NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

FINAL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

DECEMBER 2011
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the Executive summary for the Playing Pitch Strategy for North East Lincolnshire Council (NELC). Building upon the preceding Assessment Report, it proposes a strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing playing pitches, outdoor sports facilities and ancillary facilities. This Strategy will be capable of:

- Developing policy options;
- Making recommendations for playing pitch provision, protection and enhancement as well as maintenance recommendations;
- Clearly addressing the needs of all identified sports within the local area, picking up particular local demand issues;
- Addressing issues of population growth, and or major growth/regeneration areas up to 2026;
- Developing local standards, reflecting both qualitative and quantitative issues;
- Defining a clear process for improvements in community access to educational and non-Local Authority pitches;
- Providing a spatial plan for the classification of pitches.

Summary of key issues

This summarises the key issues identified in the Assessment Report.

Football

- KKP identified a total of 228 teams playing in North East Lincolnshire.
- FA demand trend analysis and team generation rates (TGRs) highlight that participation rates in North East Lincolnshire are significantly higher than national and regional averages.
- The audit identifies 128 pitches as available for community use. In addition, there are a further 70 pitches, which are not currently accessible to the community.
- Nine sites are overplayed by 12.5 matches each week. However, several sites offer spare capacity and should be considered as options for diverting play.
- A number of clubs in North East Lincolnshire report latent demand. In the main this relates to the provision of changing accommodation of a good quality.
- The most likely future increases in the number of teams are identified in the category of senior men for which there will be an anticipated further 13 teams by 2026.
- The current playing pitch stock should be protected and consideration should be given to changing the designation of some senior pitches to cater for junior football as well as protecting spare capacity to help to improve the quality of pitches in the area.

Cricket

- There are 17 cricket pitches available for community use in North East Lincolnshire, accommodating 70 teams (including senior and junior).
- Site assessments score the large majority (75%) of cricket pitch provision as good quality.
- There is a strong senior and junior league structure which supports high levels of participation.
- Partners should support clubs to develop women’s and girl’s teams and signpost this demand to Cleethorpes CC which has been designed as a hub.
Although it is difficult to fully express overplay through calculating the capacity of cricket pitches, it would appear, through analysis of play that there are a number of pitches operating over capacity i.e. Cleethorpes CC, Grimsby Town and King George V Playing Fields.

Latent demand has been reported by two clubs (each for one mid week team) which suggests that demand is not being met by existing provision.

The most likely future increases in the number of teams are identified in the category of senior men’s (seven teams) and junior boys for which there will be an anticipated further two teams by 2026.

An analysis of current and future demand identifies a shortfall of cricket pitches across the area. This is most pronounced in the Urban Area where there is also estimated to an increase in teams by 2026. However, there are a five cricket pitches in the Urban area which are not currently available for community use and could potentially help address the shortfall of provision.

Rugby

There are seven rugby union pitches and one rugby league pitch in the Borough which accommodate 25 rugby union teams.

A further development has arisen in the development of two rugby league clubs including Immingham Wasps and Sidney Sussex Sharks. At present these clubs are training on football pitches and not competing formally.

The distribution of rugby pitches is concentrated in the Urban Area and Western & Southern Arc analysis areas.

Grimsby RFC has a pressing need to re-develop its changing accommodation and clubhouse.

There is a high level of overplay in the area attributed to the high levels of match play and training.

Cleethorpes RFC also reports latent demand for access to an additional pitch.

There is likely to be a future deficit of rugby pitches by 2026.

Hockey

There are two AGPs suitable for hockey and two grass hockey pitches in North East Lincolnshire. These are located at school sites.

Grimsby Men’s Hockey Club and Wintringham Ladies’ Hockey Club have recently formed a partnership to create Grimsby Hockey Club and Grimsby Hockey Academy as an initiative to increase demand for hockey locally. The formation of the Academy has resulted in the development of an additional men’s team.

Grimsby Hockey Club and the Academy are likely to maintain a strong period of growth which will require additional access to pitches for potentially an additional three teams and access for junior training.

Towards a Level Playing Field suggests that an AGP should not accommodate more than four competitive matches on a peak day (normally a Saturday). Using this guidance it is recognised that the current patterns of play ensure that each site has capacity for additional play to be accommodated.

Bowls

There are 25 bowling greens in the area, located across a range of sites including recreation grounds, parks and private social clubs.

Participation in bowls in the area has decreased over the past three years.
Given that the population over 65 is projected to increase by 2026, retention of existing provision in the area would help to sustain current levels of participation.

Site assessments rate the large majority of bowling green provision as good quality. One site; Sussex Recreation Ground was assessed as below quality scoring 54%. However, it should be noted the green is not used as a bowling green due to a lack of demand but is maintained to a lower standard.

Pay and play is available across all local authority managed sites but is more restricted at private sites. Pay and play is important as it can help to raise the profile of the game, increase levels of membership and revenue of sites.

It is not thought likely that current and future demand for bowls will result in the need for new provision.

**Tennis**

North East Lincolnshire provides 101 tennis courts. In total, there are three tennis clubs in the area. Consultation reports membership levels remained static and that it appears that current levels of demand can be met at present.

Pay and play is available at a number of parks sites in the area. However, consultation reports that demand is in decline and that the revenue collected is no longer sufficient to cover maintenance costs.

The LTA is keen for a Beacon site to be developed in the area and notes that Barretts Recreation Ground would be an ideal location.

St James Tennis Club is unlikely to move in the current climate and will consolidate operations at the current site. Grimsby Tennis Centre has plans to resurface a number of courts in future years to maintain the quality.

