

South Staffordshire Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan

Addendum

June 2023

Background

South Staffordshire Council appointed Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd (KKP) to undertake a Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan which was published in September 2020.

The Strategy and Action Plan provides a clear, strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing playing pitch and accompanying ancillary facilities up to 2037.

In line with the Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance (October 2013), the PPS should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it remains up-to-date and relevant.

The Council engaged with the sports National Governing Bodies (NGB's) and other relevant stakeholders during late 2022 / early 2023 to seek any updates to the Strategy and Action Plan. These included: Sport England, Football Foundation, Staffordshire FA, England Hockey, England and Wales Cricket Board, Staffordshire Cricket, Rugby Football Union, Lawn Tennis Association, England Golf, British Crown Green Bowling Association and the internal South Staffordshire Council leisure services team. The Council consulted these sports NGB's and stakeholders again on a draft version of this addendum in May / June 2023 and their comments have been taken on board for this version.

Relevant section of the Action Plan has been updated and provided in appendix A to this addendum.

The responses from stakeholders are provided in the table below.

Table of Responses

Partner	Section	Response	Action required?
Sport England	Table of sites P59, site 15 - Chase Park – Hockey	<p>The site is understood to be back in use.</p> <p>Understand hockey (1 pitch) and cricket (used as a secondary venue for a club) has returned to the site though the nature of site still remains unsecure /not favourable for the users.</p> <p>Have also seen a draft CUA with a school as part of the pre app discussions relating to the site, though not sure if this has been signed. Planning Officers from the Council might be able to advise on this matter as they have been involved in the pre app discussions with Pegasus Planning on the matter.</p> <p>However, condition of the AGP is not clear and may require works.</p>	Noted. See appendix A.
Sport England	Table of sites P76, site 33 - Handrahan Stadium	Application approved dual use of site 21/00550/COU	Noted
Sport England	Table of site P78, site 51 – Ounsdale High School - Football	3G delivered at site	Noted
England Hockey	Chase Park	<p>2 clubs are using the site (Cannock and Stafford HCs). The current understanding is that only one pitch is currently playable but have concerns about the facility including lighting which remains an issue.</p> <p>The site is meeting with our partner consultant to talk about improvements and sporting development options in the near future.</p>	Noted

Partner	Section	Response	Action required?
		<p>The following improvements have been suggested by hockey club members playing at Chase Park.</p> <p>List of improvements suggested:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Flood lights - one set of lights is facing away from the pitch which is dangerous at training when it is dark but also during the later league matches on a Saturday. The floodlights are also temperamental and not been working on occasions. 2. Safety / locking up procedure - there are no security lights on the site and quite a challenging locking up procedure. 3. General safety of site - there are areas of fencing that are broken and exposed. 4. Toilet / cleaning procedures 5. Cost of flood lights – Rising cost of floodlights. 6. Ground maintenance - maintaining the grassy areas around the pitch 	<p>In terms of the suggested improvements, it would only be appropriate to secure section S106 money for physical improvements to the facilities (improvements 1, 2 & 3). However other solutions or funding streams may be available for other improvements (4, 5 & 6).</p> <p>See appendix A.</p>
Together Active	P8 – update to Sport Across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (SASSOT)	<p>In terms of community use of school and education facilities, which I would definitely encourage but equally recognise the challenges that brings, I believe there were plans by DfE and Sport England to fund a consortium to support wider use of community access to school, academies and other education facilities. This seems to have stalled recently because of recent political changes but worth being aware of to support this element of the strategy in the future.</p>	Noted

Partner	Section	Response	Action required?
		<p>There is funding in the pipeline to support multisport small sided outdoor facilities https://footballfoundation.org.uk/playzones-programme</p> <p>Update the section on p8 to remove the paragraphs on SASSOT and replace it with the following:</p> <p>Together Active (formerly known as Sport Across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent) is part of a national network of 43 Active Partnerships. Previously a county sports partnership hosted by the local authority, Together Active became an independently registered charity in January 2020. We exist to support people across Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent to increase their physical activity levels. We are primarily funded by Sport England and are a key partner in delivering the Uniting the Movement Strategy. In 2021 we launched our new five year Step Up Strategy with a clear focus on addressing inequality across our region. Our role is to work at strategic level to influence and shape change taking our knowledge about what’s happening on the ground and making it visible in policy, strategy and decision making. The essence of what we do is joining dots, driving improvement and sparking collaborations.</p> <p>Our Vision Active lives, healthy futures.</p> <p>Our Mission Working together to create active places and healthy lives through physical activity and sport.</p> <p>Our Values Engaged, Effective, Collaborative, Focused, Inclusive, Relentless</p> <p>Our key objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To drive systems leadership that results in physical activity & sport becoming a core feature in policy. 	

