

SCHEDULE OF ACTIONS MATTER 17 VISION AND SPATIAL STRATEGY (Action 17.1)

Built Sports Facilities Assessment

17.1	LT1 Protection of Playing Pitches, Existing Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities: carry out Built Sports Facilities Assessment in line with Sport England requirements
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- 1.1 Sport England agreed a Statement of Common Ground with Rossendale Borough Council, as recorded in the ‘Rossendale Local Plan Duty To Co-Operate Statement Incorporating Draft Statement Of Common Ground’ (March 2019). This is appended to this Paper.
- 1.2 Sport England commented on the need to prepare an assessment of indoor built sports facilities to provide further evidence in support of Local Plan Policy LT1 (Protection of Playing Pitches, Existing Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities). This is to include an assessment of surpluses and deficiencies in existing facilities, need and demand for facilities, and lead to a strategy for future investment and development decisions.
- 1.3 To avoid delaying progression of the Local Plan, Sport England requested that Policy LT1 in the Submission Version be amended to include the following text, which is shown in red italics (solely for the purpose of emphasis) at the end of the policy:

Strategic Policy LT1: Protection of Playing Pitches, Existing Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

Playing Pitches, Existing Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities are shown on the Policies Map.

Development proposals which would result in the loss of playing pitches and associated facilities and land or buildings in recreational or sporting use or last used as such or which would prejudice the use of these areas for sport and recreation will be resisted and only be permitted where:

- A replacement of the same type, of an equal or greater quantity and quality is provided in an appropriate location; or
- It is demonstrated to the Council’s satisfaction that there is a surplus of recreational land, buildings or facilities of the same type relative to the current and likely future needs of the local community. All development affecting playing pitches and associated facilities will be considered against the most up to date version of the Playing Pitch Strategy; or
- The development involves the loss of a small part of a larger site in recreational use and would result in the enhancement of recreational facilities on the remainder of the site, or on a nearby site serving the same community and a net gain in sports provision can be demonstrated;
- Or In the case of school playing fields or built sports facilities, the development is for education purposes or the Department for Education is satisfied that the land is no longer required for school use and its loss would not result in a shortfall in

recreational open space/playing pitches/sports facilities for the local community now or in the future.

Given the important role indoor sports facilities play in promoting the physical and mental well-being of the community, the Council will work closely with Sport England and other partners to ensure that any future decision on the provision of all sports facilities is based on a robust and up-to-date evidence base. To assist with this, it is the intention of the Council to produce an Indoor Sports Strategy during the next 12-24 months to help underpin effective policy application.

- 1.4 Subject to the Inspectors' agreement, this wording will be consulted on at the Main Modifications stage.
- 1.5 The Council commissioned the firm Knight Kavanagh and Page (KKP) to undertake this work alongside a number of other studies including an Open Space Assessment and a revised Playing Pitch Strategy.
- 1.6 Sport England has been involved in the steering group for both of the sports related studies. The Indoor Built Sports Facilities study is now fairly advanced and the Council will need to work with the consultants as well as its partners, including Sport England and Rossendale Leisure Trust to prepare an Action Plan and identify funding opportunities if and where necessary. The review of the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Study has been delayed due to issues primarily relating to Covid, which affected summer sports but Sport England are advising and together we are working with the governing bodies for the relevant sports and so expect this Study to be drafted later this year.

APPENDIX 1

Statement of Common Ground, RBC with Sport England

This Statement of Common Ground identifies areas of agreement between Sport England and Rossendale Borough Council (RBC) in relation to Sport England's representations on the Rossendale Draft Local Plan Pre-Submission Version. It identifies the issues raised by Sport England in the representations to this Plan.

RBC has consulted with Sport England on the development of the Local Plan in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations.

Sport England support the Local Plan and Policy LT1 and its approach to protecting and securing open space and playing pitch/leisure provision but raised some concerns in their representation in relation to the lack of an evidence base to support the future implementation of the policy, which is summarised as follows:

Policy LT1 strongly reflects NPPF para 97 and Sport England's policy on playing fields; however the policy is lacking as it is not supported by an evidence base on built sports facilities. Without up to date evidence, it is not possible to ascertain whether facilities are surplus to requirements or sufficient to meet needs and an assessment of both is needed to ensure this policy can work effectively. This will help to ensure the plan is 'justified' and 'consistent' with NPPF para 96.

Thanks to a series of helpful discussions with the council and the leisure trust, both sides now understand the need for this evidence and Sport England has offered to support the council in developing this. So as not to impede the progress of the local plan and to achieve a positive outcome and working relationship, the council has now committed to resolve the deficit in the evidence base shortly after adoption of the plan. To ensure this happens Sport England propose the following addition of a new paragraph of supporting text to Policy LT1:

"Given the important role indoor sports facilities play in promoting the physical and mental well-being of the community, the Council will work closely with Sport England and other partners to ensure that any future decision on the provision of all sports facilities is based on a robust and up-to-date evidence base. To assist with this, it is the intention of the Council to produce an Indoor Sports Strategy during the next 12 -24 months to help underpin effective policy application".

RBC agreed response with Sport England: Subject to the outcome of the Local Plan examination and approval of the Inspector, the above wording is to be included in Policy LT1. RBC and RLT will now work to secure agreement and, if necessary, funding to carry out a Borough-wide sports facility assessment with a view to developing a Sports Facility Strategy. RBC and RLT are grateful for Sport England's advice and accept their offer for further assistance in carrying out the assessment. This assessment will be undertaken within 12-24 months following the adoption of the Local Plan.

