



Stafford Borough Council

**Green Infrastructure,
Greenspace and Sport and
Recreation Provision Strategy**

June 2013

Green Infrastructure, Greenspace and Sport and Recreation Provision Strategy

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1: Background

The Planning Cascade

- 1.1 This strategy sets out how the Borough Council and its partners intend to ensure that there is adequate green infrastructure, greenspace and sport and recreation provision in the Borough over the next twenty years. It sits beneath a “planning cascade” of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Local Strategic Partnership’s Sustainable Communities Strategy, *Shaping Our Borough for the Future*, the Borough Council’s Corporate Plan, *Improving Stafford Borough*, and *The Plan for Stafford Borough*.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 1.2 The NPPF sets the national policy context for all development plans and strategies that relate to spatial planning and delivery in England. Its main thrust is to require planning authorities and, by extension, local authorities in general, to promote sustainable development in their areas. In the specific context of this strategy, its objectives include:
- Supporting a prosperous rural economy
 - Promoting sustainable transport
 - Promoting healthy communities
 - Protecting Green Belt land
 - Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding
 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 1.3 In order to deliver against these objectives, the NPPF requires councils:
- To adopt planning policies that support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development (and) promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local

sports venues (paragraph 28)

- To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs (paragraph 70)
- To base their planning policies on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision (paragraph 73)
- To protect and enhance public rights of way and access (and) seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails (paragraph 75)
- To plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land (paragraph 81)
- To take account of climate change over the longer term and manage risks through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure (paragraph 99)
- To set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure (paragraph 114)

Note: the NPPF defines **green infrastructure** as *a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities* and **open space** as *all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.*

Shaping Our Borough for the Future

1.4 The Local Strategic Partnership's overall aim is for the Borough:

- To have a vibrant, prosperous, sustainable economy and environment
- To be a Borough where all members of the community are safe and feel safe
- To have a protected and enhanced environment
- To be a Borough in which people feel included in society and live longer, healthier and more contented lives

Improving Stafford Borough

1.5 The Council's Corporate Plan has four broad priorities:

- **Prosperity:** a flourishing, thriving, successful Borough where we encourage and nurture economic growth and diversification
- **Clean, Green, Safe:** an attractive environment in which our community feels safe
- **Health and Wellbeing:** happy and healthy residents with an improved sense of wellbeing
- **Leading and Delivering:** a high performing Council that champions the needs and aspirations of its communities

The Plan for Stafford Borough

1.6 *The Plan for Stafford Borough* is based on a spatial vision for the Borough, that by 2031 will have:

- Retained and enhanced its high quality unique character made up of the County Town of Stafford, the market town of Stone and extensive rural area containing smaller towns and historic villages
- Provided high quality designed developments including recreation, open space and sport provision
- A range of housing types and tenures to meet the local needs of all communities and the ageing population, including affordable housing and provision for gypsies and travellers
- Reduced the need to travel, through the provision of increased services and facilities in key locations to sustain the surrounding rural areas
- Addressed issues of climate change, including a reduction in carbon emissions and flood risk with sensitively delivered renewable energy schemes
- Improved accessibility to services and facilities by providing safe, attractive and convenient sustainable connections from and to new developments
- Been protected, conserved and enhanced to prove an exceptionally high quality of environmental, historic and landscape character
- Community supported Neighbourhood Plans in place

Why Does Stafford Need this Strategy?

1.7 These policy and strategy documents set out the broad or “high level” policy context for this strategy. However, they do not set out what the Council will actually do in terms of green infrastructure, greenspace and sports and recreation provision, or where. Therefore it needs this secondary strategy, which reflects two detailed “evidence base” documents:

- A Green Infrastructure Strategy (November 2009)
- Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment and Strategy (March 2009, updated March 2013)

1.8 The diagram below summarises the key elements of the strategy.

Vision

What we want the Borough to be like

Stafford Borough will have a rich and well managed natural environment which is resilient to the effects of climate change, with more people enjoying the area as a place to live in, work and visit. Networks of high quality, accessible green spaces and sport and recreation provision will promote nature conservation, biodiversity, sustainability and provide enjoyable opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in a wide range of physical activities in order to promote physical and mental well-being, support regeneration and contribute significantly to making the Borough the area with the best quality of life in the West Midlands.