Partner	Section	Response	Action required?
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. To work with health partners to advocate for physical activity & sport as a tool to prevent and manage health conditions. 3. In partnership tackle systemic inequalities in physical activity and sport participation. 4. To support individuals to add healthy years to their lives through positive physical activity behaviours. 	
South Staffs (community services)		The high school in Wombourne changed its name from Ounsdale High School to Wombourne High School a few years ago now. The action plan also references the planned 3G pitch which has now been delivered (March 2022).	Noted
RFU	P23 (summary)	<p>There is no change or update to this section around World Rugby compliant 3G provision.</p> <p>There is demand for a pitch, we (RFU) continue to work with the Football Foundation to find a multi-sport solution to add a shockpad to an installation to meet demand for both football & rugby union.</p>	Noted
RFU	P27	Since the report, the RFU now have a partnership with the Ground Management Association (GMA). They have carried out technical assessments at the following clubs and produced reports with Pitch Quality Scores - Dudley Kingswinford RFC & Wolverhampton RUFC	Noted
RFU	P29 (last sentence)	The technical scores and reports can be added to this data set. We can also add a note in about the pitch advisory service, how moving forward each club will be encouraged to use the resource to increase capacity through better maintenance regimes. We are working towards providing funding to support better maintenance of rugby pitches working with Football Foundation and the Pitch Power application. The project is to provide support to turn more basic pitch quality scores to good pitch quality scores and thus, improve the overall capacity on our current provision.	Noted
RFU	General	It is also important to note that we currently have a big focus on Women & Girls growth as part of our strategic plan. We are currently carrying out projects to	

Partner	Section	Response	Action required?
		improve Changing Facilities, Toilet Upgrades and Sanitary Provision at over 400 clubs across the country.	
England Golf		Provided new report on golf within South Staffordshire.	It appears as if the latest data provide has already been included within the original PPS. Therefore, no changes are required.
England Golf		<p>There are 3 courses / facilities which have now closed since the data was originally collated – Patshull Park, The Staffordshire and Wood farm Golf Range. Halfpenny Green GC is no longer affiliated to England Golf and operates on a purely pay & play only basis now.</p> <p>In South Staffordshire, across the 7 clubs that affiliate to England Golf, the average amount of members per club is 526, which is 29% above the national average of 407. Factoring the differing sizes of facility in and normalising to 18 holes, this gives an equivalent number of 7.5 18 hole standard courses. Utilising this figure, the average sits at 490 which is still 20% above the national average.</p> <p>Nationally, golf has increased in popularity and participation has been steadily growing since 2019. This initially is likely to have been a result of the lifting of restrictions and golf being one of the only activities allowed following COVID lockdowns, but this growth and interest has sustained despite all other sports and activities now being allowed. Sport England Active Lives data shows that participation during 21-22 was the highest it has been since 15-16 which was when data first started being collected.</p> <p>So overall, whilst nothing needs to change in terms of the summary which recommends the current facility stock is retained, there is now potentially more pressure on the provision that is left to remain in place otherwise there is likely to be gap left between supply and demand.</p>	Noted.

Partner	Section	Response	Action required?
Staffordshire FA	Update on number of teams playing	Provided data showing a large increase in teams and therefore suggests a higher number of pitches are needed.	Noted – addressed below
Staffordshire Cricket	Chase Park / general	<p>Chase Park is being used by the following clubs and non league teams in 2023.</p> <p>Both squares will be used in 2023 by Cannock CC 3s and 4s (pitch 1) and Rugeley 3s and Hammerwich 5s (pitch 2). Also, the Sunday parks league (predominantly south Asian teams with no ground) will be using it.</p> <p>Other additions to the plan are regarding women’s & girl’s cricket, there has been significant growth in the last couple of years in the South Staffs area. The clubs below have a women/girls section and this is obviously having an impact on the use of these grounds:</p> <p>Beacon CC Brewood CC Codsall CC Himley CC Penkridge CC Wombourne CC</p>	<p>Noted. See appendix A.</p> <p>Noted – addressed below.</p>

In summary, several responses from stakeholders are factual in nature. These have been noted above and should be considered alongside the 2020 Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan.

Notable changes

Chase Park

Notable changes raised include the re-opening of Chase Park which is now being used for hockey and cricket. Chase Park remains an unsecure facility and several facilities require upgrading or improvements (see responses from Sport England and Staffordshire Cricket). The Action Plan entry for Chase Park has been updated (see appendix A). It will be important to monitor the changing situation at Chase Park and support the full re-opening and upgrading of facilities on the site wherever possible. This may include seeking funding for specific improvements.

