



1.6 The Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPOSS) will be an evidence base document for the Local Plan Review. It will ensure that existing facilities are the most appropriate in terms of quantity, quality and location and consider how best to meet the additional needs generated by the planned housing and economic growth.

1.7 The Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sports Strategy covers the period of 2019 – 2038, however, the Council has detailed plans to update the document in cohesion with any future refresh of its Local Plan Review (every five years). Please note the timeframe of when the Local Plan Review is updated may be prior to five years which would result in an earlier refresh of the PPOSS.

1.8 The proposed strategy Vision is

**'An accessible, high quality and sustainable network of sports pitches and other outdoor sports facilities which supports increased sports participation by all residents, at all levels of play, from grassroots to elite'.**

1.8 Key objectives

To achieve this vision, the Strategy will seek to secure resources to deliver the following objectives:

- Ensure that all valuable facilities are protected for the long-term benefit of sport
- Promote a sustainable approach to the provision of playing pitches and management of sports clubs
- Ensure that there are enough facilities in the right place to meet current and projected future demand
- Ensure that all clubs have access to facilities of appropriate quality to meet current needs and longer-term aspirations.

1.9 Aims

The following overarching aims of the Strategy are based on the three Sport England themes. It is recommended that they are adopted by the Council and partners to enable delivery of the overall PPOSS vision and Sport England planning objectives.

Aim 1

To protect the existing supply of outdoor sport facilities where it is needed to meet current and future needs.

Aim 2

To enhance outdoor sport facilities and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites.

### Aim 3

To provide new outdoor sport facilities where there is current or future demand to do so.

- 1.10 Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd (KKP) was appointed by Shropshire Council following a procurement process. Once appointed they undertook an assessment of all formal sport and leisure facilities across the authority to assist in strategically planning for the future. The report was carried out by KKP between Summer 2018 and Autumn 2019.
- 1.11 This report presents a supply and demand assessment of playing pitch and other outdoor sports facilities in accordance with Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance: *An approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy*. It has been followed to develop a clear picture of the balance between the local supply of, and demand for, playing pitches and other outdoor sports facilities.
- 1.12 The PPOSS provides guidance for maintenance/management decisions and investment made across Shropshire. By addressing issues identified in the Assessment Report (appendix 2) and using the strategic framework presented in this Strategy, where resources can be identified, the current and future sporting and recreational needs of the Council could be met. The Strategy identifies where there is a deficiency in provision and identifies how best to resolve this in the future.
- 1.13 The approach to developing a PPOSS consists of 10 steps which are grouped into the following five stages as outlined in Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance: An approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy:
- Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach
  - Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision
  - Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views
  - Stage D: Develop the strategy
  - Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date
- 1.14 It is important that as part of the Stage E (deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date), there is need for regular annual monitoring and review against the actions identified in the Strategy. As part of this process we will, deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date, give clarity on how the strategy can be applied and delivered and ensure the strategy is kept robust and up to date.  
This is particularly pertinent due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic (March 2020) which is expected to continue to have a direct impact on participation and funding streams across all sports
- 1.15 In the case of the Shropshire PPOSS, it is advised the documents are reviewed within 12 months of adoption by the Council to further

understand the impact of COVID-19 on the demand for outdoor sports. Depending on the outcomes of the PPOSS review, there may be a need to carry out alterations to the strategic recommendations within this document or add new recommendations.

1.16 The steering group was set up in May 2018 when we started to develop the Strategy. Representatives from the group have helped develop the strategy by working with key stakeholders to ensure their facilities are represented. Representatives from the following organisations have been involved in the Steering Group alongside the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Waste and Communications and Council officers from Planning, Learning & Skills and Leisure Services:

- Sport England
- England & Wales Cricket Board
- Shropshire Cricket Board
- Football Foundation
- Shropshire Football Association
- Rugby Football Union
- England Hockey
- Crown Green Bowls
- Lawn Tennis Association
- England Netball
- Shropshire Netball
- Shropshire Playing Fields Association

1.17 The PPOSS Steering Group should regularly review and refresh the Action Plan, taking account of any changes in pitch quality (and hence changes in pitch capacity) and demand as well as new provision that has been created or any new negotiations for community use of education sites in the future.

