

REPORT FOR: **CABINET**

Date of Meeting:	11 April 2013
Subject:	Harrow Outdoor Sports Pitch Strategy 2013-2023
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Paul Najsarek, Corporate Director of Community, Health and Well Being
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor David Perry, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services Councillor Phillip O'Dell, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Enclosures:	Appendix A: Harrow Draft Outdoor Sports Pitch Strategy 2013 Executive Summary Appendix B: Outdoor Sports Pitch Strategy Implementation Plan 2013-14 to 2014-15 Appendix C: Initial Equalities Impact Assessment

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the strategic objectives identified in the Harrow Outdoor Sports Pitch Strategy 2013-2023 and seeks Cabinet approval for the Strategy and its implementation.

Recommendations:
Cabinet is requested to:

i) Approve the adoption of the Harrow Outdoor Sports Pitch Strategy 2013-2023 and the implementation plan as outlined in Appendices A and B and in paragraph 2.7 of this report.

ii) Authorise the Corporate Director, Community, Health and Well-Being to proceed with the implementation plan (Appendix 2) provided by the Strategy and take any action necessary in consultation with the Corporate Director Environment and Enterprise, the Portfolio Holder for Community & Cultural Services and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety.

iii) Authorise the Corporate Director, Community, Health, and Well-Being to submit external funding bids to support the delivery of the priorities and actions within the Strategy, through the ongoing development and delivery of a responsive action plan, in consultation with the Corporate Director Environment and Enterprise, the Portfolio Holder for Community & Cultural Services and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety.

Reason: (For recommendation)

The Harrow Outdoor Sports Pitch Strategy will enable Harrow to plan for the provision and quality of outdoor sports facilities to provide better access and increase people's participation in sport and physical activity to achieve improved health and wellbeing outcomes for Harrow. The strategy will enable Harrow to access external partnerships and funding to take the priorities forward and outlines how £1.7million will be invested in pitches in the borough.

Section 2 – Report

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Harrow Council has conducted a review of its outdoor sports facilities and an analysis of need in the borough in consultation with local sports clubs and national governing bodies. This review has identified areas for improvement in the quality and provision of spaces for playing a range of outdoor sports in the borough. Officers have drafted a Strategy in response to this review with five key objectives as outlined below:

- **To improve the quality of grass pitches and support ancillary provision such as changing facilities at Council-owned sites.**
- **To consider location options to address deficiencies in provision for small sided football and rugby (grass and/or 3G MUGA)**

- **To consider options to provide a further Synthetic Turf Pitch in the borough**
- **To deliver sport-specific quality improvements in parks and opens paces (tennis, bowls etc)**
- **To deliver safe, fit-for-purpose pitches to meet the needs of residents**

In order to achieve these objectives, detailed feasibility studies in consultation with local residents, sports clubs and national bodies will need to be conducted and external funding will need to be identified and confirmed for projects delivered.

2.1.2 The Harrow Outdoor Sports Pitch Strategy 2013-2023 will support delivery of the Council's Corporate Priorities and core outcomes, in particular 'Increasing participation in art, sport, leisure and cultural activities'. In addition, improving outdoor sports facilities will support the delivery of the Harrow Health & Wellbeing Strategy, in particular supporting the delivery of physical activity to prevent or reduce the impact of long-term health conditions. Together with the Harrow Open Space Strategy 2011; and the Harrow PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2011, it will provide a strategic framework for the development of open space within the borough and will enable Harrow to approach external funders or development partners to improve facilities in the borough.

Cabinet is requested to approve the Strategy and its implementation.

2.2 Options considered

Officers across Community, Health & Wellbeing and Environment & Enterprise Departments have commissioned a review of Harrow Council owned outdoor sports and physical activity spaces in order to identify need and strategic priorities and objectives. This review has identified areas for improvement in the quality and provision of spaces to support a range of outdoor sports including grass and all-weather pitches. The following options have been considered:

2.2.1 Option A. Continue the current situation and do not adopt an Outdoor Sports Strategy for Harrow

Under this option, the Borough will not have a strategic plan to ensure that the location and quality of its outdoor facilities meets the demands both now and in the future and this is likely to have a negative impact on people's participation in sport and physical activity.

Major external funders require a local authority to support applications within a strategic framework. Without an approved strategy, Harrow Council's ability to successfully access external funding or partnerships to deliver improvements for outdoor facility development will be significantly limited.

