
DRAFT SPORTS FACILITIES AND PLAYING PITCH STRATEGIES

Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Steve Harker, Health and Leisure Portfolio

Responsible Director - Cliff Brown, Director of Community Services

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Cabinet approval for the Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies for Darlington.

Summary

2. The Government, via PPG17, requires local planning authorities (LPAS) to carry out assessments of open space, sport and recreation facilities as part of their planning process. It requires LPAS to prepare, update and regularly monitor and measure the quality, quantity and accessibility for open space, sport and recreation facilities. These documents provide an assessment of sport and recreation facilities following the work to produce an Open Space Strategy in 2007 which completed the first part of the PPG17 assessment.
3. The development of a Sport and Physical Activity Facilities Strategy and new Playing Pitch Strategy will help to support the development of community sport and physical activity in Darlington.
4. The two studies will help to shape strategic and detailed planning policies and will provide the evidence to justify the provision of new sport, recreation and playing pitch provision or enhancement of existing facilities. The documents will also be used to help assess the merits of planning applications.
5. The strategies are key to achieving outcomes identified within the Healthy Darlington delivery theme in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that Members approve the Action Plans as set out in:-
 - (a) **Appendix 1** – Section 13 of the Sport and Physical Activity Facilities Strategy, and
 - (b) **Appendix 2** – Section 7 of the Playing Pitch Strategy.

Reasons

7. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons:-
- (a) To inform the planning process by providing a robust evidence base to inform the priorities for future sports facility and pitch provision and to help guide investment decisions.
 - (b) To support the development of community sport and physical activity in Darlington and help address the health improvement agenda.

Cliff Brown
Director of Community Services

Background Papers

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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S17 Crime and Disorder	The implementation of the strategies will further increase scope for community based sport and physical activity provision and can contribute to the Youth Crime Action Plan.
Health and Well Being	The implementation of the two documents is integral to increasing participation in sport and physical activity by shaping a strategic approach to sport, recreation and playing pitch provision. This is fundamental to the Healthy Darlington work strands.
Sustainability	A strategic approach to future provision of sports facilities and playing pitches will enable a sustainable approach.
Diversity	The Strategies will provide a framework to help remove barriers to participation for disadvantaged groups.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	Implementation plans will need to be resourced within existing budgets or external grant funding bids.
Key Decision	This is a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The Strategies will contribute to the Healthy Darlington and Prosperous Darlington themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy
Efficiency	These documents provide templates and necessary evidence base to maximise use of future resources including for sports provision.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

8. These two documents have been developed through a steering group focusing on provision of Sports Facilities and Playing Pitches that was initially funded by Sport England and includes representatives from DBC Cultural Services, Children's Services, Planning, NHS Darlington, Sport England and PMP Consultancy.
9. The studies include an assessment of need, use, accessibility, quantity and quality of existing provision for a range of indoor and outdoor sports facilities. The approach follows the methodology set out in "Towards a Level Playing Field", published by Sport England and PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation. This strategy builds on existing good practice and will deliver integrated services to improve early intervention, prevention and targeted support.
10. The Sustainable Community Strategy outlines a clear commitment to increasing participation in sport and physical activity across the Borough. The findings of these documents will help to ensure that the quantity and quality of sports facilities and playing pitches meets the needs of the local population now and in the future to maximise opportunities for participation.
11. The action plans attached to both strategies are working documents and reflect the aims of the Authority and its partners, however it is recognised that the success of a number of these actions is dependant upon financing and will need to be resourced within existing budgets or externally funded grant bids.
12. Full copies of both Strategies are available for viewing in the Members Room. If Members require their own copy please contact Barbara Strickland on 01325 347591 or email her at barbara.strickland@darlington.gov.uk.

Outcome of Consultation

13. The Strategies were presented to the Health and Well Being Scrutiny on 8 September 2009 as part of the consultation process.

