

**Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies - Approval**

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service/Lead Director</b>	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Mark Egerton, Strategic Planning Manager and Sue Whiteside, Principal Planning Officer
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards

**Executive Summary**

At its meeting on 5 February 2019, the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee approved the Sports Facilities Strategy and the Playing Pitch Strategy as part of the evidence base for the review of the Local Plan, subject to three amendments. Investigation into the amendments has resulted in the need to re-present the report, seeking a resolution to approve the strategies as per the original recommendations, i.e. without amendments.

Following this Committee's consideration of the findings of earlier drafts of the Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies, and the views of Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee, the strategies were subject to final consultation with key stakeholders. This report summarises the representations received that have led to amendments to the strategies. The amended strategies are provided at Appendices 1 and 2, and colour hard copies of the documents are available at The Link. Links to the records of comments and actions arising from the consultation are provided as background documents 1 and 2. An Equalities Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 3. The Committee's approval of the final strategies as part of the evidence base for the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan is sought.

**This report makes the following recommendations to Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee:**

That:

1. The Sports Facilities Strategy be approved as part of the Council's evidence base for the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.
2. The Playing Pitch Strategy be approved as part of the Council's evidence base for the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b><i>Meeting</i></b>	<b><i>Date</i></b>
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	5 February 2019
Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee	9 July 2019

# Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies - Approval

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### Reason for Report

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee on 5 February 2019, the Committee gave consideration to the report seeking approval of the Sports Facilities Strategy and the Playing Pitch Strategy as part of the Council's evidence base for the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan. The minutes of the meeting correctly record the decisions made:

#### **"RESOLVED:** *That:*

1. *The Sports Facilities Strategy be approved as part of the Council's evidence base for the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, subject to the addition of Pegasus Gym and Heavenly Fitness.*
2. *The Playing Pitch Strategy be approved as part of the Council's evidence base for the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, subject to the addition of the Mangravet Recreation Field."*

- 1.2 Having undertaken further work in respect of the three facilities to be included in the strategies, and liaised with the consultants who prepared the strategies, the following results have been established.

- a) Pegasus Gym – Reference to this facility was already included in the Sports Facilities Strategy (page 2), so no action is required to comply with the minute.
- b) Heavenly Fitness Gym – This is a site allocation for housing development in the adopted Local Plan (Policy H1(25)), so cannot be relied on as future sports provision and should not be included in the Sports Facilities Strategy.
- c) Mangravet Recreation Field – The consultants undertook the strategies in full compliance with the Sports England guidance, and all Councillors and Parish Councils were consulted. Unfortunately, a record of the contacts pointing out this facility during the consultations cannot be found. There was also no material supplied regarding this facility by the Kent FA, who also had no record of Maidstone Kestrels using the facility. The consultants have advised that, given the volatility of football usage in terms of the creation and disbanding of clubs, this situation is not unusual and is addressed through Stage E of the Sports England guidance for sports and playing pitch strategies, i.e. through the future review of the strategies. It would take further paid work by the consultants to include this facility now.

- 1.3 Consequently, it is recommended that the Sports Facilities Strategy and the Playing Pitch Strategy be approved without amendment. The strategies are

unchanged from 5 February, and have been re-attached at Appendices 1 and 2 to this report.

### Background

- 1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework requires local authorities to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs (NPPF, paragraph 92). Planning policies and decisions should provide for new and improved sports venues, and also guard against the loss of facilities.
- 1.5 The Sports Facilities Strategy and the Playing Pitch Strategy form part of the Council's evidence base for the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, and will inform development management decisions. They also provide the Council with an evidence base for future budgetary needs or grant funding applications.
- 1.6 The strategies have been prepared by consultants Ploszajski Lynch Consulting Limited, and developed in consultation with a cross-section of key stakeholders, including sports providers/users and governing bodies. They take account of spare capacity on sites, and examine rising or falling trends in demand for individual sporting activities. The data has helped to build a picture of the level of provision, looking at four key elements: the quantity, quality, accessibility and availability of Maidstone Borough's indoor and outdoor sports facilities and playing pitches.
- 1.7 A base date of mid-2016 is used to calculate the quantitative need for additional new facilities arising from the borough's population growth to 2031, as set out in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan. The mid-2016 data can be used as a base for future updates of the strategies, for example, to reflect growth beyond 2031 that may arise as a result of the review of the Local Plan. The strategies should also be regularly reviewed to reflect rising and falling trends in demand for sports facilities.
- 1.8 The strategies will be delivered by a variety of means and by a number of organisations that have contributed to their development. New and improved sports provision may be funded through CIL or S106 contributions from new development. It will also be important to consider alternative means of providing for the borough's needs, for example, a proportion of needs may be met through an upgrade or expansion of existing sites to extend play time, by providing for alternative secure access arrangements to schools to extend opening times, or by applying for grant funding that may be available for the delivery of new and improved facilities.
- 1.9 Reports were presented to this Committee on 10 July 2018 and to Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee (HCL) on 4 September 2018, offering Members an early opportunity to consider the findings of the strategies. An oral update was given to this Committee on 11 September 2018 explaining, among other things, that the strategies had been well received by HCL Committee, and confirming arrangements for stakeholder consultation on the draft strategies. These technical evidence documents were brought to the attention of the Committee because of potential budgetary implications for the Council, which will be dependent on the relevant Committees'