Our Strategic Goals

Our long term aspirations for what we want to achieve

Strategic Goal 1

A resilient and sustainable Borough with a high quality physical environment

Strategic Goal 2

A Borough with an excellent quality of life and active, involved communities



Our Strategic Priorities

What we're going to concentrate on doing

Enhancing biodiversity and harnessing the power of natural systems and processes

Improving and expanding the Borough's network of walking and cycling paths

Ensuring adequate greenspace provision

Ensuring adequate sport and recreation provision

Promoting and supporting community involvement

Maximising the outcomes from public investment

Learning from success

Rationalisation and reinvestment

2: Strategic Goals

- 2.1 The Strategic Goals set out long term aspirations for what the strategy is designed to deliver. So why are they important?

Strategic Goal 1 A resilient and sustainable Borough with a high quality physical environment

Resilience

- 2.2 Climate change is a major threat to the world's population and biodiversity, although its impacts in Britain are probably less than in many other countries. Nonetheless, from a global perspective there is a clear need to minimise the vulnerability of places, people and wildlife to the impacts of climate change, such as:

- Higher average temperatures and summer heat waves, increasing the number of heat-related deaths and instances of skin cancer and creating higher levels of ground-level ozone, resulting in more cardio-respiratory disease
- More storms and resulting floods, leading to property damage, economic disruption and possible more incidences of water-borne diseases
- Fewer cold-related deaths in winter, but with the corollary that bacteria may survive longer, leading to more widespread illness and disease
- Loss of habitats or species having to move to survive
- Loss of species – for example, beech trees may struggle to survive in drier conditions
- Changes to crop yields, threatening famine in some countries

Sustainability

- 2.3 Everything we eat, all our raw materials for buildings and manufacturing and most of our current energy comes ultimately from the earth

beneath our feet. As the world's population expands, we are using up these finite resources at an ever-increasing rate. Therefore we have progressively to make more and more use of renewable sources of energy such as solar, wind and wave power. We also have to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to try to reduce and ultimately reverse the impact of climate change and recycle as much as possible.

The Physical Environment

- 2.4 The conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including the quality, character and value of the landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and soil is an essential component in making somewhere an attractive place in which to live, work and play.

Strategic Goal 2 A Borough with an excellent quality of life and active, involved communities

Quality of Life

- 2.5 Stafford Borough offers a better quality of life than much of the West Midlands – better housing, lower unemployment, less deprivation. But it could be even better. If the Borough is to compete effectively and attract investment, it needs safe and attractive places to live in ways that respect the character of areas, promote health and wellbeing and reduce social inequalities.

Active Communities

- 14 People are living longer and the costs of caring for older people with debilitating illnesses is rising rapidly while the number of employed people generating the wealth to pay for their care is reducing. Many illnesses result from inactivity and it is a national policy imperative to encourage everyone to be more physically active.

Involved Communities

- 15 People care more for their environment if they are involved in helping to look after it and have a say in how it is managed and resources used. Resources spent on repairing vandalism and collecting litter do nothing to make Stafford Borough a better place in which to live – they simply prevent it getting worse.

3: Strategic Priorities

Priority 1: Harnessing Eco- system Services

3.1 The 2011 Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) states the government's view that the quality of the natural environment is in decline, highly fragmented and unable to respond to the pressures that will follow from climate change. The NEWP is based largely on the concept of "ecosystem services" and the benefits - such as food and water, fertile soils and clean air - that society gains from natural resources and functioning natural systems.

3.2 A good indication of the problem within the Borough is that it lost 37% of its Sites of Biological Importance between 1980 and 2006, the biggest casualty being over 50% of the wet grasslands. Therefore the Council's first strategic priority is **to enhance biodiversity and harness the power of natural systems and processes** to mitigate the effects of climate change.

3.3 The benefits of harnessing natural systems and processes include:

- Cleaning the air and water and removing particulates and pollutants that are harmful to human health
- Mitigating the impact of rainfall and flooding
- Reducing "heat island" effects in urban areas
- Promoting access to locally grown food
- Providing opportunities for open air recreation
- Reducing energy consumption in buildings and healthcare costs

Priority 2: Provision for Walking and Cycling

3.4 There is a growing consensus that climate change is driven primarily by greenhouse gases and therefore there is a need significantly to reduce carbon emissions. In addition, with major developments planned for the Borough, traffic congestion is likely to get worse and with it traffic-generated pollution. Fortunately, both Stafford town and Stone are reasonably compact and fairly flat towns so they lend themselves to walking and cycling, especially

along the rivers and canals. The walkway along the River Sow in Stafford town is excellent and well used; the walkway beside the Trent and Mersey Canal in the northern part of Stone is also very good but less well used. Therefore the second strategic priority is **to improve and expand the Borough's network of walking and cycling paths**. Through new developments, providing residents with the ability to access networks from home will help to boost physical and mental well-being as well as reduce pressure on sensitive nature conservation sites within the Borough, such as the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation. Four broad types of route are particularly desirable:

