



To: Executive Councillor for Planning Policy  
and Transport: Councillor Kevin Blencowe  
Report by: Director of Environment  
Relevant scrutiny Development 2 June 2016  
committee: Plan Scrutiny  
Sub Committee  
Wards affected: All wards

**CAMBRIDGE AND SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE PLAYING  
PITCH STRATEGY 2015 - 2031**

**Not a Key Decision**

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**1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 The Cambridge Local Plan 2014: Proposed Submission was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 28 March 2014. The examination of the emerging Local Plan is continuing, with hearing sessions taking place during Summer 2016 on a range of matters.
- 1.2 Policies 68 and 73 and Appendix I within the emerging Local Plan address open space and recreation facilities to be provided through new development.
- 1.3 Sport England made representations to the consultation on the Cambridge Local Plan 2014: Proposed Submission in September 2013, which supported the principle of Policy 73, but considered it necessary for the Council to complete an up to date city wide assessment of need, as required by Paragraph 73 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.4 The Council recognised that further sports strategy documents were needed to address concerns raised by Sport England.

- 1.5 The Council has worked with South Cambridgeshire District Council and Sport England to develop two sports strategies: a Playing Pitch Strategy 2015-2031 for grass and all weather pitches covering both areas; and an Indoor Sports Facility Strategy 2015-2031 to guide future provision of indoor sports halls, swimming pools and outdoor cycling facilities to serve existing and new communities in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. In line with the National Planning Policy Framework, the strategies assess existing facilities, the future need for sport and active recreation facilities, and opportunities for new provision.
- 1.6 The Playing Pitch Strategy 2015 – 2031 addresses the needs of football, rugby, hockey and cricket and the provision of and need for both grass and artificial pitches. The Playing Pitch Strategy 2015 – 2031 is provided as Appendix B to this report.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 This report is being submitted to the Development Plan Scrutiny Sub- Committee for prior consideration and comment before decision by the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport.
- 2.2 The Executive Councillor is recommended:
- a. to endorse the Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Playing Pitch Strategy 2015 – 2031 (Appendix B) as a material consideration in decision-making and as part of the technical evidence base for the Local Plan with immediate effect;
  - b. to agree that any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes are made in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport, the Chair and Spokesperson of Development Plan Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Councils submitted the Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans for examination on 28 March

2014. The separate plans were prepared in parallel with joint working throughout the process in recognition of the close functional relationship between the two areas and reflecting the duty to cooperate.

- 3.2 Joint examination hearings on strategic issues were held between November 2014 and April 2015 on topics such as: housing and employment needs, development strategy, Green Belt, transport, infrastructure and housing supply.
- 3.3 Further joint hearing sessions are due to take place in June 2016. These joint hearing sessions are to be followed by a number of Cambridge only hearing sessions on the historic and natural environment, retail, the City Centre and Areas of Major Change, climate change, employment land, services and local facilities and allocations for development outside the Areas of Major Change. These Cambridge only hearing sessions will be taking place in June, July and September 2016.
- 3.4 The hearing sessions which address open space and the provision of sports facilities are timetabled to take place in June and September 2016.
- 3.5 Within the emerging Local Plan, Policy 68: Open space and recreation provision through new development requires open space and recreation facilities to be provided through new development and seeks to address the impact of development by taking into account local circumstances. The requirements for open space provision are set out in Appendix I: Open Space and Recreation Standards of the emerging Local Plan, which supports both Policies 68 and 73.
- 3.6 Policy 73: Community, sports and leisure facilities in the emerging Local Plan explains the criteria that must be met in justifying the loss of existing facilities and in providing for new or enhanced community, sports or leisure facilities.
- 3.7 In response to representations received by Sport England during the public consultation on the Cambridge Local Plan 2014 – Proposed Submission document, the Council considered it necessary to complete sports strategy

documents to support the relevant policies in the emerging Local Plan.

