

REPORT FROM: Assistant Director Operational Services

TO: Executive

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Playing Pitch Strategy 2024 - 2029

PURPOSE OF REPORT

For the Executive to approve the Playing Pitch Strategy and to note the contents and recommendations contained within.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Executive notes the contents and recommendations of the Playing Pitch Strategy as a strategic, live document for outdoor sports within Pendle.
- (2) That the Executive approve the Playing Pitch Strategy 2024 - 2029
- (3) That members actively support and encourage the development of sports clubs and that approval is granted for officers to seek external funding opportunities.
- (4) That the report be shared with Town and Parish councils, alongside other partners and stakeholders

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) The Playing Pitch Strategy provides a detailed snapshot of both current usage and future demand for outdoor recreation across the borough to be used as part of key planning policy, strategic and local decisions.
- (2) To support funding applications to external bodies
- (3) To improve the wellbeing of Pendle residents and to support funding applications from external sources to improve sports facilities both owned by Pendle Borough Council and educational facilities.
- (4)

To consider the current council asset transfer programme, and encourage all partners involved to commit to the recommendations within this report for the benefit of all sports across the Borough, following any transfers

Background

- (1) A Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) is designed to provide a strategic framework document for the maintenance and improvement of existing playing pitches and ancillary facilities within the borough.
- (2) The PPS document provides:
 - A vision and priorities for future improvement of playing pitches and outdoor sports
 - Key aims to assist in the delivery of the recommendations and actions
 - Strategic recommendations for maintenance, improvement, development and, if required, the rationalisation of sports facilities
 - Individual sport by sport recommendations
 - A prioritised area by area action plan
- (3) The previous PPS was in place for 2016 – 2026 as a joint venture between Rossendale, Burnley and Pendle Borough Councils. This timescale is not recommended by Sport England, as the key NGB (Non-Governmental Body), and instead a 5-year plan is suggested to ensure information is current and up to date. The new PPS has been jointly commissioned between Ribble Valley and Pendle councils by specialist consultants, KKP.
- (4) The strategy has been developed in line with Sport England's PPS (Playing Pitch Sports) guidance, and Sport England's Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (non-pitch sports).
- (5) The new PPS document covers a 5-year timeframe and incorporates the following sports within Pendle:
 - Football
 - Cricket
 - Rugby Union and League
 - Hockey
 - Tennis
 - Crown green bowls
 - 3G pitches
 - American football
- (6) The table below shows the current headline findings for pitch sport capacity*. For adult football, all sports show demand is met, with no spare capacity, or in shortfall.

Sport	Pitch type	Current supply/demand balance (match equivalent sessions)	Future supply/demand balance (match equivalent sessions)
Football	Adult	Spare capacity of 1	Spare capacity of 1
Football	Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 7.5	Shortfall of 7.5
Football	Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 2	Shortfall of 2
Football	Mini 7v7	Shortfall of 3	Shortfall of 3
Football	Mini 5v5	Shortfall of 1	Shortfall of 1
Football	3G 11v11	Shortfall of 1.75 pitches	Shortfall of 1.75 pitches
Cricket	Senior (Saturday)	Shortfall of 18	Shortfall of 18
Cricket	Senior (Sunday)	Shortfall of 30	Shortfall of 30
Cricket	Junior (midweek)	Shortfall of 18	Shortfall of 18
Rugby union	Senior	Shortfall of 4.25	Shortfall of 4.25
Rugby league	Senior	Shortfall of 1.75	Shortfall of 1.75
Hockey	AGP	Sufficient supply	Sufficient supply if quality improvements occur at Pendle Vale College
Tennis	Club tennis	Sufficient supply	Sufficient supply
Tennis	Recreational tennis	Shortfall	Shortfall
Crown green bowls	Full size greens	Sufficient supply	Sufficient supply
American football	Senior	Sufficient supply	Potential shortfall
Rounders	Senior	Sufficient supply	Sufficient supply

Match equivalent sessions (MES) for football /rugby is capacity per week. MES for cricket is per season

Many of the identified shortfalls in provision can be improved by better usage of existing provision, such as additional use of currently inaccessible educational facilities, improvements to grass pitch quality (mainly drainage), installation of sports lighting and improvements to ancillary facilities. The findings show that all existing provision should be maintained until all demand is catered for.

