

Report to Cabinet

26th September 2019

Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture



DECISION REQUIRED

Not Exempt

Adoption of Built Sports Facility Strategy

Executive Summary

This report seeks Cabinet approval for the adoption of a Horsham District Council Built Sports Facility Strategy for the period up to 2031. This Strategy focuses on the built sports infrastructure and is complemented by a separate Playing Pitch Strategy.

The Strategy provides an assessment of the current supply of built sports provision in terms of quality, quantity, accessibility, location and management. The Strategy was undertaken by independent consultants and uses the research, consultation, site assessments, data analysis and mapping that underpins the study to set direction and determine priorities for future provision.

The overall finding within the Strategy is that the District's facilities, from both a quantity and quality perspective, are good. The rates of participation in sport are also higher in Horsham District when compared with the national rates. The built sports facilities that are owned by HDC are not statutory services – these are provided by HDC as additional services to benefit the local community.

The Strategy provides an evidence base that will allow the District to plan, prioritise and schedule future built facility improvement projects. The Strategy is primarily to aid the Local Plan process to enable HDC to advise and direct potential developers to ensure they deliver the right leisure facilities for the district.

It is not anticipated that HDC will directly fund any additional improvements to built sports facilities owned by other organisations. HDC's primary financial obligation will be to the long-term improvement of our own leisure assets and to look to support community organisations in accessing external or developer funding opportunities.

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended:

- i) To approve the Horsham District Council Built Sports Facility Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

Reasons for Recommendations

This report presents Cabinet with the Horsham District Council Built Sports Facility Strategy for the period up to 2031. The Strategy provides guidance to assist with determining what provision of built facilities is required to respond to large scale infrastructure requirements for new community housing developments and also provides an evidence based strategy that maximises the opportunity to take advantage of external funding opportunities.

Background Papers:

Appendix 1 Horsham District Council Built Sports Facility Strategy 2018 - 2031

Consultation: Leisure and Culture PDAG, Sport England, Governing Bodies for Sport, relevant HDC Departments.

Wards affected: All

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Background Information

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval for the adoption of the Horsham District Council Built Sports Facility Strategy as set out in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 In October 2016, the District Council commissioned consultants to undertake a Built Sports Facility Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy for the period 2018 – 2031.
- 1.3 The District Council appointed Strategic Leisure Ltd to undertake the audit of indoor leisure facilities and 4Global to audit outdoor playing pitches. This report specifically relates to the study commissioned in relation to indoor (built) leisure facilities, only.
- 1.4. The Horsham District Planning Framework plans for the delivery of 16,000 new homes between 2011 and 2031 and together with a demographic shift associated with a changing population there is a need to ensure that there is a clear and effective strategy for maintaining the appropriate levels and quality of community sporting infrastructure.
- 1.5 In line with NPPF (paragraph 96) it is important that there is robust and up to date assessments of the need for sport and recreation facilities, including quantitative and qualitative deficits or surpluses of facilities. Information gained from the assessments can then be used to determine what provision is required to meet both current and future demand.
- 1.6 Given these factors, it is important that the Council has a clear and effective strategy to ensure it can deliver the sporting provision and infrastructure the community needs.

2 Relevant Council policy

- 2.1 In January 2017 the Council adopted the Horsham District Council Sport and Physical Activity Strategy which had as a key action to undertake a pitch and facilities audit in line with Sport England best practice.

3 Details

- 3.1 The Horsham District Council Sport and Physical Activity Strategy identifies 5 priorities being:
 - 1) Ensure sufficient and appropriate sporting infrastructure – provide the right type of facilities, of the right quality in the right place.
 - 2) Increase participation and improve health– encourage and support behaviour change so that people who don't currently participate to do so and get people who are already active to take part more often.
 - 3) Develop effective sporting and physical activity pathways – encourage and enable people to stay involved in sport and physical activity and achieve the highest standard that they want to and are capable of.
 - 4) Widen access to sport and physical activity – make sure that people who don't traditionally participate in sport and physical activity are supported to do so.