SECTION 13: ACTION PLAN**Sport & Physical Activity Facilities Action Plan for Darlington (working document)**

- 13.1 This five year action plan is intended to be a working document which will evolve over time. The plan must be reviewed and updated on a regular basis and the Community Sports Network is an ideal forum in which this document can be monitored and updated. The sport and physical activity facilities strategy as a whole has a lifespan of ideally three, but no more than five years after which time it should be updated (ie 2014).
- 13.2 The action plan reflects the aims and ambitions of the authority and its partners, however it is recognised that the success of a number of these actions is dependant upon financing and being able to address funding shortfalls.

Ref	PROPOSED ACTION	SECTION REF	LEAD	PARTNER AGENCIES	TIMESCALE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
A1	Ensure all sports facilities are afforded protection through the planning system and incorporated over time within the LDF.	-	DBC - Planning	-	Short	Specific reference to the protection of sports facilities within the LDF
A2	Develop a policy to secure developer contributions to improve the quality and quantity of existing sports facilities.	-	DBC Planning	DBC - Leisure	Short - Medium	Developer contributions policy in place.
A3	Create a standard planning condition to be attached to a planning permission to enable the effective use of community use agreements.	-	DBC Planning	DBC - Leisure	Short	Standard planning condition in place and developer contributions & community use of facilities secured in the medium-long term
A4	Maintain the quality of swimming pool provision at the Dolphin Centre including cleanliness & maintenance of the changing facilities.	Sec 4	DBC Leisure	User groups	Ongoing	High customer satisfaction levels in relation to quality of provision at the DC
A5	Upgrade the school pool facilities at Hummersknott, Longfield and Branksome (in priority order) to ensure they are disabled friendly & improve overall quality of facilities including changing rooms.	Sec 4	DBC Children's Services	Individual schools, DBC Leisure, Swimming clubs, User/disability groups	Short - medium	Improved quality of facilities, improved disabled access, higher customer satisfaction levels in relation to quality of school pool provision
A6	Review the swimming pool programme at the Dolphin Centre to try to and address crowding & conflicts of use.	Sec 4	DBC Leisure	Schools & other pool providers, Swimming clubs/ASA & user	Short	More lane swimming, more fun sessions, more pool time for Darlington ASC (not necessarily

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				groups		at the DC), positive customer feedback
A7	Improve community access to school pool facilities - priority Hummersknott then Longfield.	Sec 4	DBC Leisure & Children's Services	Individual schools, Swimming clubs/ASA & user groups	Short - medium	More community use hours available at school pools
A8	Investigate the potential for alternative management of Hummersknott School sports facilities as a satellite community based leisure centre at evenings and weekends.	Sec 4	DBC Leisure & Children's Services Hummersknott School	SSP	Short - medium	Conclude investigation of alternative management arrangements for Hummersknott School sports facilities
A9	Investigate the potential for Longfield School to become a satellite community based leisure centre.	Sec 4	DBC Leisure Longfield School	DBC Children's Services	Medium - Long	Conclude investigation of alternative management arrangements for Longfield School sports facilities
A10	Work with the ASA and swimming clubs to increase the range of aquatic activities taking place in the borough.	Sec 4	ASA	Swimming Clubs, DBC Leisure	Medium	A greater range of aquatic activities taking place in the borough
A11	Ensure the new facilities at Eastbourne Academy are fully accessible for the community once open.	Sec 5	DBC Children's Services	NGBs, Eastbourne Academy, DBC Leisure	Short - medium	Eastbourne Academy has secure community access at evenings and weekends
A12	Work with the VI Form College to negotiate access to its sports facilities for community use.	Sec 5	DBC Leisure	QE VI College, Sport England & NGBs	Short	QE VI Form College sports facilities have secure community access at evenings and weekends
A13	Support, in principle, the development of a sports hall at Longfield Sports College.	Sec 5	Longfield School	DBC Leisure & Children's Services, NGBs	Medium - long	Council support provided to Longfield Sports College in the form of advice, management expertise and officer time
A14	Liaise with Durham County Cricket Board to explore the opportunity to fill the gap in provision for indoor cricket.	Sec 5	DBC Leisure	Durham County Cricket Board, Local cricket clubs	Short	Undertake meeting with Durham County Cricket Board
A15	Explore the potential to develop a dedicated 5-a-side	Sec 5	DBC Leisure &	FA, DBC planning	Long	Conclude investigation to