- 3.8 Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council, in partnership with Sport England, have developed two sports strategies: a Playing Pitch Strategy 2015-2031 for grass and all weather pitches covering both areas; and an Indoor Sports Facility Strategy 2015-2031 to guide future provision and management of indoor sports halls, swimming pools and outdoor cycling facilities to serve existing and new communities in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. In line with the National Planning Policy Framework, the strategies set out to assess existing facilities, the future need for sport and active recreation facilities, and opportunities for new provision.

### **Playing Pitch Strategy 2015 - 2031**

- 3.9 The Playing Pitch Strategy 2015 - 2031 (Appendix B) guides future provision of outdoor grass and artificial pitches (for football, hockey, rugby and cricket) to serve existing and new communities in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. In line with the National Planning Policy Framework, the Playing Pitch Strategy has been carried out to establish whether there is sufficient playing pitch provision in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire currently and to meet the future requirements to 2031.
- 3.10 The Playing Pitch Strategy has been developed in accordance with Sport England's methodology which has involved significant consultation with pitch/facility providers and users as well as the relevant National Governing Bodies. The Playing Pitch Strategy provides an action list of where new provision should be provided on-site and how off-site contributions should be used to support new and improved provision.
- 3.11 The Playing Pitch Strategy considers current levels of active participation from clubs based within Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, their playing pitch requirements and the facilities available for use. Peak time of play and current and future carrying capacity has also been considered. Consideration is also given to the potential for clubs to

increase teams in the future, quality of facilities and the secured future of playing pitches. The Playing Pitch Strategy includes sites assessments for all pitch sites listing the sport played, the type of pitch and quality as well as the teams which use the pitch(es).

3.12 It should be noted that the long term future of many sites is outside the control of the local authorities, particularly football, cricket, hockey and rugby pitches on university, college and school sites, which form part of the existing useable provision, particularly in Cambridge. These sites have a significant influence on the level of provision available, and need to be protected. The Council will need to engage with landowners to ensure the continuing availability of these sites for sport.

3.13 The Playing Pitch Strategy provides action plans for each sport are also provided explaining what actions should take place and where to ensure sufficient provision is available to 2031. These recommend if the pitch should be protected, how it can be enhanced (e.g. drainage) and what further provision could be provided on site, e.g. outdoor storage or pitch improvements. Appendix A of this report sets out the key issues and priorities for each sport.

3.14 The Playing Pitch Strategy will be used to help to plan effectively for: future sports facility provision; current and future need; population growth and increased participation to 2031. It forms part of the evidence base for the plan making process and is a material consideration for decision-making on relevant planning applications.

3.15 Understanding the needs of different pitch sports enables appropriate provision to be made to meet the needs of the community. It is inevitable that needs change over time, just as the playing and participative requirements of individual sports change. The findings of the Playing Pitch Strategy reflect national trends with regard to the type of facilities required and the changing participation rates. These trends include:

- an overall increase in the use of all-weather sport surfaces for training and competitions;

- an overall decline in adult football participation;
- increased levels of pitch provision in the form of all weather surfaces, as they have greater capacity for use;
- the increased focus on the quality of provision and pitches being of a specific size and surface to reflect changes in the different sports;
- declining local authority revenue budgets, particularly for non-statutory services, impacting on maintenance.

## **4. Implications**

### **(a) Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The preparation of the Local Plan and the Playing Pitch Strategy 2015-2031 has already been included within existing Development Plan Fund budget plans.

### **(b) Staffing Implications** (if not covered in Consultations Section)

There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report. The Playing Pitch Strategy 2015-2031 has already been included in existing work plans.

### **(c) Equality and Poverty Implications**

This strategy has a positive impact on access to sports facilities, which can improve health and wellbeing across Cambridge's communities.

### **(d) Environmental Implications**

There are no environmental impacts in relation to the Playing Pitch Strategy 2015-2031.

### **(e) Procurement**

There are no direct procurement implications arising from this report.

### **(f) Consultation and communication**

The Playing Pitch Strategy 2015-2031 was not subject to direct public consultation. Consultation has taken place with Sport England and the relevant National Governing Bodies for sport.

**(g) Community Safety**

There are no direct community safety implications arising from this report.