There is limited community use of tennis courts at education sites, primarily due to be a lack of demand for such provision. Clubs in the area already have established home grounds and North East Lincolnshire Council provides an extensive range of public courts, which therefore limits demand for accessing courts on education sites.

Over two-fifths of the courts are rated as good quality.

**Athletics**

There are two athletic clubs in North East Lincolnshire; Grimsby Harriers and Athletic Club and Cleethorpes Athletic Club. Both are based at the King George V Stadium and operate training sessions on alternative evenings.

Improving lighting at the track and increasing daytime use at weekends would allow both clubs to train more often.

There is also demand to provide additional storage at the track.

Membership levels across both clubs generally remain consistent.

**Netball**

There are 34 netball courts in North East Lincolnshire. The majority are located at education sites.

Netball is played both outdoor and indoor.

It is reported that there is a waiting list for the Grimsby & District Netball League which is in part attributed to the lack of available facilities.

The average score for netball courts across North East Lincolnshire is 69%.
Rounders

- At present, there are no organised rounders teams or leagues established in North East Lincolnshire. However, it is likely that participation will increase through ‘return to rounders’ sessions.

Other sports

- Demand for a number of other grass pitch sports/facilities has also been examined. With the exception of archery, consultation with NGBs has not identified the need for North East Lincolnshire to consider additional provision. It is noted that users are willing to travel further to access specialist provision associated with these sports.

Schools

- Community use varies according to individual school circumstance.
- In the majority of instances, where pitches are available and in use, access to school changing accommodation is limited or non-existent.
- The quality and quantity of sports facilities (pitch and non pitch) at school sites varies across the area.

Summary of deficiencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of surpluses/deficiencies</th>
<th>Key issues</th>
<th>Proposed action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Football                          | Significant surplus of senior football pitches.  
Deficiency of junior football pitches.  
Small surplus of mini football pitches. | It is vital that all current sites are protected from development.  
The undersupply of junior pitches should be rectified through the conversion of senior pitches into junior pitches. | |
| Rugby Union                       | Deficiency of one rugby union pitch.  
Deficiency of mini-rugby pitches. | It is vital that all current sites are protected from development.  
Consideration will need to be given to the future provision of additional pitches. | |
| Rugby league                      | Emerging demand for rugby league identified. | Consideration should be given to the development of a pitch suitable for rugby league. | |
| Cricket                           | Sites are generally overplayed and there is a deficiency of pitches in the Borough. | It is vital that all current sites are protected. Where feasible consideration should be given to the development of additional wickets to increase capacity. |
Vision

The proposed vision for playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities (including ancillary facilities) is based on the themes within North East Lincolnshire Community Strategy and proposes that:

‘North East Lincolnshire work to create a carefully planned network of playing pitch facilities that are well managed and maintained and which through community participation contribute to enhancing the quality of life and sense of well-being of all sections of the community.”

Strategic objectives

The proposed vision is based upon a clear, achievable framework of strategic objectives (within boxed text which should be adopted as policy) which are supported by a range of management objectives. It is recommended that NELC adopt the following strategic objectives (as policy) to enable it to achieve the vision of the Strategy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVE 1</th>
<th>To maximise community access to all outdoor facilities across North East Lincolnshire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVE 2</td>
<td>To address quantitative deficiencies to meet existing unmet demand and plan for new provision (as and where required)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVE 3</td>
<td>To address qualitative deficiencies and enhance existing provision to support high levels of participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVE 4</td>
<td>To support the development of local leagues and clubs to meet their needs within North East Lincolnshire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of management objectives

The management objectives need to be implemented to enable the policy objectives to be delivered.

a. Adopt accessibility standards.
b. Work in partnership with leisure services and local schools and colleges to maintain, improve and encourage community use of school facilities through the development of formal community use agreements (including ensuring that fees and charges are accessible).
c. Secure tenure and access to sites across the Borough for high quality development minded clubs through lease arrangements.
d. Adopt minimum levels of provision which are accessible and sustainable and which commensurate to support current and future demand.
e. Regularly review and refresh area by area plans taking account of any improvements in pitch quality (and hence increases in pitch capacity) and also any new negotiations for community use of education sites in the future.
f. Rectify inadequacies and meet identified shortfalls as outlined in the Assessment Report through improvements to the current pitch stock and ancillary facilities in line with the Action Plan.
g. Identify opportunities to add to the overall pitch stock in the Borough to accommodate both latent and potential future demand.
h. Establish an approach to securing developer contributions which priorities projects according to a range of core criteria.
i. Work with facility providers to establish an approach to co-ordinate investment to address the community’s needs, to target priority areas and to reduce duplication of provision.
j. Adopt a borough wide quality standard.
k. Increase the capacity of sites.
l. Adopt a tiered approach to the management and improvement of facilities which allows for facility developments to be programmed within a phased approach including ancillary facilities such as changing accommodation and car parking.
m. Invest in strategic multi-pitch/sport sites across the Borough which accommodate the greatest number of teams and are located in the areas if highest population density.
n. Projects should improve pitch/surface quality as a priority and improvements to ancillary facilities including changing accommodation and car parking.
o. Secure developer contribution wherever possible to improve the quality of existing outdoor playing fields in the Borough and provide new ones where a shortfall has been identified or is predicted to be significant in the future.
p. Use the receipt from the disposal of facilities to invest in ancillary facilities.
q. Support participation at clubs which contribute to the achievement of sports development objectives.
r. Work local clubs which have achieved the quality accreditation to, where relevant, identify and secure facility improvements, appropriate sites for new facility development and funding opportunities.
s. Support local clubs to demonstrate sustainability.