- Routes that link suburban areas with the urban fringe and town centres, separated from roads as much as possible
- Routes that go round the perimeter of towns and settlements and link to rights of way in the surrounding countryside, thereby creating "spiders' web" routes that residents and visitors can use for circular and other walks of different lengths
- Routes that link settlements to Sustrans national cycle routes 5 and 81
- Routes beside the rivers and canals in the Borough

**Priority 3:
Greenspace
Provision**

3.5 Accessible, high quality greenspaces have the potential to deliver significant quality of life benefits to Borough residents. They provide opportunities for enjoyable physical activity for people of all ages and abilities with clear individual and public health benefits. They also enhance amenity to a significant extent, provide opportunities for community events and social interaction, boost land values and therefore help attract investment. All of these things contribute significantly to making the Borough a more attractive place in which to live. Accordingly the Council's third strategic priority is to ensure **adequate greenspace provision**.

**Priority 4: Sport
and Recreation
Provision**

3.6 Sport England's "Value of Sport Monitor" highlights that participation in sport and recreation brings many benefits to both individuals and communities, including:

- Crime reduction and improved community safety
- Economic benefits from improvements in fitness and health and the regeneration of local communities
- Education and lifelong learning
- Psychological health and well-being

- Social capacity and cohesion

3.7 Accordingly the Council's fourth strategic priority is to ensure **adequate provision for sport and recreation**.

3.8 The most significant land use in terms of sport is pitches, especially grass ones because of the large area of land required and low carrying capacity. Generally speaking, over time the Borough should aim to develop a network of a limited number of strategic pitch sport sites each of which should have an artificial turf pitch, backed up by changing and social facilities for a community club, as its core facility.

3.9 The best locations for artificial turf pitches are generally on secondary school or further/higher education sites as this means they can be used during the day as well as on midweek evenings and at the weekend. These sites will allow the Borough Council to work with the Staffordshire Football Association, in particular, to foster the development of fewer but strong multi-team football clubs catering for players of all ages and both sexes. With artificial turf pitches, they will be able to function every night of the week as well as at the weekend and provide midweek training and coaching. The corollary of this is that there is little point in promoting and developing single grass pitch sites.

3.10 Locating community clubs on secondary school sites has three additional advantages:

- Most schools will have some grass pitches to complement the artificial turf one
- The schools' indoor facilities will make it possible for the community clubs to offer opportunities to participate in a range of sports
- Community club management should minimise the subsidies needed from the Borough Council or County Council

Priority 5: Community Involvement

3.11 There are several "Friends" groups in the Borough – including groups for Riverway, Victoria Park and Stafford Castle and the Ferndown and Astonfields Local Nature Reserves. However, Sport Stafford appears to have only a limited role and the Borough's Town and Parish Councils vary considerably in their effectiveness. In addition, there appear to be few amenity societies. However, the success of the Britain in Bloom campaign across the country, often driven by local community

groups, shows that local people care about their local environment. Therefore the Council's fifth strategic priority is **to promote and support community involvement**. It will probably be sensible initially to concentrate on working with a limited number of key groups that can have a Borough-wide role such as Sport Stafford and the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and then progressively foster further Borough-wide or local groups where they can serve a useful purpose and will have a clear role. The best opportunities probably relate to Local Nature Reserves and areas of publicly accessible woodland.

Priority 6: Using Resources Effectively 3.12

It is abundantly clear that for the next few years, at least, public resources – essentially people and funding - are going to be significantly more limited than a decade ago. At the same time, society's needs and expectations are rising. Therefore the Council's sixth strategic priority is to **maximise the outcomes from public investment**.

Priority 7: Learning from Success 3.13

Since the original open space, sport and recreation assessment, the Council has delivered two extremely successful and well used facilities – the third generation (3G) artificial turf pitch at Rowley Park and the "destination" play area in Victoria Park. They demonstrate clearly the potential benefits of concentrating resources on a limited number of high profile, high quality and high capacity sites. The Council needs to learn from such successes – in this case, how to accommodate high levels of demand for local football in a cost effective manner (grass pitches are the most highly subsidised of all publicly provided sports facilities on a per players basis) and how to provide stimulating play for children and teenagers. Therefore the seventh strategic priority is to **learn from success**.