(7) The PPS has three main aims as recommended by Sport England. These aims lead to the recommendations for improvements across the sports facilities

Aim 1	To Protect the existing supply of outdoor sports facilities to meet the needs of current and future needs
Aim 2	To Enhance outdoor sports and ancillary facilities through Improving quality and management of sites
Aim 3	To Provide new outdoor sports facilities where there is current or future demand to do so

(8) Football findings and recommendation summary

- There are currently 150 teams playing across 50 pitches
- 14 Pitches across 9 sites are currently overplayed due to playing surface condition.
- Current shortfall of one 3G pitch, amplified to two when geographical population consideration applied
- Encourage more use of 3g surfaces to reduce overplay on grass surfaces
- Utilise the Football Foundation's Pitch Power app to assist in the improvement and ongoing maintenance of pitches. This app is a free to use application
- Support and work with individual clubs to apply for football foundation funding schemes for enhanced maintenance
- Work to spread the load of overplayed sites across more underplayed sites

- Look to improve ancillary facilities, especially on sites with multiple pitches such as Swindon.
- Various sites such as Barrowford Road, Springfield and Hodge House do not have any buildings on site and as such show 29% have no ancillary facilities. These sites tend to be used by youth teams that do not require changing facilities.

*To Note that over summer 2024, facilities and pitch at Nelson FC have been significantly improved under new ownership. Ongoing development at Lucas sports ground will reduce overplay at Belvedere / BRUFC in the 2025/26 season

Cricket Findings and Recommendation summary

- There are currently 8 clubs, alongside the Pendle district cricket league. In total 32 adult teams and 13 youth teams, spread across 10 grass sites
- Aim to improve quality of poor and standard quality sites
- Seek funding to install 'Non turf Pitches' (NTP) or Hybrid wickets to address overplay at Bullhome and Swindon playing fields.
- To support English Cricket Board (ECB) initiatives such as Allstars and dynamos to ensure continued cricket demand
- Aim to improve Ancillary facilities
- Poor condition ancillary facilities are primarily Barrowford Cricket club (private) and Swindon (PBC) which are now aged and dated buildings compared to modern equivalents at Bullhome / Edge End.

(9) Rugby Union Findings and recommendation summary

- There are four rugby Union pitches within Pendle situated at Belvedere Burnley RUFC comprising 2 **standard** quality pitches and ancillary facilities, and Holt House Colne RUFC comprising 2 **Poor** quality pitches and ancillary facilities.
- There are 22 teams across the 2 sites that are both currently overplayed
- Burnley RUFC – look to encourage more use of adjacent Prairie 3G pitch for training needs and other local sites to reduce overplay * As mentioned earlier, possibility of Lucas sports ground
- Colne RUFC – Improve drainage and maintenance of existing pitches
- If an additional 3G pitch is constructed within pendle, aim for it to be classified as World Rugby compliant so either club can use the facility.

(10) Rugby League Findings and recommendation summary

- There is one Rugby league pitch within Pendle located at Victory Park, Barnoldswick classed as standard quality.
- One Team is based at Victory Park – West Craven warriors
- Support West Craven warriors to improve ancillary facilities

- Look to improve drainage of main pitch
- Look to improve adjacent playing field to be used a training pitch to reduce overplay on main pitch
- Support development of new 3G pitch at west craven school and to ensure it is world rugby certified

(11) Tennis Findings and recommendation summary

- There are 22 outdoor tennis courts across 7 sites within Pendle between the council operated and the educational sector
- There is only one formal tennis Club within Pendle, Craven TC, with 14 active members. This is operating well below recommended membership levels.
- The LTA (Lawn Tennis Association) recently promoted a funding package to PBC, but this was discounted by the CLT on the grounds of future maintenance levels and charging mechanisms required for members of the public which was deemed not suitable for the local area.
- Aim to protect quantity of existing courts
- Aim to maintain existing 'good quality' courts and improve quality of 'poor and standard' quality courts
- Explore promoting 'Padel tennis' as an alternative sport to encourage usage.

