

## **SPORTS, LIBRARIES AND CULTURE POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

MEETING, 24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2014

Present – Councillors G. Harkin (Chairman), Peacock (Vice-Chairman), A. Connell, Mrs. Fairclough, Kellett, McKeon (as deputy for Councillor J. Byrne) and J. Walsh.

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors J. Byrne, Cox, Evans and Hayes

### Also in Attendance

Mr. K. Davies	-	Director of Development and Regeneration
Ms. T. Ashton	-	Operations Manager Sport and Active Living
Mrs. V. Ridge	-	Deputy Democratic Services Manager

Councillor G Harkin in the Chair

## **6. MINUTES**

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Policy Development Group held on 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2013 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

## **7. PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report which put forward a draft Vision Paper for the development of the Bolton Playing Pitch Strategy.

It was stated that building upon the preceding Assessment Report, the Vision Paper provided a clear, strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing playing pitches and ancillary facilities from 2014-2019. In order to map out how the vision would be achieved, the following objectives had been established, viz:-

- Produce a playing pitch strategy for the Bolton borough which identified the supply and its quality and assess the existing and predicted demand;
- Be an instrument to ensure development of policy options, an action plan and the establishment of local standards;
- Bring together all those parts of the Council and external bodies with a stake in playing pitch provision to ensure a co-ordinated approach to supply and demand;

- Produce solutions which would use school resources to also satisfy need for pitches in the local area;
- Be a mechanism to predict future requirements for pitches in those areas of Bolton which would have planned population growth;
- Ensure that sports pitch provision was provided where there were targeted areas for sport development; and
- Be conscious of local authority budget constraints and wherever possible seek to provide facilities which were more economical to maintain i.e. multi pitch sites.

The report also outlined the key issues which had arisen from the Assessment Report and related to the following areas, viz:-

- Football pitches;
- Cricket pitches;
- Rugby union pitches;
- Rugby league pitches;
- Artificial grass pitches;
- Tennis courts;
- Rounders pitches;
- Athletics tracks;
- Bowling greens;
- Netball courts.

In relation to the overarching key issues to address these were detailed as follows:-

- Poor quality grass pitches and associated ancillary facilities;
- Addressing actual spare capacity and overplayed grass pitches (particularly on over marked pitches i.e. cricket and rounders);
- Maximising access to existing provision, particularly education sites;
- Accommodating future growth expressed for grass pitches, particularly for youth football;
- Addressing spare capacity on bowling greens; and
- Maximising use of parks tennis courts to meet demand expressed from tennis clubs.

In conclusion, members were advised that the Strategy sought to provide guidance for planning decisions made across Bolton in the years up to 2019. By addressing the issues identified in the Assessment Report and using the strategic framework presented in the Strategy, the current and future sporting and recreational needs of Bolton could be satisfied. The Strategy would identify where there was a deficiency in provision and how best to resolve this in the future. Furthermore, the Strategy was intended to be flexible and regularly update using the database tools provided.

Following the presentation, a number of comments/questions were made:-

- Consideration be given in the medium to long term for the service to undertake a more enabling role rather than a provider role to enable such services to be facilitated;
- Concern that some organisations could not sustain such a role;
- Look at the provision for Free Schools as currently they did not need to provide sporting facilities; and
- Concern that Ridgmont Park was not fit for purpose.

It was agreed that the report be noted.

(The meeting started at 4.00 p.m. and finished at 4.55 p.m.)