

## RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

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meeting date: TUESDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2024  
title: PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY (PPS)  
submitted by: ADAM ALLEN DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES  
principal author: MARK BEVERIDGE HEAD OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE SERVICES

### 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To seek Committee's approval of the Playing Pitch Strategy and recommend it to Planning and Development Committee for inclusion as an evidence base document for the new Local Plan.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives – creating flourishing, healthy and happy communities.
- Other – facilitate investment in the Borough by clubs and organisations, as well as attracting funding from external sources

### 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 A playing pitch strategy (PPS) is a strategic assessment of outdoor playing pitches and courts that provides an up-to-date analysis of supply and demand for playing pitches (grass and artificial) for a local authority area. It does not just cover one sport but all sports that require an outdoor area to play their chosen sport, excluding cycling and athletics. The strategy is not solely a council document or the council's sole responsibility to deliver, but an assessment for use by all stakeholders in the Borough. The strategy assists local clubs in develop bids to external funding bodies such as Sport England, who consider the PPS to be an essential document. The PPS acts as a guide for governing bodies in prioritising investment.

2.2 Committee will recall that the Council jointly procured a playing pitch strategy (PPS), with Pendle Borough Council, this ensured each authority was able to obtain best value for the work, achieving a saving overall for each Council.

2.3 The PPS is seen as a key document by Sport England and forms part of an Local Planning Authority's Local Plan. It takes nearly a year to complete, because it provides an assessment of both summer and winter sports. Work started on this strategy in late 2023 to capture the winter sports and into 2024 for the summer ones. Widespread consultation was undertaken with clubs and the sporting governing bodies to get the information together which forms the basis for the strategy. The governing bodies and Sport England have all been consultees on the various drafts of the document as it has been developed.

### 3. ISSUES

3.1 This Council and the Borough, has not previously had a PPS. This has now been addressed with the production of this strategy.

3.2 The strategy document and action plan set out the areas where demand is unmet for facilities, be that a cricket wicket or 3G pitch. Whilst it does not provide any guarantees of funding, it is endorsed by the respective sporting governing bodies as well as Sport England, so it can be used as evidence when making applications for support.

## 4 THE REPORT

- 4.1 The summer and winter sports have been assessed and the strategy includes an action plan for each of these along with a demand analysis of existing and predicted future demand for facilities.
- 4.2 The consultants who have been working to prepare the strategy have consulted widely across the Borough and that feedback has helped to inform the strategy.
- 4.3 All the recognised sports clubs in the Borough were contacted and invited to be part of the consultation. The majority of clubs did engage and this allowed them to input into the strategy and provide a voice for their sport and their club.
- 4.4 As expected the report provides a mixed picture across the Borough, with generally good or adequate facilities for the sports consulted. There are opportunities for development of new courts for tennis and cricket. There is an identified over-use of grass pitches, and a priority need for more artificial surfaces. Work to develop proposals for additional artificial pitches is underway with the Football Association and Football Foundation.
- 4.5 The Playing Pitch Strategy assesses playing pitches against a high benchmark to drive development and improvement. Ribble Valley does have excellent sporting provision through a range of stakeholders and the PPS does not in any way suggest that we have poor provision, rather it sets ambitious targets for longer term development.
- 4.6 The full report will be available on the Council website and is appended to this report.

## 5 RISK ASSESSMENT

The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources- The report has been funded from existing budgets and split between Planning Development and Sport. There are no specific budgets in place to deliver on the Strategy. However, as referred to, the purpose of the strategy is also to enable other bodies within the borough to develop provision. Where not already provided for within the capital programme, any scheme proposals that this council wish to develop would need to be submitted as part of the capital scheme bidding process for consideration alongside other bids.
- Technical- The PPS will be an evidence base document for the new Local Plan and a material consideration in determining planning applications.
- Political- None
- Reputation- Previously RVBC was the only Lancashire District without a PPS, this has now been rectified. Clubs and groups have been fully engaged throughout.
- Equality and Diversity- As projects develop it will be necessary to consider equality and diversity on a project-by-project basis.

RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 5.1 Endorse the PPS and refer it to the Planning and Development Committee for inclusion as an evidence base document for the new Local Plan.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS – None

For further information please ask for Mark Beveridge, extension 4479.