



Derby City Council

COUNCIL CABINET
3 August 2016

ITEM 11

Report of the Cabinet Member for Communities
and City Centre Regeneration

Outdoor Football Pitch Provision

SUMMARY

- 1.1 Rationalisation of outdoor football pitch provision in Derby is proposed over the next 3 years to support the delivery of recommendations within the current Outdoor Sports Strategy 2013-18, and contribute to savings of £60,000 within the Parks service within the financial year 2016/17 part of the Councils three year budget approved in February 2016.
- 1.2 The rationalisation programme develops a hierarchy of provision for outdoor sports through implementation of a “hub” approach. This provides a core of 7 tier 1 hub sites as well as working with community organisations to provide a number of satellite tier 2 and 3 sites.
- 1.3 The rationalisation programme reduces the number of sites managed by the City Council in 2016/17 from 13 to 7 for formal football fixtures while still meeting the demand for football pitches from teams within the city. The programme also aims to increase the number of tier 2 & 3 sites managed by community organisations or clubs through asset transfer and work with stakeholders to assess future provision in Derby.
- 1.4 The 7 sites proposed to be maintained (Alvaston Park, The Racecourse, Sinfen Moor Park, Darley Fields, Chaddesden Park, Chellaston Park and Moorways) will act as tier 1 hub sites for outdoor sport providing in excess of 3,500 football fixtures in 2016/17 across all formats of the game including mini soccer, youth, adult men’s and women and girls.
- 1.5 The principle of rationalisation of football provision was approved as part of the budget consultation process for 2016-19; in addition officers have undertaken direct consultation with all city football leagues, current clubs using Derby City sites, and the Derbyshire FA.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To approve the implementation from 2016/17 of the proposed rationalisation programme noting the key objectives to achieve service savings and deliver recommendations within the current Outdoor Sports Strategy while continuing to meet the demand for football pitch provision in the city.

- 2.2 To note the reduction in the number of sites managed for formal football without reducing capacity to meet current demand within the city.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The withdrawal of facilities for league fixtures at the 6 tier 2 and 3 sites means a loss of 24 fixtures per weekend over 11 pitches. The remaining tier 1 sites provide capacity for 318 fixtures per weekend with current usage on average 109 fixtures per weekend. Overall therefore there is capacity for an additional 209 fixtures meaning the 24 fixture loss is easily offset via the use of the proposed facilities.

In addition the 7 remaining sites will be reconfigured to ensure they meet the current trend in growth of junior football and static need for adult football. There will be an overall net gain in 2 youth pitches, 1 mini soccer pitch and a net loss of 8 adult pitches as part of tier 2 provision.

- 3.2 Savings from withdrawal of facilities for league fixtures at the 6 sites amount to around £27,000 due to efficiencies in staffing costs and maintenance.
- 3.3 A robust consultation process has taken place over a period of 4 months including highlighting the budget proposals as part of the Councils budget planning for the next 3 years. Consultation includes direct email with leagues and clubs, delivering presentations alongside Derbyshire Football Association for clubs and leagues and meeting individually with stakeholders when requested.
- 3.4 Delivering the recommendations within the Council's adopted Outdoor Sports Strategy 2013-18 including "reviewing the viability of sites with only a limited number of football pitches and relocating to hub sites using the hierarchy of outdoor sports provision model, where this is feasible."



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Report of the Strategic Director of Communities and Place

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 An outcome of the Council's Budget Consultation 2016 to 2019 process was to confirm savings in the leisure service leading to some service reductions that included the rationalisation of football provision. The following information provides the further detail necessary.
- 4.2 The 6 sites where it is proposed to withdraw facilities for league fixtures for formal football (Normanton Park, Osmaston Park, Rowditch, Vicarage Road, Arboretum, and King George V playing fields) were selected against two main criteria:
- 1) Number of current fixtures and site capacity. As a result of withdrawal of formal football on these sites there will be a net loss of 24 fixtures per weekend and 6 pitches.
 - 2) Facility infrastructure. The sites listed have pitches identified as having poor pitch condition, primarily inadequate drainage with a higher than average loss of fixtures due to weather. Some of the sites also have poor changing accommodation that potentially require additional maintenance or do not meet the needs or the varied formats of the game.