decisions to implement (or otherwise) the actions and recommendations contained within the strategies. Consequently, this Committee referred the 10 July report to the 21 November 2018 Policy and Resources Committee, to consider capital budget allocations for sports provision. The reference was noted, and budgets will be considered following HCL Committee's completion of its review of sports provision in the borough.

1.10 Key stakeholder consultation, to ensure that the data included in the strategies was factually correct, commenced on 18 September for Members, and on 1 October for other stakeholders. Both consultations closed on 9 November 2018. Those consulted included:

- Maidstone Borough Councillors and Parish Councils;
- Maidstone Leisure Trust;
- Local sports facilities providers;
- Neighbouring local authorities;
- Sport England, Kent Sport and the governing bodies of sport
- Local sports clubs; and
- Schools.

1.11 As previously agreed by this Committee, the representations submitted during the consultation, together with the consultants' responses and updates to the strategies, have been published. Links to the records of comments and actions are provided at background documents 1 and 2 of this report. The strategies (provided at Appendices 1 and 2) have been amended accordingly.

1.12 There are two key changes to quantitative needs, emboldened in the table below.

Facility or Pitch	Needs
Sports Halls	1.6 x 4-badminton sized sports halls
Swimming Pools	1 x 25m 4-lane pool
Health & Fitness Facilities	187 equipment stations
Squash Courts	No projected additional needs
Indoor & Outdoor Tennis	No projected additional needs
Indoor & outdoor Bowls	No projected additional needs
Athletic Tracks	No projected additional needs
Football	4 x Adult pitches
	4 x Youth 11v11 pitches
	4 x Youth 9v9 pitches
	2 x Mini-soccer 7v7 pitches
	2 x Mini-soccer 5v5 pitches
	<b>0.77 0.84</b> x 3G turf pitch
Cricket	3 x grass pitches or <b>3 1</b> x artificial turf wickets
Rugby Union	1.5 x pitches
Rugby League	1.5 x pitches
Hockey	0.6 x artificial grass pitches
American Football	No projected additional needs
Lacrosse	0.5 x pitch and 0.1 artificial grass pitch

Updated quantitative needs for new sports facilities and sports pitches

1.13 There are several amendments to the qualitative assessment of sports facilities/pitches arising from the additional information provided during the

stakeholder consultation. These include:

- Football grass pitches: the removal of Kent Police HQ, Shepway Green and The Maplesden Noakes School from the qualitative assessment, and the addition of Marden Playing Field.
- Cricket facilities: a change in the quality of Marden Cricket Club practice nets from poor to good.
- Tennis courts: Addition of Harrietsham Tennis Club; and improvements in the qualitative assessments for Freedom Leisure Maidstone and Marden tennis court.
- Outdoor bowls clubs: addition of Lenham Bowls Club.

1.14 There are also a number of wide-ranging changes to the action plans in each of the strategies. These cover issues, actions, lead and partner organisations, cost estimates, and priorities. The changes are fully set out in the records of comments and actions (background documents 1 and 2), but to illustrate the types of amendments made, examples include:

- Jubilee Playing Field, Staplehurst: additional issue/action/costs for a 3G football pitch.
- William Pitt Field, Lenham: additional issue/action/costs/lead/priority (high) for the possible relocation of pitches to a new site in Lenham, with delivery priority increased to high.
- Yalding Cricket Club: additional issue/action/costs for upgraded changing facilities and provision of practice nets.
- Staplehurst Tennis Club: additional issue/action/costs/lead/priority (high) for refurbishment of two courts and provision of two courts with floodlights.