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Ref	PROPOSED ACTION	SECTION REF	LEAD	PARTNER AGENCIES	TIMESCALE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
	facility in Darlington in conjunction with the private sector.		private sector providers			develop a dedicated 5-a-side facility in Darlington
A16	Maximise usage of community/village halls for physical activities.	Sec 5	DBC Leisure	Other facility providers, PCT, User groups	Ongoing	More physical activities provided within community/village halls
A17	Explore the options for providing indoor athletics training facilities in Darlington – or providing access to facilities elsewhere in the Tees Valley.	Sec 5	England Athletics	DBC leisure, Tees Valley Sport, Local athletics clubs, Total Fitness	Short	Options explored to facilitate access for athletics clubs to indoor training facilities
A18	Improve the quality of sports hall provision at secondary school sites, potentially via BSF.	Sec 5	DBC Leisure & Children's Services	Individual schools, Local clubs & user groups	Medium - Long	Better quality sports hall facilities on school sites & higher customer satisfaction levels
A19	Explore the potential to provide a consistent approach to lettings/bookings at all secondary school sites with a tiered pricing approach dependant on quality of facility in the short term.	Sec 5	DBC Leisure & Childrens Services	Individual schools, Clubs & user groups	Medium	A more consistent approach to lettings/bookings & pricing structure is in place
A20	Promote joint and partnership working across secondary schools & council leisure centres through the development of a joint working group.	Sec 5	DBC Leisure	Head teachers, DBC Childrens Services, SSP, Key clubs	Short	Development of a joint working group
A21	Liaise with schools and clubs to explore development of sport specific 'specialisms' and associated facilities.	Sec 5	SSP	DBC Leisure & Childrens Services, Individual schools, NGBs, Local clubs	Medium - Long	Undertake discussions with schools and clubs to identify the opportunity for sport specific specialisms
A22	Work with NGBs to explore a facility hire discount scheme to Clubmark accredited clubs.	Sec 5	DBC Leisure	NGBs, Local Clubs	Short	Facility hire discount scheme for Clubmark accredited clubs explored with NGBs
A23	Revisit the Councils marketing plan to ensure that activity, club and facility information is available at a range of public facilities	Sec 5	DBC Leisure	Other facility providers	Short - medium	More activity, facility & club information available at a range of locations
A24	Explore the potential to provide a junior gym at a hub or satellite facility	Sec 6	DBC Leisure	Schools & DBC Childrens Services, User groups, Private	Medium	Conclude investigation to provide at least one junior gym