In addition part of achieving savings from the rationalisation process means there is a need to reduce the management of sites where additional staffing capacity is required to facilitate football.

Of the sites above 4 have been identified to retain a set of goal posts and the pitch area maintained in-line with the specification for the wider park area providing space for the park users to play recreational football.

- 4.3 The 7 sites proposed to act as hub sites for formal football from the 2016/17 playing season (Alvaston Park, The Racecourse, Sinfin Moor Park, Darley Fields, Chaddesden Park, Chellaston Park and Moorways) have been retained as they offer greater capacity to meet the needs of football clubs in the city. The sites can provide up to 318 fixtures per weekend across the varied formats of the game and on average in the 2015/16 playing season there were 109 fixtures per weekend across the city meaning capacity will still remain for an additional 209 fixtures. The sites also generally offer better infrastructure with better quality pitches and changing facilities.

- 4.4 The Outdoor Sports Strategy (OSS) 2013-18 includes the results of playing pitch modelling used to calculate the demand for pitches and provides guidance on how to balance supply with demand through until 2018. This alongside calculation's to determine Team Generation Rates gives an indication of future need which in Derby shows a shortage of junior pitches at peak playing times and a surplus of senior pitches.
- 4.5 The OSS also highlights the quality of pitch provision in the city assessed through Playing Pitch Modelling. This highlights a number of sites that are determined as poor quality, including King George V, Osmaston Park, and Arboretum Park.
- 4.6 The quality of changing provision is also assessed as part of the OSS Playing Pitch Modelling with highlights including excellent-rated changing rooms at both Alvaston Park and the Racecourse and poor-rated accommodation at Rowditch and Normanton Park.
- 4.7 Recommendations highlighted from the OSS 2013-18 include:
- To consider reconfiguration of football pitches in the City to meet the demand for youth provision
 - To review the viability of sites with only a limited number of pitches and relocate to hub sites using the hierarchy of outdoor spoors provision model, where this is feasible
 - To seek to ensure that appropriate maintenance regimes for football pitches are sustained
 - To adopt a planning policy to protect existing playing fields form development unless the development of playing fields can demonstrate net benefit for sport. This could include the replacement of single pitch sites with a larger high quality multi-pitch site.
 - To explore the feasibility of community football clubs having access to appropriate training facilities including artificial grass pitches.
- 4.8 From December 2015, three rounds of formal consultation have taken place with Stakeholders and feedback on a number of issues including pitch provision, pitch maintenance, fees and charges and administration of football bookings. The feedback has helped to shape and focus the proposal for rationalisation with changes made to support community clubs including:
- More flexible payment options for pitch hire including payment by direct debit
 - Changes to the application process to reflect the varied needs of clubs playing different formats of the game
 - Working towards a improved and clearly defined specification for pitch maintenance
 - Working towards improving tier 1 and 2 sites through funding investment
 - Working with community clubs to support a programme of transferring assets focused on tier 2 and 3 provision enabling local people to manage local facilities

4.9 The following consultation process was followed:

- December 2015 the Councils 3 year financial plan was highlighted to leagues and their member clubs with a link forwarded through email with responses requested through the process in place for capturing feedback.
- January 2016 consultation with leagues as part of the Derby Football Leagues Forum
- February 2016 stakeholder consultation with the Derbyshire FA
- February 2016 consultation evening hosted jointly with the Derbyshire FA with all clubs currently using Derby City sites invited with around 40 attending. Officers delivered a presentation and a questions and answer session.
- Proposals emailed to all clubs through the Derbyshire FA with feedback requested directly to officers.
- March – April 2016 where requested individual stakeholder meetings with officers

