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<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	Thursday 21 July 2016
<b>Subject:</b>	Adoption of Sefton Playing Pitch Strategy	<b>Wards Affected:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of Regeneration and Housing		
<b>Is this a Key Decision?</b>	Yes	<b>Is it included in the Forward Plan?</b>	Yes
<b>Exempt/Confidential</b>	No		

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### Purpose/Summary

To report on the consultation undertaken by the Council on the Playing Pitch Strategy. This includes comments received and any proposed changes before the documents are officially adopted by the Council.

### Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet approves the adoption of the Sefton Playing Pitch Strategy.

### How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community			
2	Jobs and Prosperity			
3	Environmental Sustainability			
4	Health and Well-Being			
5	Children and Young People			
6	Creating Safe Communities			
7	Creating Inclusive Communities			
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy			

**Reasons for the Recommendation:**

In order to increase the weight that can be attached to the Sefton Playing Pitch Strategy it is necessary for the Council to officially adopt the document.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

One alternative would be not to adopt the Sefton Playing Pitch Strategy; however this would limit the weight that could be attached to it in future decisions.

**What will it cost and how will it be financed?**

**(A) Revenue Costs-**No direct financial implications arising from this report. However the adoption of the strategy will lead to the council having a clear strategy in place to deliver improvements in sport in Sefton and will help the Council in working with external organisations to deliver improved sporting facilities. It is anticipated the strategy will also help the Council to secure external funding opportunities as external partners (including national governing bodies such as the FA) will have more confidence to invest in Sefton knowing there is a strategy in place to deliver improvements.

**(B) Capital Costs-** As above

**Implications:**

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

<b>Financial</b>		
<b>Legal</b>		
<b>Human Resources</b>		
<b>Equality</b>		
1.	No Equality Implication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Impact of the Proposals on Service Delivery:**

The adoption of the strategy will lead to the council having a clear strategy in place to deliver improvements in sport in Sefton and will help the Council in working with external organisations to deliver improved sporting facilities.

## **What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?**

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD4226/16) notes this report indicates no direct financial implications at this stage. Adoption of the Strategy however is likely to increase the Council's chances of attracting external funding for sports pitch developments. Members will be advised of such opportunities in an appropriate manner should such schemes arise.

The Head of Regulation and Compliance (LD3509/16) have been consulted and has no comments on the report.

## **Implementation Date for the Decision**

Following the expiry of the "call-in" period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

**Contact Officer:** Andrew Hunt

**Tel:** 0151 934 3827

**Email:** [andrew.hunt@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.hunt@sefton.gov.uk)

## **Background Papers:**

The following background papers, which are not available elsewhere on the Internet can be accessed on the Council website:

- I. Sefton Playing Pitch Strategy
- II. Sefton Playing Pitch Strategy Consultation summary

[www.sefton.gov.uk/pitchstrategy](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/pitchstrategy)

# Sefton Playing Pitch Strategy

## 1. Introduction

1.1 The Playing Pitch Strategy was commissioned in January 2015 to provide important evidence to support the draft Local Plan. It was necessary to produce the strategy to have up to date evidence on the current need for playing fields as some of the housing allocations contained former playing fields. At the Local Plan examination hearings the Inspector accepted the principle of developing these sites for housing subject to appropriate financial contributions being made to provide or improve pitches elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

1.2 The Sefton Playing Pitch Strategy's (PPS) purpose is to assess the demand and supply of playing pitches in Sefton in order to come up with recommendations of how to improve the stock and quality of playing pitches. This includes looking at different areas within Sefton as well as Sefton as a whole.

1.3 The PPS identified that there is a shortage of pitches for football, (particularly 3G modern artificial grass pitches), rugby and cricket. There is no shortfall for hockey, tennis and bowls, but all existing pitches should be protected or replaced.

1.4 The key recommendations to address the issues identified include:

- improving the quality of pitches to enable more matches to be played,
- improving facilities such as changing rooms and access,
- providing full size 3G (modern artificial grass) pitches
- Focusing on creating high quality Hub sites (larger multi-pitch sites) to make the best use of limited money. It is proposed to have at least one of these sites in the north, centre and south of the borough

*1 The Local Plan former school sites are also subject to the Schools Standards and Framework Act, which states that 10 years must elapse before a playing field can be developed unless the Secretary of State has given permission. For example for Ainsdale Hope this 10 year period expires in August 2017), this issue has already been factored in to the Local Plan.*

## 2. Consultation

2.1 Sefton Council consulted on the Draft Sefton Playing Pitch Strategy between the 26<sup>th</sup> February and the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2016. A newspaper advert was placed in the Champion group of newspapers on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016 and the documents were advertised on the Council's webpage. In addition general consultees on our database and other stakeholders were either emailed or had letters sent to them.

## 3. Summary of Comments

3.1 A total of 6 consultation responses were received on the draft Sefton Playing Pitch Strategy. Some of the key comments are mentioned below

- I. Holy Trinity Sports Club (Formby) commented that they aspire to increase their number of Tennis courts.
- II. Rookery Sports Ground (Southport) commented that they have plans to improve their facilities, that their situation reflects the strategy and they would welcome the opportunity to be involved in any future strategies.
- III. A resident commented that it was important to make sure there were all weather pitches in Formby, particularly for winter.

- IV. A Sefton Council drainage officer stated that drainage charges should be taken into account for 3G pitches
- V. Redgate Rovers Junior FC commented that they wish to lease KGV Watchyard Lane, Formby, from the Council to develop their club.
- VI. Lydiate Parish Council agreed with the strategy in relation to sports facilities in Lydiate, particularly Tennis courts. They wish to work with Sefton Council to improve this.

There were no comments by Sport England; however this was expected as they had already signed off the strategy as they were part of the Steering Group.

A summary of the comments made and the Council response is provided in the consultation summary (listed as a background paper).

#### **4. Next Steps**

4.1 When approved for adoption, the Council will publicise the adoption of the documents on its website. Once adopted the Playing Pitch Strategy will be given greater weight in decision making.

4.2 The Council has formed a Playing Pitch Strategy steering group to help to implement the recommendations of the Strategy and make progress. This brings together officers from several different Council departments together with external organisations such as the Sefton Sports Council and representatives from national governing bodies and is led by an executive director. It is intended that this group will provide strategic direction to Council initiatives regarding playing pitches and sporting provision and help ensure the strategy is an active document influencing Council decisions rather than a strategy that will not be implemented.

4.3 The Strategy will also help the Council to secure external funding opportunities as external partners (including national governing bodies such as the FA) will have more confidence to invest in Sefton knowing there is a strategy in place to deliver improvements. The strategy aims to deliver hub sites (larger high quality sites) in key locations in each part of Sefton.

4.4 This is currently being worked on and Meols Park in Southport together with Litherland Sports Park have already been identified as possible hub sites for the north and south of the Borough. Work is continuing to identify a suitable hub site (or sites) for the centre of the borough. This represents an opportunity both to improve quality and at the same time reduce costs to the Council by focusing investment in key sites rather than dissipating resources. The Strategy will also help to meet a number of wider corporate objectives relating to health and wellbeing, and encouraging participation in sports.

**I. Draft Strategy produced (for Local Plan examination) (November 2015)**



**II. Draft Consultation (26th February- 22nd April 2016)**



**III. Final version produced (taking on board relevant comments) (May - June 2016)**



**IV. Adoption of document (August 2016)**