SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORTS STRATEGY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
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QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the Executive Summary for Shropshire Council's Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPOSS). Both the Strategy and the preceding Assessment Report have been produced in accordance with Sport England guidance and both have achieved sign off from National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) and Sport England. The study covers the period up to 2038, in line with the emerging local plan.

Scope

The project provides guidance and support in order to understand and assess the need for playing pitches. It provides a strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing provision and covers the following sports:

- Football pitches (including 3G pitches)
- Cricket pitches
- Rugby union pitches (including 3G pitches)
- American football pitches
- Hockey pitches (sand/water based AGPs)
- Tennis courts
- Bowling greens
- Netball courts

Vision

A vision has been set out to provide a clear focus with desired outcomes for the Shropshire PPOSS. It seeks to:

"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'.'

Aims

The following overarching aims 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

Headline findings

The table below highlights the quantitative headline findings relating to the main pitch sports from the Assessment Report.

Sport	Analysis area	Current demand (2019)		Future demand (2038)[1]
		Pitch type	Current capacity total in MES[1]	Future capacity total in MES
Football (grass pitches)	Central	Adult	Spare capacity of 5.5	Spare capacity of 2.5
		Youth 11v11	Spare capacity of 1.5	Shortfall of 1.5
		Youth 9v9	At capacity	Shortfall of 2
		Mini 7v7	Spare capacity of 1	Spare capacity of 1
		Mini 5v5	Spare capacity of 3	Spare capacity of 3
	North East	Adult	Spare capacity of 0.5	Shortfall of 0.5
		Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 2.5	Shortfall of 2.5
		Youth 9v9	Spare capacity of 2	Spare capacity of 2
		Mini 7v7	At capacity	At capacity
		Mini 5v5	Spare capacity of 1	At capacity
	North West	Adult	Spare capacity of 0.5	Spare capacity of 0.5
		Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 1.5
		Youth 9v9	Spare capacity of 0.5	Spare capacity of 0.5
		Mini 7v7	At capacity	At capacity
		Mini 5v5	Spare capacity of 0.5	At capacity
	South	Adult	Spare capacity of 0.5	Spare capacity of 0.5
		Youth 11v11	At capacity	At capacity
		Youth 9v9	At capacity	Shortfall of 1
		Mini 7v7	At capacity	At capacity
		Mini 5v5	At capacity	At capacity
	South East	Adult	Shortfall of 3.5	Shortfall of 3.5
		Youth 11v11	Spare capacity of 1	At capacity
		Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 1	Shortfall of 1.5
		Mini 7v7	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 0.5
		Mini 5v5	Shortfall of 3	Shortfall of 5.5
	South West	Adult	Spare capacity of 1.5	Spare capacity of 1
		Youth 11v11	At capacity	Shortfall of 1
		Youth 9v9	At capacity	Shortfall of 2.5
		Mini 7v7	At capacity	At capacity
		Mini 5v5	At capacity	At capacity
Football (3G pitches)[2]	Central	Full size / small size, floodlit	Shortfall of 3 full sized 3G pitch for team training	Shortfall of 3.5 full sized 3G pitch for team training
	North East		Shortfall of 2 full sized 3G pitch for team training	Shortfall of 2 full sized 3G pitch for team training
	North West		Shortfall of 0.5 full sized 3G pitch for team training	Shortfall of 0.5 full sized 3G pitch for team training

[1] Please note future demand for football and cricket are referenced in Part 4: Sport Specific Issues Scenarios and Recommendations
[1] MES – match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket)
[2] Based on accommodating 38 teams on one full size pitch