3.14 Learning from success will be an ongoing process as the Council monitors the implementation of *The Plan for Stafford Borough* and this and its other spatial strategies.

Priority 8: Rationalisation and Reinvestment 3.15

Most of the investment in the Borough over the next two decades will be in the four Strategic Development Locations proposed in *The Plan for Stafford Borough*. However, there will also be a need for the Borough Council and its partners, particularly the Town and parish Councils, to ensure that existing open space, sport and recreation provision meets evolving local needs in ways that make the best possible use of the key resources of land, money and people. Therefore the Council's

final strategic priority is to **rationalise and reinvest** in existing spaces and facilities across the Borough.

4: Strategic Projects

Introduction

- 4.1 There are seven strategic projects that the Council will seek to deliver over the next 15-20 years:
- New strategic green infrastructure
 - A “core path” network of walking and cycling routes
 - An enhanced network of artificial turf pitches
 - Improved indoor sports provision
 - Destination play areas
 - Destination teenage area

Strategic Green Infrastructure

Penk and Sow Natural Parkland

- 4.2 The Penk and Sow Parkland to the south east of the town centre lies between Baswich and Forebridge. As it has a long perimeter in relation to its area and is surrounded by predominantly residential development it has the potential to be an attractive and highly accessible natural greenspace. In order to maximise its impact, the Council will draw up and deliver a masterplan for the area based on four main objectives:
- Providing better walking and cycling access from the surrounding communities to the park, together with routes through it to the town centre and the wider recreational network and therefore the countryside
 - Enhancing the park’s ability to mitigate downstream flooding
 - Enhancing biodiversity through the creation of wildflower meadows and appropriate management
 - Providing well signed sustainable access routes linking the area with local communities plus gateways and interpretation

Stafford Common Community Park

- 4.3 Stafford Common is clearly valued by the

communities around it and connects the residential areas of Tillington, Holmcroft and Parkside with the employment and industrial areas to the east. It is also used for grazing.

4.4 The Common provides an opportunity to create a community park for the northern half of the town and has the potential to divert some recreational demand from the nationally important and more sensitive Tillington and Doxey Marshes to the west. The Council and its partners (including the Commoners) will draw up and deliver a masterplan for the Park based on:

- De-culverting the Sandyford Brook to enhance biodiversity, landscape value and flood resilience
- Creating gateways to the Common and providing interpretation at the entrances from residential areas
- Involving residents that already use and value the Common
- Promoting the park and walking and cycling routes through it south to the town centre and north to the wider recreational network and nearby countryside
- Managing the park in a way that will promote biodiversity while also allowing grazing to continue

Stone Canal and Riverside Park

4.5 Stone and Walton sit on either side of the floodplain of the River Trent and the Trent and Mersey Canal, including three local nature reserves – Goodall Meadow, Crown Meadow and Southern Meadow (known collectively as Stone Meadows). While access to the canal towpath is generally good, access to the river is much less so. Therefore the Council will draw up and implement a masterplan for the park in association with Stone Town Council, the Friends of Stone Meadows and landowners within the park. The objectives of this masterplan will be:

- To improve access to the floodplain in order to provide local residents with a natural greenspace of strategic significance
- To work with landowners to enhance biodiversity through changes to land management
- To create a series of walking and cycling paths to and within the park
- To provide signage and interpretation

A Core Path Network

4.6 The Borough already has a number of good cycling routes and other sustainable transport corridors,

including National Cycle Network Routes 5 and 55 and the Way for the Millennium. There is a need to develop them into a network of routes that will allow Borough residents to commute to work or school, between settlements and access strategic greenspaces and the wider countryside.

Primary routes between and through settlements

4.7 The main priorities are to develop well signed, safe routes that:

- Link Stafford to Stone (approximately 8 miles, ideally along the Trent and Mersey Canal for at least some of its length)
- Link Stone north to Stoke-on-Trent (approximately 8 miles, ideally also along the Trent and Mersey Canal)
- Link both Stafford to Eccleshall (approximately 7 miles, possibly along the River Sow) and Stone to Eccleshall (approximately 6 miles).

Secondary Routes

4.8 The County Council has suggested a series of secondary routes throughout the Borough which take advantage of disused railway lines and other opportunities to create fairly level routes. However, there are two obvious gaps in the County's plans – circular routes around Stafford and Stone that also link to path networks within them. This will then create "spider's webs" of paths that residents of both towns can use to enjoy walks of whatever length they wish, with the ability to return to their starting point without retracing their steps. Within the towns, these webs should link local and strategic greenspaces together as much as possible and also provide signed links to the wider countryside and the rights of way network. Through new developments, providing residents with the ability to access networks from home will reduce pressure on sensitive nature conservation sites within the Borough, such as the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation.