1.18 The Strategy and Action Plan recommends a number of priority projects for Shropshire which should be realised over the Local Plan Review period (subject to further consultation where necessary to demonstrate there is still the need and demand for certain projects). It provides a framework for improvement and, although resources may not currently be in place to implement it, potential partners and possible sources of external funding will need to be sourced.

1.19 Consultation with Sports Clubs, National Governing Bodies of Sport, Schools and Colleges, Town and Parish Councils, Shropshire Playing Fields Association and Energize, The County Sports Partnership have been involved in ongoing consultation throughout the development of the strategy. All sport specific sections have been signed off by the relevant National Governing Body's in discussions with sports clubs, Sport England and Shropshire Council. People will be able to comment on any proposals

to lose or gain new sports pitches that the PPOSS identifies, through the development management process

## **2. Recommendations**

### **Cabinet is asked to;**

1. Adopt the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy
2. Adopt the 3 main Sport England principles to enable identification of resources and therefore delivery of the overall PPOSS vision and Sport England planning objectives.
  - To protect the existing supply of outdoor sport facilities where it is needed to meet current and future needs.
  - To enhance outdoor sport facilities and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites
  - To provide new outdoor sport facilities where there is current or future demand to do so.
3. Adopt the Action plan and the sport specific recommendations per Place Plan area and work towards its delivery and implementation, subject to further consultation where necessary to demonstrate there is still the need and demand for certain projects (appendix 3)
4. Adopt the Stage E process for keeping the Strategy robust and up to date (see 1.12)

## REPORT

### 3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

The National Planning Policy Framework requires planning policies to be based on robust and up to date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, what resources are needed, and which plans should then seek to accommodate. The Shropshire Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy fulfils this requirement and forms part of the evidence base for the Shropshire Local Plan Review. There is both a reputational risk (through having commissioned an up to date assessment and then not taken its recommendations on board) and a risk of non-compliance with national planning policy, should the PPOSS not be adopted by the Council. The PPOSS does not in itself propose any action by Shropshire Council on the ground. It's merely a vehicle for future decision making which in itself will be open to public scrutiny and comment.

- 3.1** This screening ESIIA has been undertaken ahead of the strategy being presented for adoption by Cabinet on 2nd November 2020. The new strategy is grounded in solid and robust analysis of current provision and sets out to complement the actions proposed in the draft Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy and the aspirations set out in the Council's Corporate Plan, as well as very much building on the Council's Place-based approach to service delivery.

Extensive consultation has already taken place with Schools and Colleges, Town and Parish Councils, National Governing Bodies of Sport, Shropshire Playing Fields Association and Energize the County Sports Partnership. The Strategy sets out to have a positive impact across the Protected Characteristic groupings, particularly the groupings for Age, Gender and Disability, with regard to all ages and with regard to seen and unseen disabilities.

Through ongoing discussions with specific groups, the Council and partners will be able to pick up on equality related matters that may be identified as gaps in the Strategy, which would assist positive outcomes. Links may usefully also be made with specific target groups such as children and families, people with mental health problems, and people with physical disabilities, through projects and partnership initiatives already under way. Actions may then be more readily identified from evidence gathered to enhance the positive impact of the Strategy for these groupings, leading to better outcomes overall for communities in Shropshire.

It is also recognised that there will be ongoing implications for safe access to and delivery of sporting activities as a result on the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council will need to remain abreast of latest Government guidance in this regard, and of the need to utilise this in ensuring equality of opportunity across

Protected Characteristic groupings, and vulnerable communities within these groupings.

Given the recognition of cross border travel to and from facilities, and opportunities for collaboration that may arise, it is recommended that the Council engage proactively with neighbouring local authorities in order to maximise such opportunities for communities to participate in outdoor sports. This is not least due to the lower incidents of Covid-19 infection arising from outdoor sporting activity.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The responsibility to fund improvements and or build new outdoor sports pitches will be the responsibility of the respective site owner. Most of the playing pitches are the responsibility of Schools and colleges, Town and Parish Council's, sports clubs, voluntary groups or private landowners.
- 4.2 The proposals within this strategy cannot be met within the existing budgets allocated to Leisure Services alone. The service will work with partners and stakeholders to identify appropriate additional sources of funding to deliver projects within the Strategy without the need for additional council funding.
- 4.3 Funding for new and improved sports pitches will be met by the respective site owners or through developer contributions (CIL and or Section 106 funding) and potentially external support from Sport England and sport's National Governing Bodies.