Sport	Analysis area	Current demand (2019)		Future demand (2038)[1]
		Pitch type	Current capacity total in MES[1]	Future capacity total in MES
	South		At capacity	At capacity
	South East		Shortfall of 3 full sized 3G pitch for team training	Shortfall of 3.5 full sized 3G pitch for team training
	South West		Shortfall of 0.5 full sized 3G pitch for team training	Shortfall of 0.5 full sized 3G pitch for team training
Cricket	Central	Saturday	Shortfall of 27	Shortfall of 60
		Sunday	Spare capacity of 28	Shortfall of 5
		Midweek	Spare capacity of 46	Spare capacity of 14
	North East	Saturday	Shortfall of 20	Shortfall of 42
		Sunday	Spare capacity of 13	Shortfall of 20
		Midweek	Spare capacity of 30	Spare capacity of 2
	North West	Saturday	Shortfall of 13	Shortfall of 24
		Sunday	Shortfall of 13	Shortfall of 24
		Midweek	Shortfall of 5	Shortfall of 13
	South	Saturday	At capacity	Shortfall of 11
		Sunday	At capacity	Shortfall of 11
		Midweek	At capacity	At capacity
	South East	Saturday	Spare capacity of 9	Shortfall of 24
		Sunday	Spare capacity of 31	Shortfall of 9
		Midweek	Spare capacity of 40	Spare capacity of 12
	South West	Saturday	Spare capacity of 22	Spare capacity of 22
		Sunday	Spare capacity of 33	Spare capacity of 33
		Midweek	Spare capacity of 36	Spare capacity of 32
Rugby union	Central	Senior	Shortfall of 5.25	Shortfall of 5.75
	North East	Senior	At capacity	Shortfall of 1
	North West	Senior	Shortfall of 4.5	Shortfall of 6
	South	Senior	Shortfall of 1.25	Shortfall of 5.5
	South East	Senior	Shortfall of 2	Shortfall of 3
	South West	Senior	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 0.5
Hockey (sand AGPs)	Shropshire	Full size, floodlit	There is a need to improve pitch quality and create a pitch to return exported demand.	There is a need to improve pitch quality and create a pitch to return exported demand.
Tennis	Shropshire	Courts	Adequate provision	Adequate provision
Bowls	Shropshire	Greens	Adequate provision	Adequate provision
Netball	Shropshire	Courts	Adequate provision	Adequate provision
Other sports	Shropshire	Pitches	Adequate provision	Adequate provision

From a quantitative perspective, the existing position for all sports is either that demand is being met or that there is a shortfall, whereas the future position shows the creation of shortfalls for some pitch types and in some areas where demand is currently being met and the exacerbation of existing shortfalls. There are current and future shortfalls of 3G pitches, rugby union pitches, cricket squares, and current shortfalls youth 11v11 pitches (North East and North West analysis areas) and adult, youth 9v9, mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitches in the South East Analysis Area.

When taking into consideration future demand, shortfalls worsen with additional shortfalls arising on adult pitches (North East Analysis Area), youth 11v11 pitches (Central and South West analysis areas) and youth 9v9 pitches (Central, South and South West analysis areas).

As such it is considered that football shortfalls can be met through the better utilisation of existing provision, such as via pitch re-configuration, improving quality and encouraging or enabling access to unused/unavailable provision.

In comparison for cricket and rugby union there is a need to improve the quality of existing facilities in addition to creating new provision to meet current and future levels of demand.

Notwithstanding the above, a shortfall of 3G pitches can only be met through increased provision. With resources to improve the quality of grass pitches being limited, an increase in 3G provision could also help reduce grass pitch shortfalls through the transfer of play, thus reducing overplay, which in turn can aid pitch quality improvements.

Further, there is also an unsuitable stock of hockey suitable AGPs relating to quality issues and an identified need for a new pitch within Market Drayton to accommodate exported demand.

Where provision is played to capacity there may still be a need to sustain or improve quality, due to poor quality and to create strategic reserve to better sustain quality.

Sport-by-sport recommendations

A number of relevant scenarios have been tested against key issues for each sport, resulting the following recommendations.