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Ref	PROPOSED ACTION	SECTION REF	LEAD	PARTNER AGENCIES	TIMESCALE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
				sector		facility in Darlington
A25	Explore potential to provide more 'green exercise' activities across the borough	Sec 6	Groundwork	PCT, DBC Leisure	Ongoing	Conclude investigation to provide more 'green exercise' activities across the borough
A26	Explore the potential for one of the Council health & fitness facilities to become IFI accredited to work towards meeting the needs of disabled people across the borough.	Sec 6	DBC Leisure	IFI, Disability groups	Short	At least one IFI facility in Darlington
A27	Explore the potential to provide indoor tennis provision in Darlington.	Sec 7	DBC Leisure	Local clubs & schools, LTA	Long	Undertake a meeting with the LTA and local tennis clubs to explore provision of an indoor tennis facility in Darlington
A28	Assist the boxing club and gymnastics club to secure permanent facilities & explore the opportunity to provide satellite gymnastics facilities elsewhere in the borough.	Sec 7	DBC Leisure	NGBs & Clubs, Schools, SSP	Medium - Long	Council provides assistance to the two clubs to secure permanent homes. At least one satellite club for gymnastics is in place if demand justifies this
A29	Consider provision of a climbing wall as part of a new/improved school via BSF.	Sec 7	DBC Leisure	Schools, Clubs	Long term	Conclude investigation to provide a new climbing facility as part of BSF
A30	Review the sports development programme to ensure that a range of activities are targeted at the 60+ age group.	Sec 7	DBC Leisure	User groups, PCT, groundwork	Short term	A wide range of activities is provided for 60+ yr olds
A31	Support the development of at least one more STP in Darlington to a specification that is suitable for football and rugby training	Sec 8	DBC Leisure	Football Foundation & Rugby Football Union, School/colleges	Short - medium	At least one more STP is developed that is suitable for football and rugby training
A32	Maintain and improve the quality of existing MUGAs in parks - Use the site assessment quality scores to determine priorities.	Sec 8	DBC Leisure & Parks	Friends of Groups, Community Safety	Short - Medium	Improved quality of MUGA facilities and higher user satisfaction levels
A33	Improve access to MUGAs & tennis courts on school sites.	Sec 8 & 9	DBC Children's Services	DBC Leisure, Schools	Short	Greater access to MUGAs & tennis courts on school sites

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Ref	PROPOSED ACTION	SECTION REF	LEAD	PARTNER AGENCIES	TIMESCALE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
A34	Monitor the sports facilities in parks to deter vandalism. Use the site assessment quality scores to determine priorities.	Sec 9	DBC Parks	DBC Leisure, User groups	Ongoing	Reduced vandalism, and mis-use of sports facilities in parks
A35	Explore the potential to provide improved ancillary facilities at Brinkburn Dene bowling green.	Sec 9	DBC Parks	DBC Leisure, Bowls forum	Medium	Conclude investigation to improve the ancillary facilities at Brinkburn Dene bowling green
A36	Ensure that bowling greens are maintained in line with clubs needs (provide an integrated approach to grounds maintenance in association with the leisure team) and consider where possible to provide safe storage facilities on site.	Sec 9	DBC Parks	DBC Leisure, Bowls forum	Ongoing	Higher quality greens & more storage facilities on sites.
A37	Revisit the booking procedures for Council owned bowling greens to explore possible ways to improve accessibility to greens	Sec 9	DBC Leisure	Bowls club forum	Short - medium	Greater accessibility to greens reported by clubs
A38	Explore ways of raising the profile of bowls amongst the younger population	Sec 9	SSP	NGB, DBC Leisure	Long	Undertake meetings between the SSP & NGB to explore ways of getting more young people in Darlington playing bowls
A39	Explore the opportunity to increase the number of community accessible tennis courts in Darlington.	Sec 10	DBC Leisure	Schools, NGB, DBC Planning	Long	Conclude investigation to provide more community accessible tennis courts
A40	Ensure the tennis courts at Brinkburn Dene are replaced to the same or higher standard when works are complete.	Sec 10	DBC Planning	DBC Leisure	Short - medium	Brinkburn Dene tennis courts re-instated.
A41	Upgrade the existing tennis courts in parks courts via monies from external 'parks' funding and section 106 negotiations. Use the site assessment quality scores to determine priorities	Sec 10	DBC Parks	DBC Leisure & Planning, external funders	Medium	Better quality tennis courts in parks – subject to external funding
A42	Consider development of a satellite tennis club in the east of the borough, potentially using a school site	Sec 10	SSP	NGBs & Clubs, Schools, DBC Leisure	Medium	Undertake meetings between the SSP & local clubs to explore development of a satellite tennis club

