

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	8 November 2017
Subject:	Gloucester Playing Pitch Strategy – Delivery Update		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for the Environment		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
Contact Officer:	Adam Gooch, Principal Planning Officer Adam.Gooch@gloucester.gov.uk / 01452 396836		
	David Pritchett, Open Spaces Strategy Officer David.Pritchett@gloucester.gov.uk / 01452 396785		
Appendices:	1. Interim Review including Action Plan Update (October 2017) 2. Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan Update (October 2017)		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with an update on progress made in the delivery of the Gloucester Playing Pitch Strategy since its adoption by Council in January 2016. This follows the first delivery update provided to Cabinet in November 2016.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to:

- (1) **NOTE** the progress made in delivering the Gloucester Playing Pitch Strategy (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2); and
- (2) **RESOLVE** to approve the recommendations made in the Interim Review (Appendix 1 and paragraph 3.8).

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 The City Council adopted the Gloucester Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and an associated Artificial Grass Pitch Strategy (AGPS) in January 2016. The PPS provides the framework for the Council, its partners, key stakeholders, clubs, schools and the community to work together in making improvements to playing pitches and ancillary facilities. The implementation of the Playing Pitch Strategy forms a key priority in the recently adopted Council Plan 2017 - 2020.
- 3.2 The delivery of the PPS is led by a Delivery Group (DG). The DG is led by the City Council, with representation from National Governing Bodies (NGBs), Active Gloucestershire, Aspire Sports and Cultural Trust and the Gloucestershire Playing

Fields Association. The DG has been set up for a period of three years, meets at least every six months and is tasked with monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the delivery of the PPS, Action Plan and associated Artificial Grass Pitch Strategy (AGPS). Officers report to Cabinet the progress in delivering the PPS at least once a year.

- 3.3 This is the second time that officers have brought an update to Cabinet on the delivery of the PPS, the first being in November 2016. Since this time significant progress has been made in delivering the aims and recommendations of the strategy, which are summarised below.

AIM 1 – To protect the existing supply of sports pitches for meeting current and future needs.

To achieve this aims, the PPS makes the following strategic recommendations:

- a) Protect sports facilities through planning policy;*
- b) Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs, through a range of solutions and partnership agreements; and*
- c) Maximise community use of outdoor sports facilities where there is a need to do so.*

AIM2 – To enhance outdoor sports facilities through improving quality and management of sites.

To achieve this, the PPS makes the following strategic recommendations:

- a) Improve quality;*
- b) Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) for the management and improvement of sites; and*
- c) Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding.*

AIM 3 – To provide new outdoor sports facilities where there is a current or future demand to do so.

To achieve this, the PPS makes the following strategic recommendations:

- a) Secure planning gain for playing pitches from housing growth;*
- b) Rectify quantitative shortfalls in current pitch stock; and*
- c) Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand.*

- 3.5 A full summary of the progress made in delivering the PPS is set out in the Interim Review at Appendix 1. Headline achievements are:

- a) Over 40% of grass playing fields in the city have now been improved. This includes direct grass maintenance works, reconfigured pitch layouts to provide for current needs, new posts or nets and bringing back into use previously disused playing fields. This is the result of investment from the City Council, the NGBs and the clubs themselves. Full information on a site-by-site basis is set in the Action Plan Update (Appendix 2).
- b) A targeted event with schools to explore opportunities for increased community use of school pitches as well as opportunities for pupil's to engage in sport in the city.

- c) The Rugby Football Union (RFU), Football Association (FA) and England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) have held pitch improvement workshops with clubs and groundsmen. This included an event at Gloucester Rugby's Kingsholm Stadium, lead by the head groundsman of Twickenham stadium, Keith Kent. Further workshops are planned in the future.
- d) Approaches have been made to clubs via the NGBs to identify opportunities to improve tenure arrangements for clubs playing on City Council owned sites, in order to facilitate funding bids, where available. Take up has been limited, but there are positive movements from Tuffley Rovers at The Lannett and Quedgeley Parish Council at Kingsway sports pitches.
- e) The University of Gloucestershire / Oxstalls Sports Park has been granted planning permission and, at the time of writing, one 3G pitch is operational and the other is due to be open in early November. These are the first full-sized 3G pitches in the city and have secured community use.
- f) The Blackbridge Community Hub proposal is being taken forward by the City Council and Active Gloucestershire. The current focus of work is around feasibility and the business plan.
- g) New playing field provision has been secured (on-site and/or off-site) from planning consents in the city, including 'Land at Winnycroft Farm', 'Land South of Grange Road' and 'Land off Paygrove Lane'.
- h) A planning framework to help deliver the aims and recommendations of the PPS is being taken forward through the Joint Core Strategy and Gloucester City Plan.
- i) The approach the City Council has taken in delivering the PPS has been identified by Sport England as best practice. Furthermore, the FA is using Gloucester City's approach in developing a national case study.

