
REVIEW OF OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY

Committee: Operational Services Committee

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[X57]

1. ISSUE

- 1.1. To update Members on developments from the Outdoor Sports and Playing Pitch Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. The Outdoor Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch strategies were approved by this Committee in September 2021.
- 3.2. The purpose of the strategies was to conduct an audit of provision at the time, and to provide a basis for securing and developing facilities in partnership with local stakeholders, sports bodies and other interested parties such as housing developers. In this respect, the strategies should be seen as a framework, rather than a definitive plan. It will also be appreciated that any substantive developments in provision take time to carry through, and at any given time, most will remain work in progress.

4. ARGUMENTS

- 4.1. The most significant movement so far is towards football provision, where the ECDC strategies are in concert with the Football Association's Local Football Facilities Plan and associated Football Foundation funding. New or improved facilities are under active discussion in Burwell, Soham, Haddenham, Little Downham and Littleport, and - less immediately - in Sutton. The scope of these developments range from re-surfacing or improved drainage to existing facilities, to complete new grass or artificial pitches. In some cases, these facilities also represent an increase in local recreational amenity space. There is also some interest in potential developments in a range of other sports, but such discussions remain at an early stage, and it would be unsound to anticipate any particular outcome at this point.

- 4.2. Aside from specific development projects, the studies provide a regular day-to-day point of reference and information source for officers in general discussions with sports bodies and other stakeholder groups. The production of the strategies has also helped to support a more direct and active engagement with the planning team, which has already helped to inform some of the projects noted above, and should continue to do so as a regular organisational function. In these respects, the strategies are an important part of our work, and will continue to be so.
- 4.3. It is recognised in all such documents that usage and needs change in the detail at local level, and that the focus in practice is therefore on patterns and trends. Over time, the loss of accuracy will become more problematic and the work will need to be refreshed, though this should be less time-consuming than the original study. This is not an immediate issue, but the need for this should be considered during 2023-24, and will probably become more pressing in subsequent years as the original work loses currency.

5. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1. The Committee is asked to note the content of this report

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS / EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT / CARBON IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1. There are no implications under these headings.

Background Documents

None

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