



South Staffordshire Council

Local Plan Review

Publication Plan

Future Housing Growth & Playing Pitch Requirements Topic Paper

November 2022

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Topic Paper forms part of the evidence base for South Staffordshire District Council's new Local Plan. The paper outlines the District Council's approach to the provision of playing pitches and facilities to support demand arising from future planned housing provision. Indicative costings have been identified to support plan feasibility work. These figures will be subject to future refinement as greater clarity is provided in relation to specific scheme costings.
- 1.2 Using the Government's Standard Model, and discounting sites have been developed or already have planning permission, an outstanding balance of 2,863 is to be identified. In addition to the district's own housing needs, the plan is proposing to make a 4,000-dwelling contribution towards meeting the housing shortfall identified in the wider Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA).
- 1.3 The preferred spatial strategy for the delivery of the new homes prioritises growth at a number of strategic site locations and the more sustainable villages identified as Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements in the settlement hierarchy.

2. National Policy & Guidance

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 98 recognises the importance for health and well-being of having access to high quality open spaces for sport and recreation facilities. Planning policies on such matters should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments on needs, and assessments should also be used to determine the provision of open space, sport and recreation provision.
- 2.2 Sport England Guidance 'Planning for Sport' highlights the value of undertaking a playing pitch strategy to identify needs and developing an action plan as to how these may be met. Such a strategy should then be positively applied in developing planning policy and when managing development. The guidance also highlights the importance of fostering Active Design and ensuring the early consideration of sport and physical activity in masterplanning and scheme design.

3. Playing Pitch Strategy

- 3.1 The discussions on the supply and demand of pitch provision and facilities have been informed by a Playing Pitch Strategy (2020) which was produced for the district council by the consultants KKP.

- 3.2 An initial Assessment Report identified the balance between the local supply of and demand for playing pitches and other outdoor sports facilities. The report also forecast the demand for facilities based on population distribution and planned growth. As well as examining the quantity of provision the assessment also examined pitch quality and the standard of associated ancillary facilities.
- 3.3 Building on this assessment the Strategy and Action Plan has identified a series of recommendations to support the maintenance and improvement of playing pitches and ancillary facilities. The overarching finding of the assessment was that evidenced shortfalls within the district were relatively minimal. The following issues and recommendations were identified:
- need for an increase in 3G pitch provision
 - rugby union and football shortfalls could be met through better utilisation of current supply and improving quality
 - cricket shortfalls met through better utilisation and more non-turf wickets/new grass provision
 - shortfall in hockey requires suitable artificial grass pitches
 - larger housing sites to consider provision of new multi-pitch sites

4. The Proposed Approach

- 4.1 The findings of the Playing Pitch Strategy indicated that the increased demands for football, rugby union and cricket could be chiefly addressed through making improvements to the quality, configuration and accessibility of the existing pitch supply. There was however a requirement for additional 3G pitch provision and that the needs of hockey should be addressed following the closure of the facilities at Hatherton Park. Larger scale housing sites should seek to provide a measure of new provision to meet their self-generated demand.
- 4.2 To support the findings of the Playing Pitch Strategy and to support the on-going local plan feasibility studies it is proposed to promote the following approach:
- A per dwelling contribution from each new housing site (6,863 dwellings) to fund an additional 3G pitch and support the restoration of hockey facilities within the district.
 - A per dwelling contribution from each of the non-strategic housing sites (2,863 dwellings) to better utilise and improve the quality of existing playing pitches primarily for the provision of football, rugby union and cricket facilities.

- Seek on-site provision on the strategic development sites (4,000 dwellings) informed by Sports England playing pitch calculator, though also taking into consideration the other infrastructure requirements associated with these developments.

4.3 To arrive at indicative costings to support plan feasibility work, the Sports England Playing Pitch Calculator has been employed for providing an estimate of new pitch provision. The Playing Pitch Calculator does not provide suggested costings for pitch improvements, the district council has therefore decided to use a figure based on the annual maintenance figures provided by the calculator. A figure of five years' worth of maintenance costs has been selected and tested as part of plan feasibility work. It is the intention that these figures will be refined as more information becomes available on specific scheme costs. The district council is engaging with the relevant Sport National Governing Bodies and Sports England to identify viable schemes and develop mechanisms to ensure delivery.

5. Actions and Indicative Costs

5.1 Informed by the findings of the Playing Pitch Strategy and using the Sports England Playing Pitch Calculator this section identifies the actions and associated costs which will form the basis of ensuring that new development proposals meet the national policy requirement of securing access to sport and recreation opportunities based on a robust and up-to date assessment of needs.

3G Provision

5.2 The Playing Pitch Strategy notes that it is an objective of the Football Association to provide all affiliated teams with the opportunity to access a 3G pitch for training purposes. Projected future demand arising from planned housing development indicates the need for an additional 3G pitch in addition to the outstanding requirement of a further two pitches to meet existing shortfalls. The Strategy also notes that due to the overplay on Rugby Union pitches that an additional World Rugby compliant 3G pitch is warranted. The suggested approach is to promote the provision of a dual use 3G pitch of a standard to meet the needs of football and rugby. This could reduce the pressure placed on existing facilities and offer improved training opportunities for both sports.

5.3 No location has as yet been identified for the location of a new 3G pitch however the pitch could be located where existing changing and maintenance regimes are already in place. The associated maintenance costs have therefore been based on a five year contribution.