Staffordshire FA

The Staffordshire FA have provided an update on the number of teams playing in the area. The data shows that there were 300 teams who were based and played in South Staffordshire in 2022/23. This is a large increase compared to 221 teams in 2020.

This level of increase in demand would result in additional demand for 3G and grass pitches within the district. The 2020 Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan does currently show spare capacity of grass pitches in some areas of the district. In addition, a 3G pitch has recently been delivered at Wombourne High School.

These figures will need to be kept under review going forward. The 2022/23 data set shows a large increase in the number of teams and corresponding demand for pitches. If this level of demand is maintained going forward, consideration will need to be given to providing additional pitches which will be reflected though an updated Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan.

Staffordshire Cricket

Staffordshire Cricket have highlighted significant growth in women's & girl's cricket in South Staffordshire within the last couple of years and provide a list of clubs which have a women/girls section. Similar to the increase in football teams, it will be important to monitor this area moving forward with any additional need being quantified and reflected though an updated Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan. The reopening of Chase Park (which includes 2 cricket squares) may help to absorb some of this increased demand.

Conclusion

In summary, it is concluded that the 2020 Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan still remains relevant when read in conjunction with the changes listed within this addendum. It will be important to monitor the situation regarding increased demand in football and cricket and moving forward. The Council will aim to review the Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan again in 12 months' time which will consider if a new updated Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan is required.

Appendix A - Updates to the Action Plan

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹	Cost ²	Aim
15	Chase Park	Hockey	Private	Three full-size, floodlit, hockey suitable AGPs, two of which are currently disused. Two of the pitches are water-based and the remaining pitch is sand dressed. The future of the site is unknown after being sold to a private owner in October 2019.	Determine future use of the site based on the following priority order of options: 1) Explore feasibility to bring the whole site back into use. 2) Use as open space to meet local needs. 3) Redevelop site and use developer contributions to improve other playing pitch sites (quantity and/or quality). Specific Improvements required include: 1.Improvements to flood lights 2. Security lights at site entrance. 3. Improvements to / new fencing.	Private EH FA ECB BCGBA LTA	Hub	H	S	L	Protect
		Football		Two adult football pitches that are currently disused. The future of the site is unknown after being sold to a private owner in October 2019.	Determine future use of the site based on the following priority order of options: 1) Retain/allocate site as strategic reserve. 2) Explore feasibility to bring back into use. 3) Use as open space to meet local needs. 4) Redevelop site and use developer contributions to improve other playing pitch sites (quantity and/or quality).			H	S	L	
		Cricket		Two grass cricket squares have recently come back into use.	Determine future use of the site based on the following priority order of options: 1) Retain/allocate site as strategic reserve. 2) Explore feasibility to bring back the whole site back into use.			H	S	L	

¹ (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years)

² (L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹	Cost ²	Aim
				The future of the site is unknown after being sold to a private owner in October 2019.	3) Use as open space to meet local needs. 4) Redevelop site and use developer contributions to improve other playing pitch sites (quantity and/or quality).						
		Bowls		One floodlit crown bowling green which is currently disused. The future of the site is unknown after being sold to a private owner in October 2019.	Determine future use of the site based on the following priority order of options: 1) Retain/allocate site as strategic reserve. 2) Explore feasibility to bring back into use. 3) Use as open space to meet local needs. 4) Redevelop site and use developer contributions to improve other playing pitch sites (quantity and/or quality).			H	S	L	
		Tennis		Three artificial, floodlit tennis courts that are currently disused.	Determine future use of the site based on the following priority order of options: 1) Retain/allocate site as strategic reserve. 2) Explore feasibility to bring back into use. 3) Use as open space to meet local needs. 4) Redevelop site and use developer contributions to improve other playing pitch sites (quantity and/or quality).			H	S	L	
33	Handrahan Stadium	Football	Sports Club	One standard quality adult football pitch which is currently unused. It has actual spare capacity for one match equivalent session. The site is serviced by standard quality ancillary facilities. Application approved dual use of site 21/00550/COU	Sustain pitch quality through appropriate maintenance regime. Seek to utilise actual spare capacity via the transfer of demand from overplayed sites or through future demand.	Sports Club FA	Local	L	L	L	Protect
51	Wombourne	Football	Education	Two youth 11v11, one youth 9v9 and two mini 7v7 pitches, all of standard quality. The pitches are available for	Sustain pitch quality through appropriate maintenance regime.	Education FA ECB	Local	H	M	H	Protect Provide

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales ¹	Cost ²	Aim
	High School			community use but spare capacity is discounted due to unsecure tenure. 3G pitch has now been delivered.	Formalise community use agreements to provide users with security of tenure.	LTA EN					