

**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO THE**  
**CABINET**

**19<sup>th</sup> October 2016**

1. **REPORT TITLE**                      **Draft Borough Sport and Active Lifestyles Strategy**
- Submitted by:**                      **Executive Director - Operational Services.**
- Portfolios:**                              **Leisure, Culture and Localism and Planning and Housing**
- Ward(s) affected:**                      **All**

**Purpose of the Report**

To approve the Draft Sport and Active Lifestyles Strategy for the Borough for consultation.

**Recommendations**

**That Cabinet endorse the draft Sport and Active Lifestyles Strategy and approve it for wider consultation with the local community and stakeholders as detailed in the report.**

**Reasons**

This report presents the first draft of a Sport and Active Lifestyles Strategy for the Borough, which identifies a range of strategic goals for future sports provision as well as an action plan for delivery. The draft Strategy has been developed through both inter-departmental and cross-boundary work as this is a complex area that requires effective joint working. It has also been informed through early engagement with a number of key stakeholders. The Strategy once adopted, along with the Open Space Strategy and Playing Pitch Plan will form part of the evidence base for the Joint Local Plan.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The Borough Council has worked with Stoke City Council, Sport England and a number of expert advisors in this field of work to establish the right strategic direction for the development of sport across the Borough, which the Strategy aims to identify and address. It also provides a framework for Sports Development in the Borough and provides the evidence base to develop a way forward for improving and enhancing sports facilities across the Borough, leading to future long term strategy development and delivery.
- 1.2 A number of findings are described that range from the quality of existing provision, lease arrangements, to the demand for swimming pools, sports halls and 3G Pitches. The work has provided the basis for the development of the draft Sport and Active Lifestyles Strategy and officers will continue to refresh the evidence base and context as required.
- 1.3 This draft Strategy summarises and details a mixed view of sport in the Borough by highlighting where it is thriving as well as not doing so well. To move the picture forward there is now a need to look at the existing provision of sports facilities more strategically and, as a result a need for further and continued engagement, both with Members and key stakeholders. Consequently a draft 10 year Strategy is now presented for approval to consult with the wider community and other key stakeholders such as Sport England, National Governing Bodies, Clubs etc.

- 1.4 The draft Strategy considers a number of guiding principles, including the role of the Council, clubs and governing bodies. However, it is important to put things into perspective and further clarify what the local situation is in comparison to the national picture; this is, therefore, highlighted in the draft Strategy.
- 1.5 A number of further considerations are taken into account and include planning policy issues and the need to review and look at the impact of the Sports Development Framework.
- 1.6 Taking all into consideration, this draft Sport and Active Lifestyles Strategy in essence sets out what the Council intends to achieve over this period, setting a number of strategic priorities based on the evidence base collected. It clearly sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Council and its partners/ stakeholders to deliver this Strategy.
- 1.7 The Strategy specifically seeks to ensure that the Borough has a network of accessible, high quality, high capacity, well maintained, well used and financially and environmentally sustainable sports facilities, capable of accommodating local demand, complemented by good quality changing and social accommodation, on a limited number of strategically located sites. Taking into account the geography and connectivity of the Borough it is possible to have both a relatively small number of separate facilities and high levels of accessibility. Having a small number of high capacity facilities – such as the excellent leisure centre at Jubilee2 has demonstrated – leads to economies of scale when compared with a larger number of smaller facilities. There is demand to provide a new leisure centre in Kidsgrove which currently requires a robust funding strategy to be identified.
- 1.8 The Strategy also promotes the development of financially sustainable multi-sport clubs offering good quality coaching and inclusive opportunities for players of all ages and abilities and both sexes. The example of Clayton Sports Centre for cricket and badminton is cited as a successful case in point.
- 1.9 The Strategy seeks to develop new forms of provision for traditional sports in partnership with their governing bodies in order to attract new participants and encourage past participants to return to their former sport. There is growing evidence that some traditional sports are in decline. The reasons for this are not completely clear, but they appear to include growing family and work-related pressures on players' and volunteers' time; the amount of sport on television; the quality of many local facilities; and the unwillingness or inability of some players to pay realistic charges for their sport. In response, forward-thinking governing bodies are responding by developing new forms of their sports, with smaller teams, shorter match times, playable throughout the week by players with limited skill.
- 1.10 The Strategy also highlights the three main elements to the actual delivery of the Sport and Active Lifestyles Strategy: planning, developing partnerships and funding and these are discussed and developed as part of an Action Plan within the Strategy.

