



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 31ST MARCH 2015

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF EXISTING OUTDOOR RECREATION AND LEISURE FACILITIES

REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek members views on a recent review of existing outdoor recreation and leisure facilities across the county borough prior to the report being considered by Cabinet.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 A formal review was recently completed of existing recreational facilities across the county borough by staff within the Community & Leisure Services division in conjunction with the Strategic and Development Plans Team within Planning & Regeneration. The document entitled "Review of Existing Outdoor Recreation & Leisure Facilities in Caerphilly County Borough" focused on the following elements:-
- Section 1 - Equipped Play Provision;
 - Section 2 - Sports Pitches;
 - Section 3 – Leisure Centres;
 - Section 4 – Allotments;
 - Section 5 - Amenity Green Space.
- 2.2 Members will be aware that Section 3 referring to Leisure Centres has already been subject to consideration by members in 2014. Following on from this, it is necessary to inform members of the remaining aspects of the report i.e. equipped play provision, sports pitch provision, allotments and amenity green space and to establish a way forward for a future long term leisure and recreation strategy.
- 2.3 The Authority has never benefited from a long-term strategy in relation to recreation facilities. Information from the review document will enable both members and officers to make informed decisions that will allow resources to be targeted efficiently, should they become available.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The use of recreational facilities aids delivery of the Corporate Improvement Objective Four and to the Single Integrated Plan. It also contributes to one of the main aims of the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 (LDP), which requires development "to contribute to improving public health, by promoting land use developments that contribute to healthy lifestyles and well-being".

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The review has given due regard to the health and spatial profiles of how the population of the borough, visitors and residents use the facilities.
- 4.2 The review is based on a range of factors, which include quality, accessibility, lifespan and assessment against national standards (where applicable). However, members should note that within each of these sections, listed in 2.1, there are indicators that are used to help analyse provision. Some of these indicators are by definition subjective. These indicators are condition, standard, drainage and usage. It is therefore advisable that when reading the report that the subjective nature of these indicators is taken into account when decisions are needed on future provision.
- 4.3 Weightings were applied to each of these factors, which result in an overall score and rank order for the existing facility mix.
- 4.4 The review discusses a range of conclusions based on the Adopted Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 (LDP) strategy areas:-
- Heads of the Valley Regeneration Area – **HOVRA**;
 - Northern Connections Corridor – **NCC**;
 - Southern Connections Corridor – **SCC**.

Equipped Play Provision

- 4.5 Equipped play provision includes playgrounds, Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs), wheeled play (skate parks), kick walls, youth shelters and outdoor gym provision. The review identified three key recommendations.
- 4.6 In the HOVRA, the review identified the need to improve provision north of Rhymney. Officers are currently in discussion with the local residents and tenants association to provide a new fixed play facility at Ty-Coch. In addition, members are asked to note recent investment in the facilities at both New Tredegar and Phillipstown.
- 4.7 In the NCC, the review identified the need to expand provision for older children within the Pontllanfraith area, in the SCC the same need was identified in the Bedwas area. This will ensure facilities are provided within areas where there are and will be a high population for older children in the future.
- 4.8 Given the high population in the SCC, there is a need to ensure that the condition of facilities is enhanced. As there is a greater demand on these facilities, it is important to ensure that they are also kept to a high standard.

Sports Pitches

- 4.9 In relation to the provision of sports fields, the review identified the need to improve the quality of provision in both the NCC and the SCC. In addition, the need to increase provision within the SCC is highlighted as a priority.
- 4.10 Facilities within more remote areas have often suffered from vandalism, due to their isolated location and as a result they have been temporarily removed from public use whilst repairs have been undertaken. The removal of facilities has impacted on residents' ability to participate in sporting activity.
- 4.11 Some sports pitches within the borough have been affected by poor standards of drainage, which affects both the ability of the pitch during the playing season and the standard of the playing surface.

- 4.12 The review highlighted the lack of provision of sports pitches in a number of areas. However, there are a number of facilities within schools, which are not accessible to members of the public. The review recommends that in order to cope with demand that an agreement is reached with individual school to open up these facilities to the wider community on evenings and weekends.

Allotments

- 4.13 In terms of allotment provision within the county borough, the review has two specific recommendations. Funding is targeted to bring redundant plots back into beneficial use to help reduce waiting lists. Members should note that officers, in conjunction with the relevant Allotment Federation, are working towards bringing plots back into beneficial use. Secondly, there is a need to increase allotment provision in the HOVRA and SCC and to improve the standard of provision in the NCC.

Amenity Green Space

- 4.14 In relation to public open space (POS), in more remote areas in the county borough links to amenity green space is vital and should be maintained. Both country and formal parks are an important asset to our citizens and should be maintained, to a high standard sufficient for high usage.
- 4.15 The review identified the need to maintain quality POS in the SCC, particularly in the Caerphilly basin, the Authority needs to ensure that any future windfall developments do not impede upon existing provision and future populations are well catered for.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no significant equalities implications associated with this report. This report sets out details of existing facilities and where future funding (if available) should be targeted. Any new provision within the county borough will be available for all sectors of the community and will be developed in accordance with all relevant Equalities and Welsh Language standards and statutory duties.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no immediate additional revenue budget financial implications from this report, although there will be a requirement to review the Outdoor Recreation & Facilities revenue budgets to ensure they best meet the needs objectives outlined in the report. This is likely to be extremely challenging in the context of reducing resources which in this service area, along with others, could equate to a 20% reduction in the revenue budget over the next 2/3 years.
- 6.2 The Budget Proposals 2015/2016 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/2016 reported to Cabinet and Council on 25th February included the Councils proposed capital programme for 2015 to 2018 and this included £30,000 per year for 3 years for sports pitch drainage to help address the issues identified in paragraph 4.11 of this report.
- 6.3 Any future developer contributions from Community Infrastructure Levy or Section 106 agreements will be channelled into identified gaps in existing provision to help meet the needs/requirements identified in the report.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 This report reflects the views of the listed consultees.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Members are asked to note the content of the report and to endorse conclusions arising from the review prior to the report being considered by Cabinet.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To ensure that the Authority has a strategic vision of its existing sport and leisure facilities and to make certain that any future funding is channelled into identified gaps in provision.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Acts.

Author: Mike Headington, Principal Officer: Outdoor Facilities & Bereavement Services

Consultees: Sandra Aspinall, Acting Deputy Chief Executive
Mark S. Williams, Head of Community & Leisure Services
Councillor David Poole, Cabinet Member for Community & Leisure Services
Derek Price, Parks & Outdoor Facilities Manager
David Thomas, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities & Welsh Language)
Councillor Tudor Davies, Chairman, Regeneration & Environment Scrutiny Committee
Gail Williams, Acting Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer
Rhian Kyte, Team Leader, Strategic & Development Planning
Councillor Liz Aldworth, Vice Chair, Regeneration & Environment Scrutiny Committee
Mike Eddy, Finance Manager
Stephen Harris, Interim Head of Corporate Finance

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Review of Existing Formal Recreation and Leisure Facilities in Caerphilly County Borough