**5. Background papers**

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- National Planning Practice Framework  
<http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/policy/>

**6. Appendices**

- Appendix A: Summary of Facility Needs in Cambridge;
- Appendix B: Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Playing Pitch Strategy 2015 – 2031.

**7. Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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## **Appendix A: Summary of Facility Needs in Cambridge**

This appendix covers Cambridge's facility needs by sport and includes coverage of both grass and artificial pitches.

### **Football**

#### Key Issues

Future playing pitch demand to 2031 for all types of football pitch provision as a result of; latent demand, increase in population, use of University College football pitches by community football clubs and building a strategic reserve. Improvements need to be made to improve the ongoing maintenance of existing pitches and provision of changing rooms. Provision of 3G rubber crumb pitches strategically placed to support football clubs across the Local Planning Authorities. There is also a need to ensure sustainability of junior clubs by providing long term security of training and playing facilities, allowing junior clubs to grow and develop and investigating and investing in multi pitch hub sites, where possible.

#### Key Priorities

1. Protection of all community use and informal community use football pitches across Cambridge.
2. Ensure sustainability of junior clubs and investigating and investing in multi pitch hub sites with 3G rubber crumb pitches e.g. Abbey Leisure Centre.
3. To maximise the use of existing resources and to address future deficiencies in senior and junior football. This can be achieved through community use agreements at school sites and re marking of football pitches to accommodate different size football pitches.
4. It is essential to work towards the supply identified for 3G rubber crumb pitches. This would also assist in providing 9 v 9, 7 v 7 and 5 v 5 on central venue sites for the future as per FA Policy 2015.
5. Improve pitch quality and ancillary provision by:

- Seeking to provide changing accommodation at all adult football sites to include facilities for women and girls and as a minimum toilet provision at junior and mini football sites to include toilets for women and girls;
  - Address the drainage issues for all local authority sites;
  - Address the quality issues of on-going maintenance at Local Authority owned sites.
6. The Local Authority to work with the Football Association to support clubs applying for funding, planning, undertaking asset transfer / management agreements where clubs are able to demonstrate long term development plans and have achieved the appropriate accreditations and provide player and sports development pathways.
  7. Where possible use CIL or Section 106 developer contribution funding to develop (match fund) new playing pitch facilities and bring existing facilities up to the required Football Association and Sport England Guidance Standards for playing pitches and changing accommodation. This needs to be linked to ongoing maintenance to maintain pitch quality.

## **Artificial Grass Pitches for Football – 3G Rubber Crumb**

### Key Issues

Football Clubs have confirmed that there are insufficient 3G rubber crumb pitches across the two Local Planning Authorities for clubs to use as floodlit training venues midweek.

Through consultation with the Football Association, the Rugby Football Union and England Hockey, the Strategy has identified where additional 3G rubber crumb pitches and sand based/sand filled all weather pitches should be strategically located in the two Local Planning Authorities in the future.

Any additional 3G rubber crumb pitches identified in the Strategy are not a substitute for existing grass pitches but are there to enhance and provide additional facilities to meet the requirements of football clubs and those that wish to play socially or for fitness purposes in the evenings and at weekends and to meet the ever increasing needs of junior and mini soccer for competitive games

at weekends. They also provide additional facilities when grass pitches are waterlogged.

The Football Association has requested that this study considers two calculations of number of teams per 3G rubber crumb pitch 45 teams and 56 teams. The lower figure relates to more rural areas and the higher figure relates to more built up areas.

The future requirements reflect the preferred options for provision of full size 3G rubber crumb facilities across the Local Planning Authorities. These are:

### Key Priorities

1. 1 full size 3G - North West Cambridge Development. This pitch would support the needs of Cambridge and the North Area of South Cambridgeshire.
2. Change Abbey Leisure Centre sand dressed pitch to a 3G rubber crumb. This pitch would support the needs of Cambridge in the North East and East and the North Area of South Cambridgeshire.
3. Long Road Sixth Form College plan to build a new 3G rubber crumb pitch. This pitch should be supported as it will support the existing pitch at Netherhall Community Sports Hall.
4. New 3G rubber crumb pitch full size at Trumpington School (Clay Farm Development) will cover the South West Area of Cambridge.