2.2.2 Option B Adopt an Outdoor Sports Pitch Strategy for Harrow

By adopting a strategy, Harrow Council will be able to plan for its delivery of outdoor sports facilities and direct any investment to ensure that:

- Outdoor facilities are located in the most appropriate places to meet demand both now and in the future
- Outdoor sports spaces are maximised to cater for a variety of sports and abilities
- Facilities are fit for purpose
- Facilities contribute to a positive impact on people's participation in sport and physical activity.

The Council will be investing £1.7million in improvements to Bannister Sports Stadium and Headstone Manor Recreation Ground to support these improvements. In addition, the adoption of an Outdoor Sports Pitch Strategy will enable dialogue with and potential funding from local sports clubs and providers, sports National Governing Bodies, Sport England and developers, in order to maximise the opportunities for delivery of further improvements to the outdoor sports pitch offer.

The Executive Summary of the Draft Outdoor Sports Pitch Strategy and the Implementation Plan are in Appendices A and B.

2.2.3 Cabinet is requested to:

- i) Approve the adoption of the Harrow Outdoor Sports Pitch Strategy 2013-2023 and the implementation plan as outlined in Appendices A and B and in paragraph 2.7 of this report.
- ii) Authorise the Corporate Director, Community, Health and Well-Being to proceed with the implementation plan (Appendix B) provided by the Strategy and take any action necessary in consultation with the Corporate Director Environment and Enterprise, the Portfolio Holder for Community & Cultural Services and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety.
- iii) Authorise the Corporate Director, Community, Health, and Well-Being to submit external funding bids to support the delivery of the priorities and actions within the Strategy, through the ongoing development and delivery of a responsive action plan, in consultation with the Corporate Director Environment and Enterprise, the Portfolio Holder for Community & Cultural Services and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety.

2.3 Background

In 2011, an assessment of Harrow's outdoor sports pitch provision was commissioned to produce Harrow's PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation guidance. In 2012, this study was widened to identify to Harrow Council's strategic priorities for outdoor sports pitch facilities. These were determined from a robust needs evidence base and analysis as follows:

- By applying the Sport England Facility Planning Tool
- In consultation with clubs and National Governing Bodies (NGBs)
- By using Sports Market Segmentation considering patterns of demand for specific sports
- By benchmarking levels of facility supply against national and regional averages
- Taking into account population change forecasts and expected increases in participation.

2.4 Key Objectives

2.4.1 The key objectives of the study were to:

- Analyse the current level of pitch provision, including the geographical spread and quality of pitches
- Identify the demand for pitches
- Evaluate levels of over/under supply through application of the Playing Pitch Methodology
- Identify how facilities for sports pitches can be improved
- Provide strategic options including opportunities for new/improved provision.

2.4.2 The strategy is primarily concerned with voluntary participation in competitive football; cricket; rugby; hockey; bowls and tennis but also identifies opportunities for Multi Use games Areas (MUGA's), and synthetic turf pitches which can provide a number of sports.

The needs evidence and analysis is documented in the following documents:

- Harrow Draft Outdoor Sports Pitch Strategy
- Harrow Open Space Strategy, 2011
- Harrow PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study, 2011

2.4.3 The priorities link to the following strategic themes for the Borough's open spaces as set out in the Open Space Strategy 2011:

- Quality spaces (maintaining and improving the condition)
- Places for people (making spaces more attractive and accessible to all)
- Promoting increased activity (both formal sports and informal recreation)

2.4.4 The Outdoor Sports Pitch Strategy will feed into the delivery of Harrow's Local Development Framework and the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy. It will also link into local plans for parks and open spaces and developments such as the Green Grid.

2.5 Current situation

2.5.1 The Harrow PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2011 found that a total of nearly 160 hectares of space in Harrow is given over to sports pitches with a greater level of provision in the northwest sub-area.

2.5.2 Quality assessments of the outdoor sports provision found that 15% of Harrow's football pitches were rated as good or excellent and a higher percentage of cricket pitches scores were better. Rugby, tennis and bowls have good quality pitches/greens on the club-managed sites in the borough but generally quality is less good at the Council-managed sites.

2.5.3 Changing accommodation scores vary widely, with Harrow Council facilities scoring poorly and overall, facilities for women are generally poor or limited. Half of those using sports pitches travel by car; most of the rest walk.

2.5.4 Around £1.7million of investment will be made by Harrow over the next year to support the development of Bannister Sport Stadium and Headstone Manor Recreation Ground. This funding has been negotiated through the s106 agreement for the redevelopment of the Kodak site.

