheme, depending on the location and outcomes being met by the proposal.
- 4.5 To secure investment in Trafford under this scheme and to meet the core aims of the Playing Pitch Strategy a sum of £434,000 has been prioritised within the Capital Programme to develop a series of projects across all four localities in Trafford. Officers have engaged in conversations with the local Football Associations, the Football Foundation, Community Club and other key stakeholders to determine a set of schemes to be supported by this funding and are in the process of commissioning enhanced pitch reports and feasibility studies for these schemes.
- 4.6 Alongside this discussion officers are also working with the Football Foundation to ascertain the value of their contribution. If the council is successful in obtaining additional funding from the Football Foundation the total scheme investment in Trafford facilities could rise to in excess of £1.03 million (which includes elements of S106 contributions also). The schemes put forward under the LFFP have also been positioned to benefit multiple sports where possible.

- 4.7 Whilst this investment is crucial it does not present a sustainable route to investment. To overcome this an Investment Task and Finish Group, a sub-group of the Playing Pitch Strategy Steering Group, has considered the opportunity to access S106 contributions and Local CIL investment to create a strategic investment portfolio which will enable the steering group to identify beneficial investment opportunities to enhance and or provide new facilities to meet the needs of current and future residents as identified in the PPS.

## **5. Governance: Decision Making Process**

- 5.1 The points below set out a process to inform decisions related to the Playing Pitch Strategy, Long Term Security of Tenure and Local Football Facilities Plan.
1. Site identified within PPS due to demand or for improvement to increase or sustain use
  2. Site reviewed at either PPS: Maintenance T&F Group and or LFFP Working Group
  3. Sent for comments from PPS Steering Group and added to investment portfolio
  4. Presented at Leisure Project Board for consideration and comments
  5. Sent to Place Shaping Board for consideration and comments
  6. Sent for consideration and approval from Exec Member for Culture and Leisure

## **6 Summary**

- 6.1 The PPS provides a sound strategic framework to guide investment by the council, its partners and community clubs. The opportunities highlighted in the report provides significant opportunities to protect, enhance and provide new facilities in Trafford, in locations where investment is needed and in some cases has been lacking.
- 6.2 Protecting, and enhancing the pitch provision within Trafford's green spaces will ensure they are used and maintained in a way that supports sustained and increased engagement in sports and physical activity from all ages and across the whole borough, whilst also creating opportunities for community clubs to remain sustainable to meet the future demands of Trafford's growing population.

### **Other Options**

- **If this strategy is not in place there will be no strategic plan for pitch provision in the borough this will mean**
  - Pitches will fall into disrepair
  - Pitches could be used for activities other than their intended purpose
  - Opportunities to engage in sport would decline

## **Consultation**

- Football Clubs have been consulted as part of both the Playing Pitch Strategy and the Local Football Facilities plan.
- Clubs have also undertaken community engagement as part of the LTST scheme.

## **Reasons for Recommendation**

The recommendations set out in the report will serve to safeguard sports pitches in the borough and will ensure there is a plan to protect existing supply, enhance playing pitches and ancillary facilities and provide new playing pitches to support current and future demand of Trafford's residents. The refreshed plan will also ensure planning decisions are made with the most current data in mind.

**Finance Officer Clearance** (GB)

**Legal Officer Clearance** (TR)

## **[CORPORATE] DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE**



To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.