

# Cabinet report



Report of head of economy, leisure and property

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To: CABINET

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## Leisure and sports facilities study 2013-2029

### Recommendations

That cabinet:

- (a) adopts the leisure and sports facilities study 2013-2029 (formerly referred to as the leisure facilities strategy) subject to amendments to the study being made in accordance with paragraph 14 of this report
- (b) authorises the head of economy, leisure and property, in consultation with the cabinet member for leisure, to make any minor amendments to the study prior to its publication.

### Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek cabinet's approval for the adoption of the leisure and sports facilities study subject to the amendments referred to in paragraph 14 of the report. The latest draft of the executive summary of the study is attached to the report as appendix A (page 11). The full draft study can be found on the Vale of White Horse District Council's website using the link: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-development-framework/core-strateg-6>

## Corporate objectives

2. The leisure and sports facilities study will help to ensure that the Vale Council is achieving its strategic objectives and corporate priorities, in the following ways:

strategic objective: excellent delivery of key services, and corporate priority: deliver high performing services with particular emphasis on ensuring good quality sports and leisure provision

strategic objective: meeting housing need, and corporate priority: secure sufficient financial contributions from development to deliver essential infrastructure.

By reviewing the existing provision of facilities across the district and the future requirements arising from population growth up until 2029, the study has prioritised future facilities for which contributions can be sought from section 106 (s106) contributions and the community infrastructure levy (CIL) in order to provide ease of access to facilities across the district.

## Background

3. The leisure and sports facilities study covers the period up to 2029 and is required to ensure the effective delivery of leisure services across the Vale of White Horse district. It seeks to inform development by ensuring that there is a strategic network of leisure facilities in place to cater for the needs of the current and future population. As well as helping to meet the requirements of the Vale Council's corporate plan, the study also provides the evidence base for relevant planning policies contained within the local plan, giving guidance on the phasing of leisure facilities to meet new growth and the priorities for other investment. The final report will be published on the Vale Council's website and form part of the evidence base for the local plan.
4. Due to lack of capacity for this piece of work within the Vale Council, officers commissioned leisure consultants, Nortoft, to produce a leisure and sports facilities study for the Vale. Officers oversaw the consultants throughout the process and are satisfied with the final report.
5. The study analyses the key facilities used by the community for sport and physical activity, with the exception of outdoor grass playing pitches, outdoor tennis courts and multi-use games areas (MUGAs). Currently, Sport England is reviewing its guidance for playing pitch strategies. Once these recommendations are available, a further piece of work will be undertaken into playing pitch, outdoor tennis and MUGA requirements up to 2029. In lieu of this updated guidance from Sport England, the consultants have used the standards adopted by the Vale Council in 2009, which are shown in the tables in this report.
6. The key factors influencing this study are the proposed major housing growth planned around Didcot, Wantage / Grove and Faringdon, together with other smaller areas of growth scattered across the district, and the need to:
  - identify the additional sport facilities that will be required in order to cater for the increase in population
  - develop a local plan in line with the 2012 National Planning Policy framework
  - make effective use of mechanisms to lever funds from developers
  - consider trends in participation in sport and physical activity

- deal with the age and condition of some of the existing facilities.

## Summary of content

- The study uses information taken from various Vale Council documents, including:
  - corporate plan – Vision for the Vale (2012-2016)
  - community strategy (2008-2016)
  - supplementary planning document (SPD) – open space, sport and recreation future provisions (2008)
  - former airfield west of Grove development principles and guidelines – SPD (2006)
  - joint Didcot infrastructure delivery plan live document (2011)
  - Vale of White Horse open space, sport and recreation provision strategy background report (2009).
- The consultants reviewed the context of the district and other national, regional and local strategies and priorities for sport and facility development, and undertook an analysis of current participation levels in sport and physical activity.
- The needs assessment for each sports facility type comprised of a number of elements including:
  - theoretical demand for facilities based on various modelling tools
  - consultation responses
  - issues associated with facility accessibility and quality
  - anticipated population forecasts
  - national governing body of sport strategic requirements.
- To inform these assessments, the consultants used information from:
  - Sport England’s facility planning model (FPM) runs for the district - this provides an up-to-date baseline position of the adequacy of the sports facilities supply in relation to sports halls, swimming pools and artificial grass pitches
  - Sport England’s sports facilities calculator to help quantify how much additional demand for the key community sports facilities is generated as a result of new growth linked to specific development locations
  - Nortoft’s calculator, which forecasts future need for each facility type based upon both changes in population size and the anticipated growth in participation in sport and physical activity
  - updates to requirements for sports facilities to 2029 using the Vale Council’s adopted standards
  - a review of some of the funding applications for sports facility improvements recently made and some other club/site-specific issues known to the Vale Council.
- One key output of this work has been the review of the relevant planning standards from those adopted in the open space, sport and recreation future provision SPD (2008). The revised quantity and accessibility standards are summarised in figure one on page 8 of the executive summary report (attached as appendix A – page 11).