Football

- Protect existing quantity of pitches until all demand is being met (unless replacement provision meets Sport England requirements and is agreed upon and provided).
- Sustain pitch quality and seek improvements where necessary via utilisation of the FA's Pitch Improvement Programme and associated funding opportunities.
- Explore opportunities to gain long-term access to sites where community use is not currently offered.
- Work to accommodate future demand at sites which are not operating at capacity or at sites not currently available for community use that could be moving forward.
- Improve ancillary facilities where this is a clear need to do so.
- Ensure clubs playing within, or with aspirations to play within, the football pyramid can progress.
- Explore pitch reconfiguration where possible in order to alleviate pitch shortfalls
- Explore the reinstatement of pitches to alleviate shortfalls, particularly at Kynaston Road Recreation Ground, Radbrook Recreation Ground and Waincott Recreation Ground.
- Support Shawbury United FC in its aspirations to create its own site, only if the Club can secure long term tenure.
- Further determine the feasibility for relocation of Greenfields Sports Ground which will include suitable ancillary facilities.
- Monitor sites located on flood zones and carry out relevant improvements as required.
- In the longer term, explore the feasibility of carpet hybrid pitches if research is positive, as a potential solution with regards to flooding.

- Update the Local Football Facilities Plan for Shropshire in due course with findings from the PPOSS.

3G pitches

- Protect current stock of 3G pitches and retain on the FA Pitch Register.
- Look to create additional 3G provision in the Central, North East, North West, South and South East analysis areas in order to alleviate identified shortfalls.
- Ensure that any new 3G pitches have community use agreements in place.
- Ensure all current and future providers have in place a sinking fund to ensure long-term sustainability.
- Ensure that all new 3G pitches are constructed to meet FA and FIFA recommended dimensions and quality performance standards.
- Encourage more match play demand to transfer to 3G pitches and ensure that pitches remain suitable to accommodate such demand through appropriate certification when it is required.
- Ensure that any new 3G pitches are priced competitively against the cost of hiring a grass pitches and are aimed at local grassroots clubs.
- When any new full size 3G pitches are created within the Authority the feasibility of making them World Rugby Compliant should be examined.
- Ensure discussions take place between the Council, EH, Shropshire FA and FF before any new 3G or hockey suitable provision is created to ensure stock sustainability.
- Update the Local Football Facilities Plan for Shropshire in due course with findings from the PPOSS.

Cricket

- Protect all cricket squares in current use.
- Work with clubs and grounds staff to review quality issues on squares to ensure appropriate quality is achieved at sites assessed as standard and sustained at sites assessed as good.
- Assist in the reinstatement of cricket demand at Whittingham Cricket & Bowling Club.
- Look to reinstate lapsed cricket provision at Ironbridge Power Station using housing developer contributions.
- Ensure security of tenure for all clubs with lease arrangements in place by ensuring agreements have over 25 years remaining.
- Support pavilion developments where it is required.
- Explore options to provide clubs capacity for future demand including square quality improvements, creation of NTPs, securing tenure and secondary sites or creating new provision if required.
- Any new cricket provision created should have a ball strike assessment carried out as a matter of due course. Where new housing or building developments are under consideration within proximity to existing facilities a ball strike risk assessment should be undertaken. In addition, any clubs which could be potentially affected by this issue should be signposted to the ECB.
- Deliver the All Stars Cricket, Dynamos and women & girls programmes and seek to increase junior and female participation as a result.
- Work to increase women and girls' participation in line with the emerging Inspiring Generations ECB Strategy and protect existing provision so that women and girls have a suitable place to practise and play.
- Monitor sites located on flood zones and carry out relevant improvements when required.
- Using supplementary information provided by the Shropshire Cricket and the ECB look to address capacity and/or quality issues at Pontesbury Playing Fields, Shrewsbury Cricket Club, Frankwell Recreation Ground, Heath Road Ground, The Kynaston

Ground, Ellesmere Cricket Club, Oswestry Cricket Club, Bridgnorth Bowls, Cricket & Hockey Club, Alveley Cricket Club Four Oaks Ground / Alveley Recreation Ground and Priorslee Road