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Ref	PROPOSED ACTION	SECTION REF	LEAD	PARTNER AGENCIES	TIMESCALE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
A43	Promote school club links to raise the profile of clubs in the community and provide an exit route for young people	Sec 10	SSP	DBC Leisure, Clubs, NGBs	Ongoing	Higher number of school-club links as measured by the PESSYP Survey
A44	Explore the opportunity to improve the quality of the athletics track at Longfield	Sec 11	Longfield School	England Athletics, clubs, DBC Leisure & Childrens Services	Long	Discussions with the ASA and re the future of the athletics track at Longfield School
A45	Explore development of, and improvements to the cycle track at Longfield High School, and increase community access	Sec 11	Longfield School	British Cycling, DBC Leisure & Childrens Services	Long	Discussions with British Cycling re provision of a cycling track at Longfield School
A46	Ensure a strategy is in place for future maintenance/replacement of the athletics track & floodlighting at Eastbourne Sports Complex	Sec 11	DBC Leisure	-	Medium	Investment strategy is in place for future maintenance / replacement of the athletics track & floodlighting at Eastbourne Sports Complex
A47	Explore potential external funding opportunities to improve the spectator facilities at Eastbourne athletics track	Sec 11	DBC Leisure	England Athletics, Local clubs, Sport England, Tees Valley Sport	Medium	External funding opportunities explored for improved spectator provision at Eastbourne track
A48	Investigate development of a second skate park in the borough & consider development of a bmx facility	Sec 11	DBC Leisure & Parks	Groundwork, PCT, user groups, DBC Children's Services	Medium - long	Conclude investigation to provide a second skate park and a bmx facility in Darlington
A49	Continue to work with partners to provide and promote non-facility related activities to increase levels of physical activity in Darlington	Sec 11	DBC	All	Ongoing	Increased levels of physical activity as measured by the Active People Survey
A50	Consider Quest accreditation for the Councils leisure facilities and sports development service	-	DBC Leisure	QUEST	Medium	Discussions with QUEST to explore accreditation of Council leisure facilities & sports development
A51	Provide email updates/bulletins to update the community with progress on implementation of the strategy.	-	DBC Leisure	All partners	Ongoing	Regular email updates provided to community.

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13.3 For the purposes of this action plan, short term is equal to 0-1 year, medium is 1-3 years and long term is 3-5 years.

13.4 Further information relating to this project can be obtained from Mike Crawshaw at Darlington Borough Council (01325 388431).

SECTION 7: ACTION PLAN**Playing Pitch Action Plan for Darlington (working document)**

- 7.1 This five year action plan is intended to be a working document which will evolve over time. The plan must be reviewed and updated on a regular basis and the Community Sports Network is an ideal forum in which this document can be monitored and updated. The sport and physical activity facilities strategy as a whole has a lifespan of ideally three, but no more than five years after which time it should be updated (ie 2014).
- 7.2 The action plan reflects the aims and ambitions of the authority and its partners, however it is recognised that the success of a number of these actions is dependant upon financing and being able to address funding shortfalls.

Ref.	PROPOSED ACTION	STRATEGY REFERENCE	LEAD	PARTNER AGENCIES	TIMESCALE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
A1	Ensure all pitches are afforded protection through the planning system and incorporated, overtime, within the LDF.	PPS1	DBC - Planning	-	Short	Specific reference to the protection of pitches within the LDF
A2	Develop a policy to secure developer contributions to improve the quality and quantity of existing outdoor playing pitches.	PPS2 PPS2A	DBC Planning	DBC - Leisure	Medium	Developer contributions policy in place.
A3	Create a standard planning condition to be attached to a planning permission to enable the effective use of community use agreements.	PPS2 PPS2A	DBC Planning	DBC - Leisure	Short	Standard planning condition in place. Developer contributions & community use of facilities secured in the medium-long term
A4	Explore the opportunities identified in this PPS to improve the provision of community accessible pitches as a way to address under-supply for football – including securing access to facilities on school sites Explore opportunities available through BSF to provide improved pitch facilities	PPS3 PPS6 PPS7	DBC – Planning, Leisure	Local clubs Pitch providers DBC – Childrens Services Sport England	Short-Medium Long	Improved provision of community accessible pitches and a reduction in the shortfall of provision Achievement of community use agreements on school sites
A5	Identify & prioritise one more strategically placed hub site in line with the hierarchy	PPS5	DBC	Local clubs, Leagues, Providers, CSN	Short-Medium	Identification of one more hub site in addition to Eastbourne SC