12. The study sets out the Vale Council's priorities for sport and recreation provision and identifies, amongst other things, quantitative and qualitative deficiencies in facilities provided in the district, as detailed in figure two on page 9 of the executive summary report (attached as appendix A).

## **CONSULTATION PROCESS**

13. Following an individual cabinet member decision to authorise consultation on the draft study, officers carried out a four week consultation period that finished on 17 December 2012. Officers analysed the consultation responses and reflected these by making appropriate changes to the study. The consultation response summary document is attached to this report as appendix B (page 22).

14. The Vale Council's scrutiny committee reviewed the draft study at its meeting held on 24 May 2013. Below is a summary of the comments raised by scrutiny committee, and any actions that have been, or will be, taken in response to these comments:

- agreement with officers' proposal that the name of the document should be changed from the leisure and sports facilities strategy to the leisure and sports facilities study – the name of the document will be changed to reflect this
- timescales for investment should be detailed in the table shown in figure two of the executive summary - timescales will be added to the table and will also be added in the study
- explanation needed for acronyms within the study, particularly in the consultation response document – explanation will be added to clarify the acronyms used in the consultation response document
- the study will need to be reviewed as changes are made to joint-use facilities as schools become academies – see paragraph 15 of this report, which will be reflected in the study
- the study's recommendations should be reviewed in the light of the Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan – see paragraph 15 of this report, which will be reflected in the study
- local plan evidence in relation to leisure and sports facilities should be reviewed - see paragraph 15 of this report, which will be reflected in the study.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

15. Officers will carry out an interim review of the study in 2015 to take account of any changes in housing growth figures, decisions on future indoor sports facilities in Wantage/Grove and to take account of the recommendations in the playing pitch strategy, multi-use games area (MUGA) and tennis court reviews. This will also allow for any amendments to be made following further consultation on the local plan and any neighbourhood plans that are being developed, as well as to review the current position of the Vale Council's joint use leisure facilities as academy schools become more established. Officers will carry out a full review in 2018.

## **Options**

16. The leisure and sports facilities study is required as an evidence base for the local plan. Cabinet could decide not to adopt the study, however, the existing evidence base on sports and leisure requirements is out of date and this would leave the Vale Council in a weak position when negotiating future land requirements and developer contributions for s106 agreements / CIL.

## **Financial implications**

17. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However, there are potential future implications arising from the contributions received and the pressure on facilities. The study prioritises future leisure requirements and developer contributions for s106 agreements and CIL contributions towards these. However, this does not mean that the Vale Council will take responsibility for more types of facilities than it has in the past. Neither should it be assumed that the Vale Council will automatically make additional funds available to assist other bodies to provide new or improved facilities.

## **Legal implications**

18. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **Risks**

19. The study is required in order to provide evidence for the need for leisure and sports facility projects to be funded from s106 and CIL contributions. Without an up to date evidence base, there is the potential for developers to dispute the provision of such funding. Not securing this funding would result in the district missing out on the opportunity to improve its provision of leisure facilities and not maximising the opportunity to secure external funding.
20. There is no guarantee when s106 / CIL funding for identified leisure facility projects will be available, as the monies are likely to be released on the completion of a specified number of houses. Careful communication will be required with local organisations in order to ensure that draft timescales are understood and reviewed as appropriate.
21. The study has also alerted town and parish councils and local sports clubs to needs and deficiencies in the facilities that they provide and this may lead to pressure on the Vale Council to make resources available (through the capital community grants scheme and the capital programme) to help improve provision.
22. There is no guarantee that any of these projects will take place and there is no commitment from the Vale Council to fund projects directly.

## **Other implications**

23. A press release will be issued announcing the adoption of the study and a copy of the document will be available on the Vale Council's website. Town and parish councils will be alerted to the finalised study.

## **Conclusion**

24. The leisure and sports facilities study was created to provide the Vale Council with a list of leisure and sports facility priorities for which s106 / CIL contributions can be sought. All feedback from the consultation process was taken into account and incorporated into the study as appropriate. Officers recommend that cabinet adopts the leisure and sports facilities study and authorises the head of economy, leisure and property in consultation with the cabinet member for leisure to make any minor amendments to the study prior to its publication, which will reflect comments received from scrutiny committee. However, adopting the study does not mean that the Vale Council will take responsibility for more types of facilities than it has in the past. Neither should it be assumed that the Vale Council will automatically make additional funds available to assist other bodies to provide new or improved facilities.

## **Background papers**

- none