2.5.5 However, Harrow Council, like all other local authorities, is operating in a difficult financial climate where resources must be targeted to produce maximum benefit for residents at reduced cost. There are good examples in Harrow where working in partnership with other agencies and external funding bodies has produced pitches of a high standard with good management and improved usage at no cost to the Council. Examples include Cedars Youth and Community Centre, funded by MySpace national funding and operated by Watford FC's Community Sports and Education Trust. The centre provides a 4G synthetic seven aside football pitch alongside indoor sports and youth facilities. Other examples include local clubs taking 'ownership' of facilities and their maintenance (such as Wealdstone Bowls club at Byron Park).

2.6 Why a change is needed

2.6.1 The strategy identifies two key areas for consideration:

- A small deficit in the number of pitches available particularly in the south of the borough.
- Improvements required to pitches and changing facilities.

2.6.2 There is a need to provide a sufficient number of adult and junior sports pitches and other outdoor sports facilities to meet both current and future demand. The agreed local quantity standard of 0.71ha/1,000 head of population calls for a modest increase in the provision of pitches by 2017, mainly for mini-football. There are also deficiencies across the borough for Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA) and Synthetic Turf Pitches (STP).

2.6.3 The quality standard also highlights the need for improvements to football pitch quality and local authority provided changing accommodation.

2.6.4 The accessibility standard for outdoor sports is a 15-minute actual walking distance. Applying this standard highlights small deficiencies in the central and south west of the borough.

2.6.5 The Strategy identifies a number of ways for the Council to enable the improvements to facilities including:

- Prudent use of any available partnership contributions or capital resources (including the strategic use of potential future Community Levy Infrastructure receipts) to maximise external funding from bodies such as the Football Foundation or Sport England
- Identifying partners to support or deliver the development or management of facilities (such as Cedars). Community management of facilities or joint development proposals (such as at Whitchurch Playing Fields) may provide a model for other partnership arrangements at Council owned playing fields within the borough where ongoing budgets or substantial investment may be required to further improve facilities..
- Using development funding (including CIL and S106) to improve pitch quality and changing facilities

2.7 Strategic Priorities

2.7.1 In the context of Harrow Council's priorities for its open spaces – i.e. improved quality, better access and more activity - and the findings of the recently completed strategic needs assessments, the following are the investment priorities for outdoor sports facilities in the borough:

A. Improve the quality of grass pitches and support ancillary provision such as changing facilities at Council-owned sites. Prioritise multi-sport sites with potential for strong sports development outcomes and with on-site management/supervision to minimise risk of vandalism.

There is a major opportunity to create a sports hub at Bannister Stadium through the provision of quality pitches with good drainage; a good training area; increased changing capacity and a reconfiguration of pitches.

Similarly there is an opportunity to substantially upgrade the pitches at Headstone Manor Recreation Ground as well as improve the changing rooms. Significant funding through the S106 agreement (dependent upon commencement) for the Kodak site re-development has been identified to make these improvements. Work will commence shortly, preparing for or targeting activity to realise the early delivery of the funding from the Kodak redevelopment, on the presumption of a start on that site later this year.

B. Consider location options to address deficiencies in provision for small sided football and rugby (grass and/or 3G MUGA) - As a priority, consider the suitability of upgrading existing disused or low grade facilities on Council-owned sites where there is potential for high demand and sports development outcomes and a good level of on-site management/supervision (e.g. through leisure contractors) working with national funding bodies, community partnerships or development opportunities.

C. Consider options to provide a further Synthetic Turf Pitch in the borough – this should be suitable for competitive hockey (i.e. sand filled or sand dressed) with floodlights and on-site management and in an accessible location.

D. To deliver sport-specific quality improvements in parks and open spaces (tennis, bowls etc) e.g. those park-based bowling greens and tennis courts in need of improvement and on sites with potential for strong sports development outcomes and with on-site management/supervision to minimise risk of vandalism.

E. To deliver safe, fit-for-purpose pitches to meet the needs of residents – As a priority to improve ‘goal mouth’ areas of pitches where they are currently very worn.

