

## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Executive  
**Date:** 30 October 2017  
**Report for:** Decision  
**Report of:** Executive Member for Communities and Partnerships

### Report Title:

Adoption of the Trafford Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS)

### Summary:

This report provides Members with information on the development of a new Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) to update the existing strategy which was developed in 2009.

Sport England expect Local Authorities to have a robust plan for the maintenance, improvement and development of playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities, which enables a greater strategic case to be made for investment from Sport England and other public funders.

The new strategy will help to shape the council's future ambition around playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities and support the case for further investment during the period 2017-2026

### Recommendation(s):

That the Executive;

- 1) Notes the contents of the Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report;
- 2) Approves the adoption of the Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan;
- 3) Notes the proposal to commence a review of PPS in line with Sport England Guidance;
- 4) Approves the criteria and process for considering applications for Long Term Security of Tenure (25 year maximum).

Financial Impact:	No direct financial implications arising from this report. However, the adoption of the strategy will lead to the council and partners having a clear action plan of improvements in sporting facilities. It is anticipated the strategy will also help the Council and partners to secure external funding as organisations will have more confidence to invest in Trafford.
Legal Impact	The strategy would be used to inform strategic planning decision.
Human Resources Impact:	The PPS identifies sites with poor facilities, including disability access and set these out as priorities to be addressed. It should therefore assist in improving accessibility for all.
Asset Management Impact:	None
E-Government Impact:	None
Risk Management Impact:	The risk management will be conducted as per current long term agreements.  Planning application decisions, draft land allocations and draft planning policies are likely to be considered inadequate by Planning Inspectors if based on old information.
Health and Safety Impact:	None

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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Background Papers:

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 In line with previous Sport England Guidance the Council had produced an “Outdoor Sports Facilities Study – An Assessment of Need” in March 2009. Sport England updated their guidance relating to outdoor sports facilities in October 2013, Trafford therefore required an up to date assessment to be carried out to ensure that the assessment was in line with the new guidance and also to ensure a robust evidence base to support strategic decisions, investment proposals and to inform the planning process going forward..
- 1.2 The Council appointed specialist consultants, Knight, Kavanagh and Page to conduct the assessment and to support and advise in relation to the development of the PPS (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). The review covered all pitches used for: football; cricket ;Rugby League; Rugby Union; hockey; 3G pitches; lacrosse and Gaelic Football; together with outdoor bowling greens; outdoor tennis courts and athletics tracks. A Steering Group was set up which included representatives from each of the above sport’s National Governing Bodies alongside representatives from the Council and Trafford Leisure CIC..
- 1.3 The purpose of the PPS is to assess the supply and demand of playing pitches in Trafford in order to develop proposals for the improvement of the stock and quality of playing pitches. This involved assessing different areas within Trafford as well as looking at Trafford as a whole. The areas as assessed were North (Old Trafford and Stretford), West (Urmston and Partington), South (Altrincham) and Central (Sale).
- 1.4 The Sport England Guidance identifies 5 stages to be followed in developing and maintaining a PPS. The Steering Group signed off Stage A of the Sport England steps, “Prepare and Tailor the Approach” in June 2016, which set the scope for the assessment.
- 1.5 Stage B required on site assessments of all the playing pitches and surveys with all the sports clubs utilising the pitches, all of which had to be conducted during each particular sport’s playing season. This then informed the stage C, “Supply and Demand” assessment and the PPS Assessment Report which was produced in March 2017.
- 1.6 Following sign off of Stage C by the Steering Group, the stage D, “The Action Plan” report was produced in consultation with the National Governing Bodies for the relevant sports and was agreed by them in June 2017.
- 1.7 The PPS, if formally adopted would inform strategic planning decisions and would be used to aid decision making in connection with planning applications.

## **2. Consultation**

- 2.1 Trafford Council procured Knight, Kavanagh and Page (KKP) to undertake the development and completion of Trafford’s PPS. KKP ensured that the National

Governing Bodies were consulted with in line with the Sport England guidelines.

- 2.2 The individual clubs had the opportunity to complete a survey either online or over the phone regarding their club and the facilities that they use. Some larger strategic clubs had face to face meetings to complete the survey.
- 2.3 Trafford's PPS Steering Group signed off each stage of the PPS including the stage C Assessment Report and stage D Action Plan.