#### **5. Background**

- 5.1 In the absence of an up to date PPOSS it has been difficult to evidence the need and demand for new and improved outdoor sports pitches. This new Strategy will enable Shropshire Council to practically support Sports Club, Town and Parish Councils and other pitch owners when making funding applications. It will also support discussions with developers about new and improved outdoor sports pitches.
- 5.2 Following discussions the outdoor sports facilities listed below were agreed by the steering group for inclusion in the Assessment and Strategy and are recognised as the major outdoor sports in Shropshire:
  - Football pitches (including 3G pitches)
  - Cricket pitches
  - Rugby union pitches (including 3G pitches)
  - Hockey artificial grass pitches (AGPs)
  - Tennis / Netball courts
  - Bowling greens

- 5.3 Pitch sports (e.g. football, rugby union, hockey and cricket) are assessed using the guidance set out in Sport England’s Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance: An approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy.
- 5.4 Non-pitch sports (e.g. bowls, tennis and netball) are assessed using Sport England’s Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance (2014). This requires a different methodology to assess supply and demand to that used for pitch sports.
- 5.5 Analysis areas have been created to allow for a more localised assessment of provision and examination of playing pitch supply and demand at a local level. Due to its size, Shropshire will be broken into smaller subsections known as Analysis Areas. These analysis areas are amalgamations of the Place Plan Areas.

<b>Analysis area</b>	<b>Place plans</b>
Central	Pontesbury & Minsterley and Shrewsbury
North East	Market Drayton, Wem and Whitchurch
North West	Ellesmere and Oswestry
South	Cleobury Mortimer and Ludlow
South East	Albrighton, Bridgnorth, Broseley, Highley, Much Wenlock and Shifnal
South West	Bishops Castle, Church Stretton and Craven Arms,

- 5.6 The Council current Playing Pitch Strategy (2010 – 2019) is out of date. This new strategy will give us the most up to date evidence base on outdoor sports pitches.
- 5.7 The Council PPOSS sets out the vision, aims and objectives for sports pitches in Shropshire and provides an action plan for achieving those aims and objectives. This strategy will also contribute towards the delivery of the council’s corporate plan and draft Rural and Communities Strategy
- 5.8 The strategy will be led by Shropshire Council but will be delivered through the steering group. The Steering group consists of National Governing Bodies of Sport, Sport England, Shropshire Playing Fields Association and the County Sports Partnership.
- 5.9 The Steering group will meet on an annual basis to review the Action Plan and what has been delivered. The Action Plan sets out key projects throughout Shropshire which are grouped in Place Plan areas. The projects that are included in the Action Plan are as a result of discussions with Shropshire Council, National Governing Bodies of Sport, Schools and Colleges, Town and Parish Councils, Shropshire Playing Fields Association and Energize The County Sports Partnership. They are based on the need and demand for new and improved sports facilities throughout Shropshire.
- 5.10 In moving forward we need to be realistic about what is achievable, and who is best placed to deliver on the key aspects of the Strategy. The council will

remain accountable for the delivery of the PPOSS and the Action Plan and providing expertise to seek resources to support that delivery.

## **6. Additional Information**

- 6.1 The Council will engage with partners to discuss the PPOSS action plan and how projects can be developed.

## **7. Conclusions**

- 7.1 By adopting this strategy we can start to engage with a range of stakeholders to consider delivering key projects throughout Shropshire. These projects will align with local need and demand, therefore supporting effective and efficient use of resources.

## **8. Climate Change**

- 8.1 From an environmental angle, there are likely to be increased emissions arising from more frequent journeys to access facilities once these are functioning again, with further possible increases as more facilities open to the public. However, this needs to be balanced against the positive health and well being impacts of participation in physical activity.

It will be more important than ever to seek to ensure that facilities are looked after in ways that will minimise negative impacts upon the physical environment, including energy efficient measures, waste disposal measures, etc.

<b>List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)</b>
<b>Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)</b> Cllr Lezley Picton Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Waste and Communications
<b>Local Member</b> All members
<b>Appendices</b> Appendix 1 – Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy Appendix 2 – Shropshire PPOSS Assessment Report Appendix 3 – Shropshire PPOSS Action Plan Appendix 4 – Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy Executive Summary Appendix 5 – ESIIA