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Ref.	PROPOSED ACTION	STRATEGY REFERENCE	LEAD	PARTNER AGENCIES	TIMESCALE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
A6	<p>Improve quality of pitches by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - developing a policy of rest and recovery across pitch sites - developing a prioritised and costed programme of site improvements in line with the hierarchy & identify associated sources of external funding - Once tier 1 & 2 sites are established, continue to provide playing pitches within Parks to enable informal play and training - Supporting clubs to apply for external funding to improve their facilities. 	PPS5 PPS9	DBC	Local Clubs, Local Leagues, Providers, NGBs	Short-Medium Long term Ongoing	<p>Policy of rest & recovery developed</p> <p>Improved pitch quality & fewer games cancelled due to pitch problems</p> <p>More clubs securing external funding for facility improvement with support from DBC</p>
A7	Explore the opportunity to include school pitches within the existing booking system including a tiered pricing approach	PPS 8	DBC Leisure & Childrens Services	Local clubs Leagues Providers CSN	Short – Medium term	Conclude investigation of development of a streamlined booking system incorporating all pitches available for community use
A8	Undertake an audit of facilities to assess compliancy with DDA & identify areas to be addressed.	PPS 9	DBC Leisure	Local clubs Leagues	Medium	Audit of facilities undertaken and priorities for action identified
A9	<p>Develop a joint working group to promote partnership working across the Council and with key stakeholders in the provision of playing pitches.</p> <p>Focus should be on agreeing, developing and delivering planned improvements</p>	PPS9	DBC Leisure	CSN Providers Clubs & leagues	Short-Medium	Joint working group established
A10	Ensure that the changing facility at South Park is used to its full potential	PPS5 PPS9	DBC	DBC Leisure Services DBC Planning, League Secretaries,	Short	Changing facilities are used by adult, junior and mini teams as required

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Ref.	PROPOSED ACTION	STRATEGY REFERENCE	LEAD	PARTNER AGENCIES	TIMESCALE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
				Spraire Lads & Girls Club		
A11	Explore the opportunity to develop dedicated 5-a-side football facilities in Darlington.	PPS10	DBC Leisure & Planning	Private sector	Long	Conclude investigations in to the provision of a dedicated 5-a-side facility in Darlington
A12	Support partners with applications to the Football Foundation for funding to improve facilities where there is evidence of local need and where proposals are in line with the pitch hierarchy.	PPS5	DBC Leisure & Planning	Durham County FA, Parish Councils, local clubs	Short - medium	Relevant applications for external funding supported by DBC (where there is evidence of local need and where proposals are in line with the pitch hierarchy).
A13	Hold discussions with Durham County FA to agree and align priorities for future improvements to football facility provision and agree short, medium and long term priority projects. Explore the potential of developing a second third generation pitch suitable for football and rugby training	PPS11	DBC	Durham County FA, RFU	Short Long	Discussion held with County FA & priorities agreed Discussion held with the RFU Development of another 3G STP in Darlington in the medium-long term to cater for football and rugby
A14	Update the PPM modelling spreadsheet to reflect ongoing changes in population & changes to the pitch stock.	PPS4	DBC Leisure	Clubs/providers DBC Planning	Ongoing	PPM spreadsheet & pitch database is regularly updated.
A15	Provide email updates/bulletins to update the community with progress on implementation of the strategy.	-	DBC Leisure	All partners	Ongoing	Regular email updates provided to community

7.3 For the purposes of this action plan, short term is equal to 0-1 year, medium is 1-3 years and long term is 3-5 years. Implementation of the action plan should be in conjunction with the key issues identified in each locality which is presented in Appendix E.

7.4 Further information relating to this project can be obtained from Mike Crawshaw at Darlington Borough Council (01325 388431).