Rugby union

- Existing quantity of rugby union pitches to be protected or be fully mitigated to meet National Planning Policy.
- Improve pitch quality at secure sites to alleviate overplay and create actual spare capacity, particularly at sites that are significantly overplayed such as Oswestry RFC, Shrewsbury RFC and Clee Hill RFC.
- Where required, assist clubs in obtaining long term agreements in order to provide security of tenure.
- Continue to develop strong relationships between rugby clubs and schools through curricular and extracurricular programmes in order to increase levels of mini and junior participation.
- Assist Ludlow RFC in installation of floodlights and access of Linney Park.
- Monitor sites located on flood zones and carry out relevant improvements when required.
- Improve ancillary facilities where this is a clear need to do so.
- Ensure in the relocation/mitigation of Greenfields Sports Ground if the site is developed for housing.
- Assist club in the creation/access of additional provision, where required, to alleviate overplay.
- Secure access to pitches to alleviate overplay at Clee Hill Rugby Club, Oswestry Rugby Club and Shrewsbury Rugby Club.
- Explore options for temporary alternative provision for those clubs located in flood zones during periods of flooding.
- Explore the feasibility of securing access to educational sites to reduce current and future levels of overplay and improve pitch quality where applicable.

Hockey

- As a priority, refurbish the pitches at Roman Road Sports Centre, Whitchurch Sports & Leisure Centre and Bridgnorth Endowed School.
- Protect all existing full size hockey suitable AGPs for hockey use.
- Ensure a sinking fund is in place for long-term sustainability of all current and new pitches
- Explore the potential of returning Market Drayton HC demand back into Shropshire if suitable provision can be created.
- Explore creating regular secured access to provision at RAF Shawbury and RAF Cosford School of Physical Training.
- Ensure that future demand from new England Hockey initiative, Hockey Heroes (aimed at growing participation for under 10s) can be accommodated.
- When the 3G pitch stock increases, encourage the transfer of football demand from the sand-based AGPs in order to free up increased capacity for hockey activity.
- Ensure discussions take place between the Council, EH, Shropshire FA and FF before any new 3G or hockey suitable provision is created to ensure stock sustainability.
- Improve ancillary facilities where this is a clear need to do so.
- Where required, assist clubs in obtaining long term agreements in order to provide security of tenure.
- When refurbishing/creating provision considered the feasibility of installing a Gen 2 surface.

Bowls

- Retain existing quantity of greens.
- Improve poor and standard quality greens through enhanced maintenance regimes.
- Assist clubs, where possible, with any future ancillary provision improvements
- Support clubs with plans to increase membership so that growth can be maximised.
- Monitor sites located on flood zones and carry out relevant improvements when required.

Tennis

- Retain and sustain quality of club courts for competitive play through implementation of appropriate maintenance regimes.
- Support clubs which have aspirations for courts and ancillary facility improvements.
- Improve quality of key local authority courts and accompanying ancillary provision, first and foremost focusing on sites that best accommodate informal play.
- Explore implementation of ClubSpark, Rally and Gate Access schemes at appropriate sites to enhance available provision for informal tennis.
- Consider the feasibility of operating LTA programmes such as Tennis for Kids, Tennis for Free and Great British Tennis Weekend to attract new players to the sport.
- When refurbishing/creating provision considered the feasibility of installing a Gen 2 surface.
- Monitor sites located on flood zones and carry out relevant improvements when required.

Netball

- Protect quantity of courts.
- When refurbishing/creating provision considered the feasibility of installing a Gen 2 surface.
- Seek to improve poor quality courts quality through resurfacing or improved maintenance.
- Look to continue and expand the use of courts for England Netball initiatives such as Back to Netball and Walking Netball.
- Facilitate improved engagement between England Netball and schools.

Delivering the Strategy

The PPOSS seeks to provide guidance for maintenance/management decisions and investment made across Shropshire. By addressing the issues identified in the Assessment Report and using the strategic framework presented in the Strategy, the current and future sporting and recreational needs of Shropshire can be satisfied.

It is important that there is regular annual monitoring and review against the actions identified in the Strategy. This monitoring should be led by the local authority and supported by all members of the steering group. As a guide, if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years, Sport England and the NGBs would consider the PPOSS and the information on which it is based to be out of date.

This being said please see the Assessment Report and Strategy & Action Plan for more details surrounding the delivery especially regarding the impact of COVID 19.