Interim review

- 3.6 The Gloucester PPS was adopted in January 2016. In order to ensure it remains up-to-date and relevant, it is important it is updated on a regular basis, to maintain the momentum and commitment that has been built up in developing the PPS, and to ensure the original supply and demand information is no more than two years old.
- 3.7 In order to achieve this, the DG has completed an 'Interim Review' of the PPS, provided at Appendix 1. The review focusses on five questions set out Stage E of Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance, which is about delivering a PPS and keeping it up to date. The questions are:
 - How has the delivery of the recommendations and action plan progressed? Are changes required to the priority afforded to each action?
 - How has the PPS been applied and what are the lessons learnt?
 - Are there any changes to particularly important sites and/or clubs in the area and other supply and demand information? What does this mean for the overall assessment work and key findings and issues?
 - Have there been any developments for a specific sport or particular format of sport?
 - Are there any new or emerging issues and opportunities?
- 3.8 The overall conclusion of the review by the DG is that

- a) The current DG structure, representation and frequency of meetings work very well. The work of the DG to date has led to significant improvements in the city. To maintain momentum, it is important for the City Council to maintain strong leadership and that the rest of the DG maintains their current commitment.
- b) A review has been undertaken of updated supply and demand information, improvements made to the different playing pitch sites and any developments in priorities and formats of sports. Whilst significant progress has been made in delivering the PPS, it is not considered at this time that these necessitate a reconsideration of the aims and recommendations of the PPS or the AGPS. It is however important that this continues to be monitored by the DG in the future.

4.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations

- 4.1 The PPS provides the framework for the Council, its partners, key stakeholders, clubs and the community to work together in making improvements to playing pitches. The preceding section of this report sets positive ways this is already happening and will continue to take place in the future.

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 5.1 None – not relevant to this report.

6.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 To provide Cabinet with an annual update on progress in delivering the adopted Gloucester PPS, including an Interim Review. The Interim Review shows that significant progress has been made in delivering the PPS and that, having reviewed the most recent club participation information, developments in the different sports and sites, the PPS remains up-to-date.

7.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 7.1 The DG will continue to meet at least every six months, delivering the aims and recommendations of the PPS. A further Interim Review will be brought to Cabinet in November 2018.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 The PPS is being delivered by a variety of different parties. Some of the actions are made at no cost to the City Council, being implemented directly by the NGBs and / or clubs as a direct result of the adoption of the PPS. Some costs will be incurred by the City Council, for example, the cost of improving the quality of pitches in City Council ownership.
- 8.2 Some projects will draw funding from a range of different sources and this is something that will be coordinated through the DG. Suitable funding streams for the delivery of projects will be identified in advance of them being initiated. If funding is not available, the projects will not go ahead.
- 8.3 At the Cabinet meeting on 9 November 2016, Members endorsed a 'Priorities list for playing fields and ancillary sports facility improvements'. This document sets out a range of possible playing pitch and sports facility improvement projects, to guide

investment priorities of the City Council from S106, Community Infrastructure Levy (once adopted) and any other funding sources. This document is up-to-date and does not therefore require updating at this time.

- 8.4 As agreed by Council at adoption, any more significant delivery projects will be brought for consideration at Senior Management Team as and when relevant.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

9.0 Legal Implications

- 9.1 There are various legal implications for the City Council associated with the delivery of the PPS and AGPS. The City Council continues to work with NGBs to identify opportunities for increased security of tenure for priority clubs. There is also the potential for 'Community Asset Transfer' – although there are no such cases being progressed at this time.

- 9.2 Now that the PPS and AGPS have been adopted they are important material considerations in the determination of planning applications and as evidence supporting the emerging Local Plan.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 10.1 A risk register was completed at the time of taking the PPS and AGPS to Council for adoptions and remains valid. The main risks are around the failure to deliver the strategies. However, as evidenced above, officers and the DG are working collectively to ensure delivery.

11.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

- 11.1 A PIA 'Screening' has been undertaken and shows that the delivery of the PPS would not affect a particular group any differently to any other. A full PIA is not therefore required.

12.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

- 12.1 N/A

Sustainability

- 12.2 The delivery of the PPS is having a positive effect on sustainability in Gloucester, providing a framework for the protection, enhancement and provision on playing pitches and ancillary facilities in the city over the next ten years. It will also set a good foundation for the ongoing consideration of playing pitches through future updates to the strategies.

Staffing & Trade Union

12.3 Not applicable

Background Documents:

'Priorities list for playing fields and ancillary sports facility improvements' (November 2016).