

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive – 14 July 2010

Update on the Allotments, Green Space, Play Pitch and Sports Facilities Strategies for Taunton Deane Borough Council

Report of the Strategy Officer

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Catherine Herbert)

Executive Summary

Up to date Strategies with associated Policies are needed to inform the Local Development Framework, identify existing shortfalls in provision and secure the right amount, type and quality of facilities in relation to the anticipated population growth of the Borough and ensure that facilities are developed and managed in the most appropriate way.

This report follows on from four individual reports to Community Scrutiny and Executive in November and December respectively last year at which members:

- Reviewed and Adopted the Strategies including the Visions, Aims, Objectives, Policies and Action Plans;
- Accepted the Strategies as technical documents to be weighed in the decision-making process for the determination of development proposals;
- Approved wider consultation on the Strategies to make them more robust and enable them to be considered for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document;
- Delegated approval of any minor alterations to the Strategy resulting from the consultation and the outcomes for the Action Plan as they were developed to the Executive Councillor for Sport, Parks and Leisure.

The Executive is asked to review this report and reaffirm the adoption of the Strategies.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide a summary of the progression and changes undertaken, if applicable, to ensure adequate Strategies for Taunton residents and visitors in the future.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council adopted its first Playing Pitches and Green Space Strategies back in 2003 and 2004 respectively. These required updating being six and seven years old, and predating the publication of Planning Policy Guidance note 17 (PPG17) which meant no standards were developed and no policy statements were included. In the case of Sports Facilities and Allotments Strategies the Council never had a single comprehensive strategy for them.
- 2.2 The Strategies firstly assessed the quality, quantity and accessibility of provision in the Borough. Secondly they identified and provided policies to address any current and future gaps in provision. Thirdly they provide a coordinated and consistent approach to the managing and planning future provision which enables resources to be directed to areas of priority and to plan for appropriate levels of facilities in connection with new developments.
- 2.3 The Strategies will guide plan-making and be used as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) evidence base; and may ultimately become a Supplementary Planning Document which will develop the current approach to calculating Leisure facilities requirements arising from new developments.
- 2.4 In the course of their production the Strategies have been subject to consultation with key stakeholders, such as the County Sports Partnership (SASP), Tone Leisure, sports clubs, Allotments holders and those on the waiting list, as well as national governing bodies such as Sport England.
- 2.5 Development of the Allotment Strategy was assisted by a Steering Group set up specifically to develop the strategy, propose policy, standards and an action plan.
- 2.6 The strategies were reviewed, approved and adopted at Community Scrutiny on the 17th November and Executive on the 2nd December 2009; and included approval to go out to wider public consultation.
- 2.7 To become part of the LDF it was necessary to consult more widely on the documents to make them more robust to challenge. The consultation process ran from 20th January for eight weeks. It included statutory consultees,¹ other national and regional stakeholders,² local stakeholders and interested parties.³
- 2.8 As a result of the comments received from the consultation there are:

¹ Such as The Environment Agency, Strategic Health Authority and District Councils

² Such as RTPI, Home Builders Federation, Housing Corporation, Institute of Sport, Parks and Leisure, DCMS, DCLG, Equalities and Human Rights Commission, County Council, GOSW and construction companies that are active in our area.

³ Such as sports pitch users, voluntary sector, Compass Disability Services, Equalities Forum and Parish Councils.

- No amendments to the substance of the Allotment Strategy.
- No amendments to the substance of the Green Space Strategy.
- Amendment to calculation of rugby and hockey pitch capacity in the Playing Pitch Strategy. This is a technical alteration following advice from Sport England, the statutory authority and producer of the Model used to make the calculations. The result is that the strategy now shows a slight deficit in the number of junior rugby pitches at peak times and a slight reduction in the surplus of available hockey surfaces. All other pitches remain in their original deficit or surplus category. No changes to key findings, considerations, standards, policies and actions.
- Amendment to Sports Facilities Strategy future requirements list to reflect the technical alteration in calculation of rugby and hockey pitch capacity in the Playing Pitch Strategy. The standards, policies and actions remain unchanged.

3. Policy Context

3.1 National

Whilst there is no current primary legislation that specifically requires the preparation of a Sports and Recreation Facilities Strategy, Planning Policy Guidance 17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG 17 July 2002) makes clear that local authorities should undertake audits of existing open space, sports and recreation facilities, robust assessments of existing and future needs, and set local provision standards.

Section 13 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Council to keep under review the matters which may be expected to affect the development of its area or the planning of its development.

Planning Policy Statement 12 (paragraph 4.8) requires that Local Development Documents must be based on a robust and credible evidence base. Policies should be founded on a thorough understanding of the needs of the area. For this purpose the Council should prepare and maintain an up to date information base on key aspects of the social, economic and environmental characteristics of their area, to enable the preparation of a sound spatial plan meeting the objectives for sustainable development.

Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 makes provision for developer contributions in association with new developments and Circular 05/05 clarifies the requirements for such contributions. This includes a requirement for contributions to be appropriate to the impact of the development. To this end it is necessary to establish standards of provision for leisure based on robust evidence. The report provides such an evidence base.

3.2 Local

There is much local policy which aspires to achieve well-being outcomes for the community which the Council is charged with delivering. The Strategies could deliver on these benefits if managed and developed appropriately for example:

- The **Sustainable Community Strategy** for Taunton Deane has as part of its vision; *all residents will have convenient access to a range of recreation and leisure facilities.*⁴ This is supported by the Priorities.