1.15 The strategies have been updated as a result of the representations received, and the Committee's approval of the Sports Facilities Strategy and the Playing Pitch Strategy as part of the evidence base for the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan is sought (the strategies are provided at Appendices 1 and 2, and colour hard copies of the documents are available at The Link).

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## **2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

2.1 Option A: The Committee could decide not to approve the Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies as part of the Council's evidence base. The risks associated with Option A at this point are low, but these will increase over time as the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan progresses through its preparation and consultation stages to examination, when the Inspector will consider whether the evidence supporting the local plan is adequate and up-to-date. Further, Option A does not provide the Council with an evidence base for future budgetary needs or grant funding applications.

2.2 Option B: The Committee could decide to approve the Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies as part of the Council's evidence base.

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### **3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Option B is the preferred Option. The Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies provide a sound up-to-date evidence base to support the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan. The strategies also provide the Council with an evidence base for future budgetary needs or grant funding applications.
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### **4. RISK**

- 4.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. That consideration is shown in this report at paragraph 2.1. Officers are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

### **5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 5.1 The key stakeholders listed in paragraph 1.10 have contributed to the preparation of the Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies, and were consulted on the penultimate iteration of the strategies to ensure the data collected was factually correct and up-to-date. Links to the results of the consultation are provided as background documents 1 and 2, and the consequential amendments to the strategies are set out in the report.
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### **6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 6.1 If the recommendation is agreed, the strategies will inform the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan. The strategies have been published on the Council's website, pending the decision of this Committee.
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### **7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve corporate priorities by encouraging good health and wellbeing, and by ensuring the borough has good leisure facilities to meet the needs of residents and attract visitors.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development

	In particular, the Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies support the new strategic priority to create a thriving place, with a vibrant leisure and culture offer. The reasons other choices will be less effective are set out in section 2.	
<b>Risk Management</b>	Risks are already covered in the report – refer to paragraphs 2.1 and 4.1.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Financial</b>	The strategies identify the need for new spending to deliver new and improved sports facilities and pitches to meet the borough’s future needs to 2031. The strategies will be delivered by a variety of means, including allocations as part of the review of the Local Plan, and by a number of organisations. New/ improved sports provision may be funded through CIL or S106 contributions from new development, or by applying for grant funding that may be available. It will also be important to consider alternative means of providing for the borough’s needs, such as the upgrade or expansion of existing sites to extend play time, or by providing for alternative secure access arrangements to schools to extend opening times.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
<b>Staffing</b>	The recommendations arising from the strategies that will be considered as part of the review of the Local Plan can be delivered within the current staffing structure.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development

<b>Legal</b>	There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.	Cheryl Parks Mid Kent Legal Services (Planning)
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. Data will be held in line with the General Data Protection Regulations and locally adopted policies.	Cheryl Parks Mid Kent Legal Services (Planning)
<b>Equalities</b>	It is recognised that the recommendations may have varying impacts on different communities within Maidstone. Therefore a separate equalities impact assessment has been completed, attached at Appendix 3.	Policy & Information Manager
<b>Public Health</b>	It is recognised that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health and that of individuals.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	There are no specific implications for a negative impact on crime and disorder arising from the recommendation in this report.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Procurement</b>	The procurement of consultants has followed the Council's financial procedures rules.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development Section 151 Officer

## 8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report.

- Appendix 1: Sports Facilities Strategy
  - Appendix 2: Playing Pitch Strategy
  - Appendix 3: Equalities Impact Assessment
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## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Background document 1: Sports Facilities Strategy – Record of Comments and Actions  
[https://www.maidstone.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/242638/Sports-Facilities-Strategy-Record-of-Comments-and-Actions.pdf](https://www.maidstone.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/242638/Sports-Facilities-Strategy-Record-of-Comments-and-Actions.pdf)
- Background document 2: Playing Pitch Strategy – Record of Comments and Actions  
[https://www.maidstone.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/242637/Playing-Pitch-Strategy-Record-of-Comments-and-Actions.pdf](https://www.maidstone.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/242637/Playing-Pitch-Strategy-Record-of-Comments-and-Actions.pdf)