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 The option to not use a hierarchy hub approach and continuing to provide management of tier 2 & 3 sites sustaining football at a wider number of facilities. This will limit the ability to contribute to service savings and impact on the approach to focus resources across a number of smaller sites with the aim of improving the infrastructure and service provided at tier 1 level.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Financial officer Human Resources officer Equalities officer Risk Officer Health & Safety officer Environmental officer Service Director	Amanda Fletcher, Head of Finance Liz Moore, Strategic HR Manager Ann Webster, Lead on Equality and Diversity Richard Boneham, Head of Governance & Assurance Adrian Jeffs, Health and Safety Team Leader Andy Hills, Environment and Climate Change Group Manager Claire Davenport, Director of Leisure, Culture & Tourism
For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Chris Nightingale, Outdoor Recreation Development Officer, 01332 640630 chris.nightingale@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 The rationalisation programme results in savings within 2016/17 of around £27,000.

Legal

- 2.1 All usage agreements with clubs are seasonal and the proposed changes would come into force following the application process for home venues from the 2016/17 season.
- 2.2 Sites proposed to be withdrawn from formal football provision will be assessed for suitability for asset transfer and/or license agreement as part of the approach to reducing the number of sites directly managed by the Council and at the same time supporting community organisations to manage local facilities.

Personnel

- 3.1 The rationalisation programme will reduce the required staffing capacity within the Park Ranger's service area but not result in staff at risk. The savings are attributed to a reduction in need for staff employed on variable hour's contracts.

IT

- 4.1 None arising from this report

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 It is recognised that this approach limits the number of facilities in some localities and reduces the availability of pitches for formal use for people in some areas of the city. It is also recognised that there is pitch provision within a minimum of 15 minutes drive time for all populations and doesn't reduce pitch availability in-line with current and future demand over the next 3 years.
- 5.2 The HUB model focuses resources on those sites that provide a stronger infrastructure for varied user groups. This includes changing provision that is suitable for different formats of the game including junior, youth, girls and women's football. Changing accommodation at the Racecourse, Alvaston and Chellaston all comply with current requirements around mixed site usage with priority given to women and girls as part of the application process for clubs to choose a home site for 2016/17. In addition both the Racecourse and Alvaston Park sites provide disabled people's parking facilities, changing rooms and toilets.
- 5.3 The sites that are proposed to not offer formal football provision were selected

partially based on a much poorer infrastructure with changing accommodation that is not suited to the demand from varied user groups.

Health and Safety

- 6.1 The provision of a reduced number of formal facilities will enable the Council to focus maintenance resources at fewer sites to provide safer facilities. This will include maintenance of buildings and equipment, compliance with and development of safe working practices and enabling partners to be skilled in the management in identified asset transfer facilities.

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.1 None arising from this report

Property and Asset Management

- 8.1 Any assets transferred over the four-year period in the form of a lease, would require the tenant to take over the responsibility for managing and maintaining the identified site.
- 8.2 Property management and grounds maintenance will consider how an improved specification for a smaller number of hub sites can be delivered over the short and medium term.
- 8.3 Officers from leisure, estates and property management will need to identify any required strategic reserve of up to 10% for playing pitches which is a recommendation with the OSS.

Risk Management and Safeguarding

- 9.1 The need to address football provision and focus on delivering a stronger more robust hierarchy approach is imperative to arrest decline in the City's facilities. Failure to change approach will likely result in us not having the option of implementing a structured programme and tier 2 & 3 sites falling into disuse through inability to invest in them. It would also see an increase in maintenance costs year-on-year to sustain current provision.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 10.1 The proposal contributes to the Council providing good-quality services that meet local needs and contributes to priority outcomes:
- Making the most of our assets
 - Delivering services differently
 - Enabling individuals and communities
 - Promoting health and wellbeing.