2.7.2 In order to maximise external funding opportunities and manage a programme of improvements, it is intended to utilise existing s.106 funds to deliver a programme of improvements. Currently with £1.7 million of funding going into the improvements of facilities at Headstone Manor Recreation Ground, and Bannister Sports Centre, there is a real opportunity to lever in external funding to improve other facilities. This will require resourcing feasibility studies and project management through this existing funding and through any future opportunities that developments and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) may offer. In addition, there is the opportunity to engage with schools (both primary and secondary) as they become Academies and with new Free Schools and the colleges to identify what role they can play in promoting local health and fitness by maximising use of their facilities

2.8 Consultation

2.8.1 The research on which the draft Outdoor Sports Pitch Strategy is based was undertaken with wide consultation with sports clubs in the borough. In addition the Football Association and the English Cricket Board have been involved with developing the strategic priorities and the draft implementation plan. Sport England have received the draft implementation plan for comment.

2.8.2 Delivery of the Strategy will require further consultation with local residents, sports clubs and users on specific projects to ensure that any planned improvements can be delivered to respond to need and to maximise usage without impacting negatively on local residents.

2.9 Legal Implications

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report other than that with effect from 1st April 2013, the National Health Service Act 2006 (as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012) will include a new section

2B which imposes a duty on the Council to take 'such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of the people of the area'.

2.10 Financial Implications

2.10.1 Funding for the actions outlined in the Harrow Outdoor Sports Pitch Strategy will come from:

- Existing section 106 Agreements for Bannister Sport Centre (£1 million for drainage improvements, all weather training pitch, and additional changing accommodation) and Headstone Recreation Ground (£690,000 for pitch upgrading and improvements to changing accommodation).
- Partnerships with local clubs and other partners to explore local management of facilities to share or reduce revenue costs.
- Investigating potential partners to develop sites and share costs.
- Council funds such as the Community Infrastructure Levy or capital where priorities for spend are agreed corporately

2.10.2 Each project outlined in the implementation plans for the delivery of the Outdoor Sports Pitch Strategy will be fully costed as proposals are developed. If the strategy is approved, any potential funding bids to support the delivery of individual projects will have to be submitted using the Council's procedures for developing and agreeing the capital programme or use of the CIL through the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, outlining available external funding to deliver priorities and seeking to reduce overall revenue costs to the Council.

2.11 Performance Issues

Adult participation in sport and active recreation is measured through the annual national Active People Survey. Participation has increased from 16.7% in 2010/11 to 19.1% in 2012/13.

Measures will be developed for pitch usage and availability to track increases in usage.

There are no other performance implications.

2.12 Environmental Impact

There will be improvements to the quality of open space that is accessible to the public.

Physical improvements to the changing facilities could result in reduced energy consumption.

2.13 Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No

Separate risk register in place? No – Separate risk registers will be developed for the delivery of discrete projects.

The main risks identified for the proposals contained within this report are as follows:

1. Reductions in the Public Realm capital budget, and inability to secure external funding.

By adopting the Outdoor Sports Strategy 2013-2023 the Council will be maximising its potential ability to maximise grant funding.

2. Changes in national priorities in connection with outdoor sports facilities.

The Council will maintain strong links with National Governing Bodies, Sport England, and the National Playing Fields Association. The Implementation Plan will be reviewed as appropriate.

2.14 Equalities implications

2.14.1 An initial Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared for the proposals contained within this report. This IEQIA identified the following impacts:

Improved outdoor sports facilities will have positive impacts on people of all ages and race who currently use the facilities or will do so in the future.

The IEQIA identified that there would be a particularly positive impact on people with a disability as access to facilities including changing accommodation will be improved. There would also be a positive impact for women as changing accommodation will better meet their needs.

The IEQIA did not identify an adverse impact on any of the protected characteristics.

Separate Equalities Impact Assessments (EQIA) will be completed for each discrete project.

2.15 Corporate Priorities

This report incorporates the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe
- United and involved communities: A Council that listens and leads
- Supporting and protecting people who are most in need

by identifying the future provision of outdoor sports pitch facilities in the Borough. The strategy will contribute to the health and well-being of people who are most in need by providing affordable and accessible outdoor sports facilities.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Roger Hampson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 26 March 2013		
Name: Stephen Dorrian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 27 March 2013		

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: Liz Defries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Divisional Director Strategic Commissioning
Date: 26 March 2013		

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: John Edwards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Divisional Director (Environmental Services)
Date: 26 March 2013		

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Tim Bryan (Service Manager Libraries, Sports & Leisure)

Tel: 020 8416 8639

Background Papers:

1. Harrow Draft Outdoor Sports Pitch Strategy (Full document)
2. Harrow Open Space Strategy, 2011
3. Harrow PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study, 2011

**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

[Call-in applies]