## 2. **Issues**

- 2.1 As part of the development of this draft Strategy, early discussions have already been undertaken with a number of key stakeholders in relation to their current club issues and what their aspirations for future development are. This consultation needs extending to other groups.
- 2.2 A considerable financial investment has been made in upgrading the leisure centre 'offer' in Newcastle and the ability to invest 'in the future health and wellbeing of our communities' and in particular in sports facilities in Kidsgrove is now extremely constrained in terms of available local authority funding unless assets are disposed of.

- 2.3 The detailed Action Plan in the draft strategy identifies financial implications/ commitments, but with reduced funding, alternatives such as government funding and partnerships, as well as disposal, will need to be further developed in order to make the Action Plan a reality.
- 2.4 Traditional funding through Section 106 capital receipts will be used wherever possible and the Sport and Active Lifestyles Strategy will provide the evidence base to justify such investment. As the Council has not yet agreed to become a community infrastructure levy (CIL) charging authority and therefore this funding is not currently an option to meet the needs of sport, there is a need for the Council to consider the introduction of a levy to help support the growth and development of sport. This may support the justification for introducing a CIL.
- 2.5 On this basis and in summary, this Strategy sets out:-
  - 2.5.1 A number of “guiding principles” for the Council and its key partners;
  - 2.5.2 What the Council intends to achieve, sometimes in the fairly long term;
  - 2.5.3 The key facility-related issues that the Council and its partners need to tackle; and
  - 2.5.4 The specific actions that the Council and its partners intend to implement over the next decade.

### 3. **Options Considered**

- 3.1 In simple terms the Council can either approve the Draft Sport and Active Lifestyles Strategy for consultation or it can choose not to. Further developing the strategy and approach outlined is likely to lead to more investment in sport and more positive local health outcomes.

### 4. **Proposal**

- 4.1 Engagement and communication has been identified as a vital element in the development of the Strategy and in the effective delivery of its recommendations.
- 4.2 Early engagement has taken place with selected clubs and organisations to inform the draft Strategy and this was valuable in highlighting current issues, future plans and the appetite for collaboration and joint working. Further engagement is proposed.
- 4.3 The following engagement strategy is proposed:
  - 4.3.1 Period of informal engagement during November / December 2016, in particular the Advisory Sports Council, Sport England, Stoke City Council and their advisors.
  - 4.3.2 Engagement and consultation on the draft Strategy is recommended for December / January. This will involve inviting quantitative feedback from a wide range of stakeholders through a short questionnaire. Identified stakeholders include all local clubs and organisations, the wider community (i.e. the public), councillors and national, regional and local sports governing bodies. A consultation event will also be arranged for October to allow face to face discussions and feedback. The consultation will seek, amongst other things, to establish whether any barriers to participation (perceived or otherwise) exist and what measure would help to overcome them. A consultation plan will be prepared, setting out the detail of who will be consulted and how feedback will influence the final strategy.
- 4.4 Timescales for finalising the Strategy:

October 2016:	Approval by Cabinet of draft for engagement & consultation
November/ December 2016:	Informal engagement
January /February 2016:	Engagement & consultation
March 2016:	Update and amend the final strategy
April 2016:	Report final Strategy to Cabinet for adoption
Post April 2016:	Feedback on final Strategy to wider community

Then annually, updating of data sets.

5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

5.1 Given the importance of sport to the local health economy and the established role of physical activity in improving individual health, it is proposed that the Council leads on the production of a Borough Sport and Active Lifestyles Strategy to maximise these benefits for our local communities.

6. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

6.1 There will be a positive impact on those areas relating to health improvement and inward investment.

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

7.1 Any legal implications are contained within the strategy.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

8.1 An Equality Impact Analysis is being developed alongside the Strategy. It will be reviewed and updated to take into account feedback from engagement and consultation and will be presented in December as part of the report to Cabinet on the final Strategy.

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

9.1 Any future investment required to fund the strategy will need to be considered as part of the Council's annual budget strategy. This will be considered as part of the annual budget process. It should be noted that delivery and funding of the strategy will not be the sole responsibility of the Council, and that the Council will seek to support partners and other providers in the delivery of services and facilities where appropriate.

10. **Major Risks**

10.1 A detailed risk register for the delivery of the Sport and Active Lifestyles Strategy and Action Plan which will set out all the current risks and identify the mitigating actions needed to manage them will be developed, monitored and updated throughout the life of the Strategy. The key risks thus far are:

10.1.1 Unable to secure capital funding

10.1.2 Failure to engage key stakeholders in Strategy and recommendations

10.1.3 Changes in policy locally and nationally

10.1.4 Staff pressures and lack of resources to deliver

10.1.5 Failure to align with the timetable for the preparation and adoption of the Joint Local Plan.

11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 This report is in the forward plan

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

12.1 Development of the Sport and Active Lifestyle Strategy was approved by Cabinet in December 2014.