

Cabinet

04 November 2020



Title	A Playing Pitch Strategy for Spelthorne		
Purpose of the report	To make a decision		
Report Author	Claire Moore		
Cabinet Member	Rose Chandler	Confidential	No
Corporate Priority	Clean and Safe Environment		
Recommendations	The Cabinet is asked to adopt the 2020 -2035 Borough Playing Pitch Strategy for implementation.		
Reason for Recommendation	The Strategy provides a robust evidence base that will allow the Borough to plan, prioritise and schedule future outdoor sports pitch projects. It will help guide investment and provide the essential information required to apply for external funding. It is also an important part of the evidence required to inform the new Local Plan 2020-2035 and to assist The Planning Development Management Team when making planning application decisions.		

1. Key issues

- 1.1 A Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) is an assessment of all outdoor sports playing pitch provision in the Borough, It includes pitches provided by all providers, not just the Council. The PPS includes quality and condition assessments of current outdoor playing facilities and ascertains how much they are used by the local community. It also calculates and predicts future supply and demand for these facilities based on the borough's predicted population changes.
- 1.2 During 2019 a thorough assessment of playing pitches across the Borough was undertaken by Ploszajski Lynch Consulting Ltd in partnership with the Leisure and Wellbeing Team and the Planning and Housing Strategy team. A Steering Group of internal and external partners contributed to the development of the strategy, including colleagues from the Parks and Open Spaces, National Governing Bodies for Sport and Sport England. Local sports clubs were also consulted.
- 1.3 The consultants followed a robust 5 stage methodology as advised by Sport England, the leading government agency for sports pitch planning. They have achieved sign off for this document from the specific National Governing Bodies as well as from Sport England

- 1.4 The findings of the report (Appendix 2 – Spelthorne Playing Pitch Strategy 2020 - 2035) show that there is currently a deficit for most types/sizes of football pitches in the borough including a shortfall of 2 full size 3G artificial turf pitches. It also shows that the current supply of cricket pitches meets demand, but that there is no spare capacity. There is some spare capacity for rugby and hockey pitches.
- 1.5 To meet future needs extra pitches for football and cricket are likely to be required, while the additional demand for hockey and rugby is likely to be able to be accommodated by modifying existing pitches.
- 1.6 The PPS forms an important part of the evidence base required to inform the development and operation of the new Spelthorne Local Plan 2020-2035. It includes the most up to date information concerning current playing pitch provision as well as forecasting likely demand. The new strategy has been developed to cover the period up to 2035, in line with the Local Plan.
- 1.7 In addition to informing the local plan, the PPS will also be used by the Planning Development Management Team to ensure that the appropriate decisions are made regarding planning applications. The strategy will allow the Borough to plan, prioritise and schedule future outdoor sports pitch projects and assist in securing Section 106 developer contributions, CIL monies, Football Foundation or other external funding for enhancing or building new facilities locally.
- 1.8 The strategy will complement the Council's commitment to support the Health and Wellbeing of residents through sports development and increasing participation in sport/physical activity.
- 1.9 Due to the length and the detail contained in the PPS, an Executive Summary has been created which covers the highlights and recommendations contained in the PPS (See Appendix 1 – Spelthorne PPS Executive Summary). An Action Plan detailing the findings of the investigation and the proposed actions to address them has been compiled (see Appendix 3 – PPS Action Plan)

2. Options analysis and proposal

- 2.1 The recommended option is to agree the adoption of the strategy and ensure the Borough benefits from its provision in the ways mentioned above.
- 2.2 The risks of not approving the document would be as follows: -
 - Planning colleagues would not be able to use the information contained in the strategy as evidence for the Local Plan or for planning decisions.
 - A possible decline in sports pitch provision leading to the decline of sport and physical activity within the Borough and the associated negative health and wellbeing effects of this on residents.
 - Neither the Council nor clubs, schools and organisations within the borough would have the document to use as evidence when applying for funding to maintain, manage and improve outdoor sports pitch provision across the Borough.
 - External funding applications may be affected by lack of evidence leading to less money coming into the Borough.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 The outcomes of the Spelthorne Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) will help guide investment decisions for both the Council and external organisations for the next 15 years.
- 3.2 The majority of the actions/outcomes contained in the PPS will be explored in partnership with key stakeholders to identify future funding sources. It is not anticipated that Spelthorne Borough Council will directly fund any additional improvements to playing pitches owned by other organisations.
- 3.3 Spelthorne Borough Council's primary financial obligation will be to the long-term improvement of its own leisure assets and to look to support community organisations in accessing external or developer funding opportunities.

4. Other considerations

- 4.2 Due to the 15 year duration of the PPS, there is a need to keep the evidence base and document up to date and to work in partnership to implement and update the Action Plan. This work will be led by the Leisure and Wellbeing Team but will involve colleagues in other departments such as parks and asset management.
- 4.3 During the formation of the Council's PPS, an influential study was released by the Football Foundation, 'Spelthorne's Local Football Facility Plan 2019-2029' which identifies the accurate target investment in football facilities across the local area. The Football Foundation comprises of the Premier League, the FA and Department of Culture Media and Sport and is the largest funder of football facilities in the country. The results of the study have been collated with the football actions in the PPS to maximise the opportunity to apply for external funding.
- 4.4 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached (see Appendix 4 – PPS Equality Impact Assessment)

5. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

- 5.1 The provision of a suitable number of outdoor sports pitches can have environmental impacts. These relate mainly to facilities ancillary to the pitches themselves such as changing rooms and car parking.
- 5.2 Any new or replacement facility development as a result of this assessment should undergo an energy assessment to ensure that the facility is energy and carbon efficient in order to meet planning policy requirements. The planning process would also provide opportunity to consider any other environmental impacts for example biodiversity and landscape impact.

6. Timetable for implementation

- 6.1 An Action Plan (see Appendix 3 - Spelthorne Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan) has been produced providing prioritised actions from the recommendations. From this, a year 1 to 5 year action plan have been drawn up taking account of what's appropriate and manageable to deliver initially.
- 6.2 The strategy and action plans are working documents and will be reviewed regularly by the Steering Group to ensure they remain relevant and up to date.

Background papers:

None

Appendices:

- Appendix 1. Spelthorne Playing Pitch Strategy_Executive Summary
- Appendix 2 Spelthorne Playing Pitch Strategy 2020 - 2035
- Appendix 3. Spelthorne Playing Pitch Strategy _Action Plan - Priorities for yr. 1-5
- Appendix 4. Spelthorne Playing Pitch Strategy _Equality Impact Assessment