Priority 9 - To Promote and enable healthy lifestyles.⁵

Priority 12 - To improve the provision of leisure...opportunities.⁶

- The Strategies contribute to meeting all the four **Corporate Strategy Aims**⁷ by promoting and creating active; inclusive and sustainable communities.

- **Comprehensive Area Assessment and Local Area Agreement.** Performance indicators which contribute to these two monitoring programs include:

National Indicator 8 - Adult participation in 30 minutes, moderate intensity sport.

National Indicator 121 - mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75.

- **PCT Strategic Framework for Improving Health** and staying healthy aims to reduce obesity promote physical activity across all ages.⁸
- The **Local Development Framework** is an opportunity to plan new communities effectively, allocate new land for facilities and levy a charge on developments which through circumstance of size or location aren't able to provide provision within the development. The levy could also go some way to providing capital investment in improving existing sites.

4. Implications

4.1 Key Decision

Adoption of the Strategies as technical documents is a key decision that will:

⁴ Taunton Deane Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2017, Pg 5

⁵ Taunton Deane Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2017, Pg 26

⁶ Taunton Deane Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2017, Pg 33

⁷ Taunton Deane Corporate Strategy 2010-2013

⁸ Strategic Framework for Improving Health in Somerset 2009/10– 2013/14, published by Somerset Primary Care Trust October 2008

- Inform the preparation of policy
- Inform the decision making process for the determination of development proposals
- Provide adequate supply of facilities for current and future populations
- Improve the over all quality of facilities
- Improve participation and satisfaction levels
- Achieve accessible distribution off facilities

4.2 **Policy**

It is clear from national legislation that local authorities are required to provide robust and credible evidence base of need and set local provision standards to address sports, recreation and open space provision. This enables the Council to plan and make provision for future sports facilities through developer contributions, partnership working and national funding streams.

4.3 **Corporate Objectives and Council Priorities**

Approval of the strategies is working towards production of Taunton Deane's Local Development Framework which is a Council priority; as well as meeting its Corporate Aims on Tackling Depravation, Regeneration and Climate Change.

The Strategies have at their core; policies for best practice management, accessibility, safety, enhancement, facility provision, engagement and education, all of which are contributing to the Sustainable Community Strategy objectives.

4.4 **Financial**

The policies developed within the strategies are supported by an action plan. These will require investment in facilities and a re-allocation of existing resources to deliver on the priorities identified by the Strategy. Sources of funding are identified by the strategy; some will arise from existing and future developer contributions, national and regional initiatives. The strategies highlight partnership, co-location and joint working opportunities.

4.5 **Human Rights**

It is considered that no decision will conflict with the Council's Obligations under the Human Rights Act (1998).

4.6 **Property**

The strategies will deliver a co-ordinated and consistent approach to managing and planning facilities provision which enables resources to be directed to areas of priority and to plan for appropriate levels of facilities in connection with new developments. The reports encompass site audits of all Taunton Deane's key facilities assets and identify where they have greater potential and improvements are desirable or necessary.

4.7 **Risk Management**

Without adopted Strategies the Council is exposed to developer challenges on the provision of facilities. This will impact directly on the improvement of existing and provision of new facilities which in turn affects the health and wellbeing of the population of Taunton Deane.

Without the strategies; facilities provision at best will be haphazard and which will disadvantage our community.

4.8 **Community Safety**

The strategies contain policies around maintaining local facilities and reducing anti social behaviour, focusing on providing positive alternative activity for young people, skills development and engagement in sport.

5. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

5.1 This report has been written considering the positive and negative impacts on the six following equalities groups – Disability, Race, Faith, Gender, Sexual Orientation and Age.

5.2 The strategies were subject of an Equality Impact Assessment prior to their first appearance to Executive on the 2nd December 2009; reducing the likelihood of any unintended discrimination arising from the management of facilities and consequently reducing the council's exposure to claims based on discrimination. No changes to the strategies have required the amendments of the original Equality Impact Assessment.

6. **Groups Consulted**

6.1 As part of the process of producing the Strategies the following consultations have been taken into account;

- Focus groups with the key stakeholders
- Review of the draft documentation by national, regional and local stakeholders and interested parties, statutory authorities, the voluntary sector, disability groups and equalities forum.
- advice was taken from Sport England, the statutory authority
- Public consultation

Planning Policy, Development Management, Economic Development, Estates, Property, Policy and Performance have been consulted at various stages of the Strategies production.

7. Time-scale

- 7.1 Following Executive the Strategies will be published in the corporate style on the Councils website and portal. Paper copies will be produced and be available in reception at Deane House, libraries and community centres. Approval of the provision standards would see them come into effect immediately to be weighed in the decision making process for the determination of development proposals.

8. Justification

- 8.1 The Strategy is needed to ensure that resources are directed in a way that delivers on all the above matters and which contributes to the delivery of key Council and Sustainable Community Strategy outcomes.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 The Executive is asked to review the report and reaffirm the adoption of the strategies.
- 9.2 The Executive is asked to delegate to the Portfolio Holder for Sports, Parks and Leisure approval of minor amendments to the Strategy resulting from changes in the evidence base and the outcomes of the Action Plan as they develop.

10. Further Information

- 11.1 The draft Strategies will be posted on the Member's Portal along with the Equalities Impact Assessments.
- 11.2 Strategy Officer contact details: Ann Rhodes - a.rhodes@tauntondeane.gov.uk