### **Cricket**

#### Key Issues

The future demand identifies that there will be insufficient cricket pitches in 2031 that are in secured community use. There is a need to address the quality of Parker's Piece, the only Council-owned cricket site.

## Key Priorities

1. Protection of all secured and unsecured community use and education cricket pitches across Cambridge. Consider additional sites for new cricket facilities.
2. Improve pitch quality at Parker's Piece.
3. The Local Authority to work with Cambridgeshire Cricket and City of Cambridge Cricket Clubs so that the implication of this strategy and action plans can be implemented and that there are clear routes of communication and all decisions are taken with a full understanding of needs and aspirations.
4. Work with the England and Wales Cricket Board and Cambridgeshire Cricket to support clubs applying for funding, and planning, particularly with clubs that can demonstrate long term development plans and have achieved the appropriate accreditations and provide player and sports development pathways.
5. The Local Authority to work with Cambridgeshire Cricket to identify potential sites if the University Colleges were to stop the current use of community cricket at their facilities.
6. Where possible use CIL or Section 106 funding (match funding) to develop new playing pitch facilities and bring existing facilities up to the required England and Wales Cricket Board and Sport England Guidance Standards for playing pitches and changing accommodation.

## **Rugby Union**

### Key Issues

Cambridge Rugby Club already has permission to improve and modernise changing facilities, but would benefit further from the provision a World Rugby compliant 3G rubber crumb pitch with floodlighting to allow for training and match play.

Improvements need to be made to the changing rooms at Cambridge Rugby Club and the Cantabrigians would like to expand their clubhouse.

Improvements to drainage will improve playing and training capacity.

There is a need to ensure that clubs have access to high quality floodlit pitches to facilitate training and match play mid-week throughout the season.

### Key Priorities

1. Protection of all community use rugby pitches across the City of Cambridge.
2. Cantabrigians Rugby Club lease and agreement to use the rugby pitches at Hills Road Sixth Form College needs to be safeguarded or alternative facilities will need to be found in the future.
3. Ensure all teams are playing on the right size pitches.
4. Improve pitch quality and ancillary provision by:
  - Over time address the drainage issues for all clubs to assist with current capacity issues;
  - Ensure over time that all clubs have two floodlit pitches;
  - Address the quality issues that clubs have with ancillary facilities such as changing room's and club houses;
  - In the long term, provide a 3G Rubber Crumb pitch that is World Rugby compliant at Cambridge Rugby Club.
5. The Local Authority to work with the Rugby Football Union to support clubs applying for funding, and planning, with clubs that are able to demonstrate long term development plans and have achieved the appropriate accreditations and provide player and sports development pathways.
6. Where possible use Section 106 or CIL funding to develop (match funding) new playing pitch facilities and bring exiting facilities up to the required Rugby Football Union and Sport England Guidance Standards for playing pitches, clubhouse and changing accommodation.

## **Hockey**

### Key Issues

The Playing Pitch Strategy supports the proposal to provide artificial pitch hockey facilities at the Cambridge University, Wilberforce Road Sports Ground.

The Playing Pitch Strategy also supports the proposal for a new hockey Artificial Grass Pitch facility at Howes Close (Place) for the Anglia Ruskin University which must also provide a community use agreement.

With the Long Road Sixth Form College, existing artificial grass pitch and the further provision at Wilberforce Road and Howes Close (Place), this would allow for sufficient match slot provision for hockey up to 2031 and would cater for the training needs and requirements of club hockey across Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.

### Key Priorities:

1. Protection of all community use artificial hockey pitches across Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.
2. Ensure hockey continues to have primary use for mid-week training and match slots at weekends when required.
3. Ensure that plans are in place to maintain artificial pitch quality in the long term across all Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Hockey artificial pitches and that sink funds are in place to replace carpets and refurbish pitches.
4. The Local Authority to work with England Hockey, Cambridge University, Anglia Ruskin University and the hockey clubs to develop 3 artificial pitches, including 2 new pitches at Wilberforce Road and 1 new artificial pitch at Howes Close (Howes Place).