Number of new 3G pitches: 1
Costs of pitch: £941,759
Maintenance Costs: £37,086/annum x 5 years = £185,343
Total Costs of Provision & Maintenance = £1,127,102
New Houses to be allocated/without permission = 6,863
Indicative per dwelling contribution = £164.22

Hockey Facilities

- 5.4 Following the closure of Chase Park (Hatherton) there are no longer any active dedicated hockey pitches within the district. The teams previously based at the site have expressed an interest in returning to the district and discussions have taken place about the possibility of a hockey suitable AGP being provided at Penkridge but it appears that progress on this idea has recently stalled. The Playing Pitch Strategy has suggested that meeting the existing hockey demand previously based at Hatherton could be achieved on a single AGP pitch. The study has highlighted the need to ensure that existing demand is adequately and securely accommodated with new provision being required if Hatherton is not brought back into use. To support the restoration of Hockey provision it is proposed to seek a contribution based on the Sports England Playing Pitch Calculator maintenance payments sums.

Maintenance Costs: £37,086 x 5 = £185,343
New Houses to be allocated/without permission = 6,863
Cost per dwelling = £27.00

Football

- 5.5 The Playing Pitch Strategy identified the following projected football match equivalent shortfall per week as a consequence of the projected increase in population during the plan period:
- 3.5 youth sessions (2.5 sessions of 11v11 and one session of 9v9)
 - 4 mini sessions (5v5)
- 5.6 The recommended approaches to addressing these shortfalls includes securing access on sites with spare capacity through community use agreements, improving quality of poor pitches and reconfiguration of unused adult pitches. Access arrangements are outside the remit of the local plan, however assistance could be provided to support the reconfiguring of unused adult pitches to meet the shortfalls in youth and mini-pitch provision. No costs are available for undertaking this work

and discussions are on-going with the relevant National Governing Bodies to determine how best to address the shortfalls.

Cricket

- 5.7 The playing pitch study has identified a projected future match equivalent shortfall/season of 67 sessions (the shortfall identified at Swindon Cricket Club has been discounted as this arose as a consequence of damage to the pitch which the club has indicated will be rectified). The study suggests that shortfalls can be alleviated by quality improvements and by better use of existing Non-Turf Pitches. A particular additional issue is the number of clubs without secure long-term access to playing sites. If access were to be lost this would place increased pressure to find alternative sites or for new provision to be provided.
- 5.8 Securing access is outside the remit of the local plan however it is an approach which the district council would promote. Improving pitch quality has been identified as having a role to play in helping to address the shortfall in provision and it is therefore proposed to seek contributions based on the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator for a five-year maintenance contribution.

Maintenance Costs: £ 56,001 x five years = £280,006

New Houses to be allocated/without permission (non-strategic sites) = 2,863

Cost per dwelling = £97.80

Rugby Union

- 5.9 The playing pitch study indicates that there is a projected future match equivalent shortfall/week of 9.5 senior sessions which arise as a consequence of increased demand during the plan period. In meeting this projected shortfall the strategy has highlighted a number of potential actions including improving quality of poor pitches at four sites; providing floodlighting to facilitate training or provide a 3G pitch for training purposes.
- 5.10 It is proposed to address the currently identified shortfalls through funding contributions towards enhanced maintenance to improve pitch standards and also to seek the provision of a 3G pitch (see above) capable of contributing to meet the training demands of both rugby union and football.

Maintenance: £23,704 x five years x four pitches = £474,092

New Houses to be allocated/without permission (non-strategic sites) = 2,863

Costs per dwelling = £165.59

Strategic Housing Sites

- 5.11 The Local Plan review has identified four potential strategic housing sites: East of Bilbrook, Land at Cross Green, North of Linthouse Lane and North of Penkridge. In order to inform discussion on the future provision of playing pitches on these sites the playing pitch calculator has been used to provide an indicative guide on the level of new provision which could be required subject to consideration of other infrastructure demands arising from the development of these sites. The District Council is proposing to enter discussions with the promoters of the four sites to secure an acceptable level of on-site provision to meet the playing pitch requirements generated by the development of these sites.
- 5.12 The potential requirements for additional facilities as identified by the playing pitch calculator are as follows:

Strategic Site	Number of Grass Pitches	Number of Changing Rooms
SA1 East of Bilbrook (848 Dwellings)	2.38	3.32
SA2 Land at Cross Green (1200 Dwellings)	3.37	4.70
SA3 North of Linthouse Lane (1200 Dwellings)	3.37	4.70
SA4 North of Penkridge (1129 Dwellings)	3.17	4.42

6. Summary

- 6.1 This Topic Paper has sought to address NPPF requirements by responding to the findings of the recent Playing Pitch Strategy produced by KKP on behalf of South Staffordshire Council. The paper is based on a close examination of the findings of the KKP study to determine what could constitute an appropriate contribution towards meeting the future demands for playing pitch provision generated by additional housing proposals during the period of the Local Plan.
- 6.2 As noted in the KKP report the strategy is not solely aimed at Local Authorities. Other parties will need to take an active role to support the delivery of the strategy recommendations including actions relating to security of tenure and other potential income streams and grant funding.
- 6.3 In seeking to address the potential future playing pitch requirements arising from proposed new housing developments this paper has used figures derived from the Sport England Playing Pitch calculator to provide indicative costing. These figures

have been used to support plan feasibility work and will be subject to refinement as more information is available. To reflect the differing requirements these costings have been split between non-strategic and strategic site requirements as follows:

- Non-Strategic sites (2863 dwellings) – contribute towards new 3G pitch, restoration of hockey facilities, improvements to football, cricket and rugby union facilities. Suggested contribution = £454.61/dwelling.
- Strategic Sites (4,000 dwellings) – contribute towards new 3G pitch, restoration of hockey facilities. Suggested contribution = £191.22. Plus on-site provision to meet site generated needs.