- 5) Strengthen organisations and partnerships – increase the number and quality of volunteers, coaches and clubs.
- 3.2 Each of these aims has a reliance on, or connectivity with, facility infrastructure so it is essential that the Council adopts an approach that enables it to prioritise the mix, location and quality of facilities for a period which aligns with the period covered by the Horsham District Planning Framework.
- 3.3 The Built Sports Facility Strategy will sit alongside the Playing Pitch Strategy to provide an evidence base for use in planning, investment and sports development decisions. The Strategy provides a robust and up-to-date evidence base to inform policy direction, specifically the development of planning policies concerned with the protection of existing built sports provision and new built sports provision required to meet future demand. The findings and recommendations will also be used as a basis upon which to consider planning applications and development proposals.
- 3.4 The evidence base used for the Strategy included formal areas of indoor and outdoor built sports facility provision within the Horsham District as specified below:
- Sports Halls
 - Swimming Pools
 - Athletic Tracks
 - Indoor Bowls
 - Health and Fitness Facilities
 - Squash Courts
 - Indoor Tennis
 - Gymnastic Facilities
 - Community Halls
 - Multi-Use Games Areas
- 3.5 Exclusions from this study are all informal outdoor play areas, children’s playgrounds, general open space provision, golf facilities, water sports and paddling pools, allotments and amenity greenspace.
- 3.6 A variety of consultation methods were used to obtain information about supply and demand from providers of facilities, leagues, clubs, county associations and national/regional governing bodies of sport. Issues identified by clubs returning questionnaires were followed up by telephone or face to face interviews.

Findings and recommendations of the Study

- 3.6 The study concludes that
- Overall, the district has good range of sport and leisure facilities.
 - The demand for sports halls to 2031 can be met from within existing supply.
 - The sports hall stock also has the capacity to meet demand for other sports (e.g. table tennis).

- Badminton England has a need for a new Badminton Performance Centre (now addressed through the Bridge Leisure Centre).
- There is potential to better use some informal halls such as community centres to meet activity demand, particularly in rural areas.
- Many sports halls are on education sites and, because only two sites are the subject of formal Community Use Agreements, continued community access is not guaranteed.
- Some facilities, particularly squash courts, and sports halls on education sites, are aging and will require replacement or refurbishment in the long term (10 -15 years).
- This includes the sports hall at Billingshurst Leisure Centre that forms part of the Council's community offer.
- In the longer term (25 years plus) this will include Pavilions in the Park.
- Development in the pipeline (e.g. North Horsham) will provide additional hall space to ensure that overall sports hall provision per head of population is maintained.
- There is an under supply of facilities for swimming that equates to 260.42sqm of water space (just over a 4 lane, 25m pool), most of which relates to the new housing developments in and around Horsham Town.
- There is an evidenced demand for additional gymnastics and trampolining provision.
- There is an evidenced demand for ongoing athletics provision within the district.
- There is a community aspiration for improved cycling facilities within the district, including off road tracks.
- National modelling suggests a shortfall in indoor bowls provision in the district but this is not mirrored through expressed demand or pressure on existing facilities.
- There will be a small shortfall (77) in affordable and community accessible fitness stations within fitness suites to meet the needs of the growing population by 2031 (now addressed through The Bridge and new low cost providers that have opened since this study began).
- There is a desire on the part of Netball England for indoor netball facilities but this has not been mirrored through the views of local clubs.
- There is a need for improved provision of Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) - (partially addressed through 5 new MUGAs at The Bridge).
- 8 MUGAs within the district need resurfacing.

- 3.7 On the basis of the above key findings the Strategy lists 16 priority recommendations and delivery action plans which can be found on pages 173 -180 of the report, set out at Appendix 1.

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 Once adopted the Strategy will be accessible to all stakeholders and partners so that they can coordinate their own priorities with those of the Council.
- 4.2 The Strategy will be used to provide a robust evidence base to aid decision making in respect of future provision and management of built sports provision.

5 Views of the Policy Development Advisory Group and Outcome of Consultations

- 5.1 The **Leisure and Culture Policy Development Advisory Group** supports the Strategy.

6 Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected

- 6.1 There is no statutory requirement to have this Strategy but having a strategy which has a robust evidence base will allow the Council to plan, prioritise and schedule future built facility projects and take advantage of external funding opportunities. Without it the Council would be open to challenge regarding its priorities, particularly within new developments, and would be less likely to maximise future sporting provision opportunities.

7 Resource Consequences

- 7.1 None identified at this stage. However, this Strategy will be helpful in determining potential future expenditure priorities on maintaining sporting facility provision within the District.
- 7.2 The Strategy does not require any additional financial commitment from the Council – it should be seen more as a guide to strategic planning and protection of existing assets. Many of the facilities requiring maintenance or upgrades are not Council facilities. Those Council facilities that are identified as requiring maintenance or replacement are as expected under long-term prudent, planned, cyclical replacement.

8 Legal Consequences

- 8.1 There are not considered to be any legal or human rights implications.

9 Risk Assessment

- 9.1 Without a Strategy clearly identifying sporting infrastructure priorities, future planning developments could lead to an imbalance in provision.
- 9.2 Without a Strategy the Council could be open to an objection from Sport England to the emerging Local Plan Review.

10 Other Considerations

- 10.1 The Strategy provides robust evidence, strategic direction and a set of recommendations in order to ensure appropriate levels of future provision of sports facilities to serve existing and new communities in the Horsham District until 2031.