

# **Adoption of the South Somerset Playing Pitch Strategy 2017 - 2028**

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## **Purpose of the Report**

1. The Community Health and Leisure team plays a key role in planning for the future provision of playing pitch provision in South Somerset and in securing appropriate developer contributions towards playing pitch and changing provision. In order to do this a robust evidence base is required that is compliant with national planning policy guidance. This reports seeks members; endorsement of:
  - a. The new South Somerset Playing Pitch Strategy and associated action plan
  - b. The proposed new standards of provision for playing pitches and changing facilities

## **Forward Plan**

2. This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of July.

## **Public Interest**

3. The Council aspires to be a district that provides and supports the supply of accessible, well managed and well maintained playing pitches and changing facilities, which are fit for purpose and encourage residents to maintain and increase their participation in sport and active recreation. The Council therefore commissioned a study to review playing pitch provision in line with national planning policy guidance and has resulted in a new strategy and action plan to help plan for the future. The review involved consultation with key providers of playing pitches and also users of playing pitches and members of the public. This report seeks support from members to adopt the new strategy and its recommendations.

## **Recommendations**

4. That the District Executive:
  - a. Formally adopts the new South Somerset Playing Pitch Strategy 2017 - 2028
  - b. Adopts the revised standards for playing pitch and changing room provision outlined within this report.

## **Background**

5. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states:

“Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on up-to-date assessment of the needs for open space, sport and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local

area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required”.

6. Sport England has produced the guidance that supports local authorities to produce playing pitch needs assessments/strategies that are compliant with the NPPF.
7. A decision was taken to develop a new NPPF compliant strategy in 2015. SSDC officers undertook the initial audit of supply. The overall assessment of supply and demand was undertaken by an external consultant.
8. A steering group was established to take forward the project in line Sport England guidance comprising of representatives from England Hockey, the Rugby Football Union, the English Cricket Board, the Football Association, Sport England and SSDC officers.
9. The key benefits of adopting an NPPF compliant playing pitch strategy are as follows:
  - a. It provides a robust evidence base to inform the assessment of planning applications and proposed developments.
  - b. It provides evidence to help protect and enhance existing provision
  - c. It identifies gaps in provision and identifies priority projects thus enabling the prioritisation of any internal and external capital and revenue investment
  - d. It helps to attract investment from other sources including National Governing Bodies and Lottery Funding
  - e. It provides a clear district wide action plan.
  - f. It can also provide clear standards of provision for playing pitch and changing room provision

## **Report Detail**

10. The new Strategy supports the Council in providing the right combination of playing pitches and changing provision to meet the current and future needs of the district's population. The final strategy and action plan can be viewed on the SSDC website.
11. There are two main stages involved in the development of the new strategy. The first stage requires the completion of needs assessments which examine supply and demand for facilities. The second stage involves bringing together supply and demand information to form a strategy and action plan.
12. The needs assessment was undertaken in consultation with clubs, national governing bodies of sport and Sport England to establish the quantity, quality, availability and accessibility of playing pitches and changing facilities across South Somerset.
13. New standards of provision for pitches were considered as part of the new strategy. The latest Sport England Guidance does not specifically require standards of provision to be set by local authorities, favouring instead that actual infrastructure requirements are clearly identified. However, officers felt that it would be beneficial to retain standards of provision in order to assist with the calculation of developer obligations where required.

Members are therefore asked to approve the new standards for playing pitches and changing/pavilion spaces summarised in Table 1 below, to ensure that appropriate S106 contributions continue to be sought.

### **Table 1 – Former and proposed new standards of provision**

Infrastructure Type	Former standard (Sq m per person)	Proposed new standard (Sq m per person)
Playing Pitches	14	12
Changing Rooms	0.1157	0.105

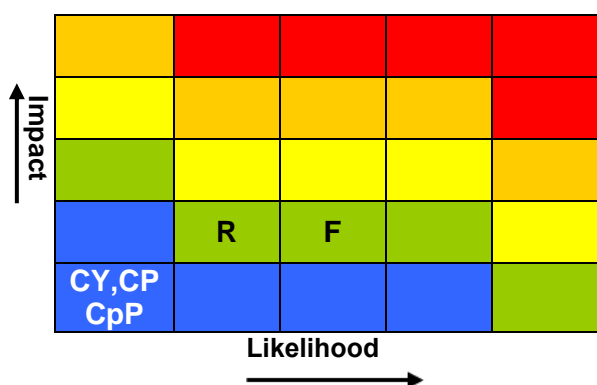
14. The new strategy was completed and signed off by the steering group in 2017. The process to complete a new strategy was lengthy as pitches for different pitch sports can only be assessed during the appropriate playing season in line with Sport England guidance.
15. A consultation exercise was concluded last autumn following the completion of the draft strategy. There were just under 50 group/individual responses and a summary of the comments and steering group responses and any amendments made to the strategy and associated documents are attached as Appendix A.
16. At the request of the Council Leader, a separate Portfolio Holder briefing was arranged (held in May 2018) prior to the strategy being brought forward to District Executive Committee so that members had an appropriate opportunity to discuss the detail of the strategy with the Portfolio Holder and lead officers. Fifteen members attended the Portfolio Holder's briefing. A summary of the priorities (by Area) within the new Strategy presented to members is attached as Appendix B.
17. There was one particular concern expressed by some members at the Portfolio Holder's briefing about the necessity to try and formally secure community use on artificial playing surfaces at school facilities within Bruton to ensure that Area East residents have adequate access to artificial playing surfaces. The Community Health and Leisure Manager agreed that the appropriate officer would report on progress to the Area East Committee in due course but the need to secure access is already detailed within the strategy action plan.

## Financial Implications

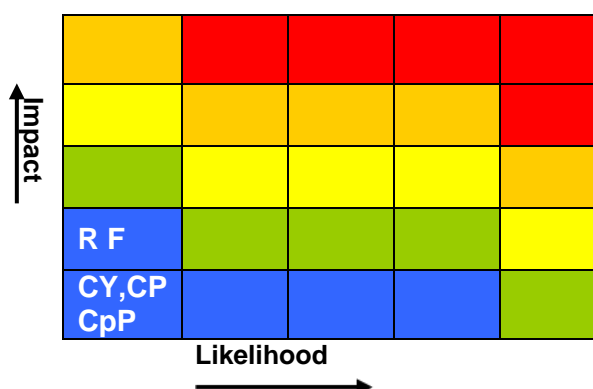
18. There are no requests for additional resources within this report. Looking ahead, any investment projects arising from the strategy/action plan would be presented separately with appropriate business cases. It is anticipated that the strategy will also be informative and underpin potential access to funding through planning obligations and external funds, as well as being used for longer term resource planning.

## Risk Matrix

**Risk Profile before officer recommendations**



**Risk Profile after officer recommendations**



## Key

Categories	Colours <i>(for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)</i>
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

## Council Plan Implications

19. The Playing Pitch Strategy contributes to Council Plan aim to “improve health and reduce health inequalities”. The Strategy will also help the Council “ to build healthy, self-reliant, active communities” and to:
- Target support to areas of need
  - Help people to live well by enabling quality cultural, leisure, play, sport & healthy lifestyle facilities & activities

## Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

20. The playing pitch strategy does not directly address carbon emissions or climate change therefore there are no implications.

## Equality and Diversity Implications

21. Originally an Equality Assessment for the strategy was completed in May 2017 and updated in June 2018. The results of the assessment showed that the strategy is unlikely to have any impacts on people with protected characteristics.

## Privacy Impact Assessment

22. No personal data handling is involved.

## Background Papers

23. None
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