### **3. Summary of PPS**

- 3.1 The PPS identified that there is generally spare capacity of grass football pitches, especially for adult 11 v 11 football pitches. Some of this capacity is created by clubs purposefully underusing pitches in order to maintain the quality of the pitch surface. However there is overplaying on some pitches in Trafford.
- 3.2 10% of Trafford's football pitches are regarded as of "good" quality and 27% are have been classified as in "poor" condition.
- 3.3 During the peak cricket season, there is a sufficient supply of match sessions with enough spare capacity to cater for future demand. However nearly 50% of available pitches are located in the south.
- 3.4 Rugby league's primary demand is sufficiently met as Trafford currently only has one team. However, the 35 rugby union pitches represent a shortfall of 5 pitches for the 7 clubs and 67 teams. The south has the largest proportion of rugby pitches.
- 3.5 Hockey has a shortfall of at least 1 sand based or water based (not 3G) artificial grass pitch with floodlighting in the central location. This shortfall results in one club playing and training outside of the borough. Future requirements would ideally be increased to 2 artificial grass pitches. All existing sand based or water based pitches should be protected or replaced.
- 3.6 Demand for lacrosse, Gaelic sports, tennis, crown green bowling, athletics in Trafford is currently sufficiently catered for. Tennis however does have a need for flood lighting on courts and the quality of the athletics tracks needs improving.
- 3.7 Trafford has a shortfall of at least 7 full size 3G artificial grass pitches that are required for community use.

### **4. Summary of Next Steps**

- 4.1 The PPS contains a number of recommendations to address the issues of capacity and quality across all sports. These are set out within the body of the

Strategy and Action Plan by reference to each of the individually assessed sports. Many of the sport specific recommendations reflect the aspirations of the various clubs which were consulted throughout the process and will be relied on by those clubs to support funding initiatives, whereas others are clearly more strategic.

- 4.2 The PPS also contains a strategy and action plan setting out site specific recommendations. These identify potential lead partners and rank the recommendations according to a number of criteria, including the site hierarchy (Key, Local or Reserve), Priority, Timescales, Cost and Aim (Protect, Enhance, Provide).
- 4.3 The Action Plan should be reviewed in the light of staff and financial resources in order to ensure that support is prioritised for strategically important provision. It is proposed that the Council should continue to work with the National Governing Bodies (NGB's) of the relevant sports and with other partners to develop a priority list of actions based on local priorities, NGB priorities and available funding.
- 4.4 Working to the priority list of actions, the Steering Group, including representatives from each of the sport's NGB's and representative from Trafford Council will then work with the relevant Sports Clubs, Charities and other stakeholders to identify external funding opportunities to assist with the delivery of the recommendations identified in the Action Plan including:
  - Improving the quality of pitches to enable more matches to be played and therefore increasing the capacity;
  - Improving facilities such as changing rooms and access;
  - Providing full size 3G (modern artificial grass) pitches; and
  - Focusing on creating high quality Hub sites (larger multi-pitch sites) to make the best use of limited money.
- 4.5 The adoption of the PPS will give it status for the purposes of the Council's Local Development Plan. It would also be given greater weight in the planning decision making process.
- 4.6 Applications for Long Term Security of Tenure will be considered from organisations in light of the outcomes of Trafford's PPS. This is because clubs with a 25 year agreement will be eligible for external funding to improve the standard of pitches and facilities.
- 4.7 The supporting paper, "Criteria for Security of Tenure" (Appendix 3) shows the principles that will be used in agreements with Sports Clubs as well as the 'process' (Appendix 4) for agreeing this.

## **5. Keeping the Strategy Robust and Up to Date**

- 5.1 Stage E of the Sport England Guidance recognises the need for the policy to be kept robust and up to date. It recommends that the PPS is reviewed annually. It also recognises the need to reflect changes to particularly important sites or clubs and the need to have regard to new or emerging issues and opportunities.
- 5.2 The Trafford landscape continues to evolve rapidly and a number of key opportunities have come forward, particularly in the North of the Borough, linked to the UA92 proposals. Furthermore, the development of this PPS of necessity has been a lengthy operation, and the context within which some of the recommendations and actions were proposed has changed. It is therefore considered appropriate to expedite a review of the PPS with specific regard to the emerging opportunities, to ensure that the document does remain robust and up to date.

## **6. Other Options**

- a. One alternative would be to not to adopt the Trafford Playing Pitch Strategy. However this could impact the Planning department's decision making process and will impact on the ability of individual clubs to apply for and secure funding to maintain and improve facilities across the Borough.
- b. Do nothing. This is not an option given the condition of the playing pitches in Trafford. The standard of playing pitch quality will reduce where overplay continues.

### **Reasons for the Recommendations**

- a. Enhances Trafford Council's and Trafford's sports clubs ability to attract external funding to improve facilities.
- b. The Trafford Playing Pitch Strategy will support Trafford Councils Physical Activity Strategy and the Open Space Agenda. .
- c. The Playing Pitch Strategy will also help to meet a number of wider corporate objectives relating to health and wellbeing, and encouraging participation in sports.

**Key Decision:** yes

**If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given?** Yes

**Finance Officer Clearance:** GB

**Legal Officer Clearance:** JLF

**CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE:**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joanne Hyde". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping underline.

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