

Introduction

- 1.1 During September 2006, Swindon Borough Council commissioned PMP to produce a Playing Pitch Strategy guiding provision of pitches across Swindon from 2006 to 2011. This strategy has been developed following the methodology outlined in “Towards a Level Playing Field” and updates the previous strategy produced by PMP in 2001.
- 1.2 The strategy will guide future provision and management of existing and new sports pitches in the Swindon area in the context of national policy and local sports development criteria.
- 1.3 The projected significant population growth up to 2011 will increase pressures for the development of all land in and around the urban areas of the borough and pressures on pitches and other green spaces are therefore rising. Significant development pressures could therefore impact on existing sports fields and playing area provision in addition to generating additional demand in future years.
- 1.4 The overall aims of this project are therefore to:
 - review the existing playing pitch assessment in light of any changes in national, regional and local policy
 - update information relating to the current and future playing pitch needs within Swindon based on current Sport England guidance
 - review the implications of significant development proposals in the emerging Local Development Framework on future playing provision
 - to review standards of playing provision for future development.
- 1.5 This playing pitch assessment is primarily concerned with voluntary participation, by adults and young people, in competitive association football (referred to in this document as ‘football’), cricket, rugby union and hockey.
- 1.6 The strategy presents the key findings arising from extensive survey work and consultation, highlighting areas of both concern and opportunity and sets a vision and strategy for the future delivery of sports pitches across the borough. It also considers opportunities arising through population growth and new developments and investigates the likely impact on demand for pitch provision if there are increases in participation.
- 1.7 It is important to emphasise that this document examines the provision of playing pitches (i.e. the playing surface, safety margins and the wider area for repositioning the pitch within the playing field) and not playing fields or open spaces (which include grass or other areas which are not used for sport). This is a key distinction since some of the areas surrounding pitches are not used for sport but are important in terms of open space. This document complements the open space audit, undertaken in compliance with PPG17 and the green infrastructure study which is currently underway in conjunction with key partners.
- 1.8 The following areas are covered within this document:
 - the current picture – a review of the national and local context, including participation trends and playing pitch provision in England, both at a national level, and specifically within Swindon borough

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- methodology – a summary of the research process
 - supply and demand – a quantitative and qualitative appraisal of the extent to which existing playing pitch provision meets the current (and future) competitive needs of pitch sports
 - an application of Sport England's Playing Pitch Methodology (PPM)
 - key actions, recommendations and priorities for the future based on the development of the main issues arising from the supply and demand consultation and PPM analysis.
- 1.9 The adequacy of provision is analysed on both a borough wide level and geographically across the borough, using ward area boundaries amalgamated to form sub areas.
- 1.10 These geographical areas are illustrated in Map 1.1 overleaf and a summary of the population within each area can be seen in Table 1.1 below. The population breakdowns have been derived from locally produced population estimates and projections at ward level (2003).

Table 1.1: Sub areas in Swindon Borough Council – Populations 2006 and 2011

Ward	Sub Area	Sub Area Population 2006	Sub area population 2011
Central	Central Cluster	28698	31223
Eastcott			
Gorse Hill and Pinehurst			
Covingham and Nythe	East Cluster	27193	26914
St Margaret			
St Philip			
Abbey Meads	North Cluster	37757	44205
Haydon Wick			
Moredon			
Penhill			
Blunsdon	Rural	23260	28604
Highworth			
Ridgeway			
Wroughton and Chiseldon			
Dorcan	South Cluster	35248	36707
Old Town and Lawns			
Parks			
Walcot			
Freshbrook and Grange Park	West Cluster	38720	39219
Shaw and Nine Elms			
Toothill and Westlea			
Western			

- 1.11 All data collected as part of this study has been inputted into a complex excel spreadsheet. This toolkit has also been provided to the Council, enabling detailed in depth analysis and testing of future scenarios.

Map 1.1: Analysis areas in Swindon