(12) Hockey Findings and recommendation summary

- There is currently 1 hockey team In Pendle, Pendle Vale HC. They use facilities at Pendle vale school comprising 1 full size artificial pitch and 2 smaller sand-based pitches across the rest of Pendle. The current needs for hockey are being met with spare capacity.
- The pitch at Pendle vale is classed as 'poor condition',
- To work with partners for replacement surfaces in due course. A sinking fund should be in place for the replacement of playing surfaces
- Pursue long term tenure of a site for Hockey

(13) Crown Green Bowls findings and recommendation summary

- There are 15 Bowling greens across Pendle, all of which are standard or good quality. There are no poor-quality greens
- Membership of club's ranges from 23 up to 126
- Only 1 club, Alkincoats is operating at over capacity. The remainder all have spare capacity for additional players
- Aim to protect current number of bowling greens
- Support clubs with improvements to ancillary facilities and increasing membership

(14) American Football findings and recommendation summary

- There is no dedicated American football pitch within Pendle. A standard rugby pitch is used at Colne RUFC. No competitive match's take place and as such the current provision is deemed to be sufficient, although this should be monitored for future growth

(15) Rounders Findings and Recommendation summary

- There is no formal rounders club within Pendle, although four diamonds exist across four sites. Two of which are open for community use. This is deemed sufficient for the current demand.

Summary Findings

- The strategy shows that no existing playing fields can be deemed surplus to requirements due to current and future usage and should therefore be protected from development proposals
- There are current shortfalls of match sessions, specifically football and rugby, although demand is currently being met. These shortfalls can mostly be addressed with pitch quality improvements - some minor maintenance works; others requiring capital investment.
- Estimated costs for improving drainage standards for grass pitches range from £5000 - £120,000. Some external funding may be available towards these costs, but some capital may be required from Council
- Aim to encourage and maximise community usage of facilities within the educational sector
- Secure Tenure and access to sites to quality, developmental minded sports clubs and encourage greater levels of ownership. This may help secure additional funding from National Governing Bodies (NGB's) for facility improvements not available directly to the council.
- To encourage use of the 'Pitchpower app' (free to use) by clubs, PBC and private landowners to self-assess conditions to identify potential improvement maintenance standards / requirements.
- To work with individual NGB's to prioritise local actions.
- Encourage matches to be transferred to sites with current undercapacity on current overplayed sites.

- Investigate the installation of a synthetic cricket wicket at both Bullhome and Swindon playing fields.
- To continue to monitor future local development and ensure suitable contributions are received from developers using the Sport England playing pitch calculator to ensure current local capacity is in line with any rise in population figures.
- Anticipated population growth from the Local Plan by 2040 suggests capital costs of £857,000 for increased facility supply to cope with increased number of users, plus annual maintenance costs of approx. £46,000 pa over the next 16 years. This would need a combination of PBC capital funds and external grants.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: Corporate Plan 2023-2027– Priority 4 – complete PPS document.

The PPS works alongside the Local Plan as a key evidence base and provides a strategic framework for sports provision

Financial: The PPS will assist in the direction of limited council resources for both capital works and revenue & maintenance budget improvements alongside encouraging external funding sources.

Future consideration to allocation of capital budgets through the life of the strategy for improvements to pitch drainage systems. **Long term planning until 2040 suggests significant capital investment will be required as highlighted in recommendation 11 to meet usage by predicted increase in local population.**

Legal: None arising from this report

Risk Management: None arising from this report

Health and Safety: Improvements to playing pitch surfaces reduce risk to users

Sustainability: None arising from this report

Community Safety: None arising from this report

Equality and Diversity: [OBJ] Improvements to ancillary facilities such as changing rooms, can be a key factor in encouraging users with health conditions and impairments alongside girls and women to take part in sports.

APPENDICES

- 1 – Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy and Action Plan August 2024
- 2 - Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy Assessment Report March 2024

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.