The Rights of Way Network

4.9 Like other areas, the Borough has a network of rights of way across much of the rural area. However, it is often poorly signed and in poor repair. Therefore the Borough Council will encourage the County Council to concentrate on designating, upgrading, signing and then maintaining a network of "core paths".

An Enhanced Network of Artificial Turf Pitches

4.10 The Borough currently has four artificial turf pitches (ATPs). Three – at Stone Hockey Club, Alleyne's School and Staffordshire University at Beaconside - are sand-based (often referred to as 2G, or second generation) and designed primarily for hockey. The fourth – at Rowley Park – has a third generation or 3G (rubber crumb-dressed) surface designed for football. Each of the 2G pitches has some spare capacity at peak times – especially on Sundays - while the 3G one does not.

4.11 There is a clear need for more 3G pitches designed for football and to a lesser extent for rugby. There are four main reasons for this:

- **First**, climate change means that grass pitches are becoming saturated and unplayable more often, leading particularly to significant backlogs in football and rugby fixtures by the end of the winter season. ATPs make it possible to overcome this problem. 3G surfaces are suitable for football and rugby: Saracens in Barnet Copthall, London, is the first professional rugby union club to have an artificial turf pitch at its home stadium, while Twickenham, the home of English rugby, has a "semi-artificial" pitch. The Staffordshire Football Association has identified floodlit third generation ATPs as a key priority for football in the Borough and the Staffordshire Rugby Union Club Facility Development Strategy also highlights a need for third generation pitches.
- **Second**, grass football and rugby pitches make poor use of land. If grass pitches did not exist, no sensible person would consider inventing a facility that could be used for only 3-4 hours of use a week and lie idle the rest of the time. Certainly, land used for grass pitches often performs an important amenity function in terms of providing open-ness in densely developed areas and opportunities for informal activities such as kickabouts, but there is no need for most such sites to be large enough to accommodate one or more pitches. The lack of trees and changes in level also mean that they are pretty uninspiring as green spaces. Looking to the future, ATPs will facilitate not only higher levels of participation in football and rugby overall, but lower levels of participation at the weekend. This will reduce the peaking of demand at the weekend and may reduce the total number of pitches required and therefore

help to make the best use of land. In the next decade or so, however, this will require a significant increase in ATP provision.

- **Third**, grass pitches are the most highly subsidised of all publicly-funded sports facilities. Sport England has published figures that indicate that the life cycle cost of adult football pitches is about £110 per hour of use if loan funding of the capital cost is excluded and £150 if it is included. These figures are based on an average of four hours of use per week for 35 weeks per year. For 3G pitches these costs are typically about £20 and £60 respectively, based on an average of 35 hours of use per week for 45 weeks per year. As these costs exclude income, and most councils charge more for artificial turf pitches than grass ones, the advantages of artificial surfaces are too important to ignore.
- **Finally**, the Borough has eight times as many football teams as hockey ones, but three of the existing ATPs are designed for hockey and only one is suitable for football matches. In addition, rugby training areas across the Borough are badly overplayed.

4.12 The 3G pitch at Rowley Park is already the “home” ground for a football team playing in the West Midlands League. Progressively more and more teams – especially mini and youth ones and teams playing in less competitive local leagues – are likely also to want to play on 3G surfaces. In the long term it is likely that most football will be played on 3G pitches because of the huge advantages they offer to both players and pitch providers:

- For players, they offer a consistently high quality playing surface, are playable in almost all weather conditions and, in theory at least, for 24 hours a day. This means that teams can play and practice on the same pitches and very few matches or training sessions have to be cancelled.
- For providers, although expensive to provide, they have similar annual maintenance costs to grass pitches but generate significantly more income.

4.13 The change to most football being played on artificial surfaces will not happen overnight, but will almost certainly gather momentum over the next decade.

- 4.14 As for hockey, the Staffordshire Hockey Association – and for that matter the two Stafford-based Hockey Clubs – believe there is also a need for at least one more 2G pitch in the Stafford town area for hockey. Their rationale is that the existing 2G pitches cannot accommodate all of the peak period demand for matches and training. The Stafford Hockey Club and Stafford Ladies Hockey Club both believe they could field additional teams if they had access to an extra pitch. However, it would make much better use of expensive pitches if hockey was willing to play more matches on Sundays, when the 2G pitches at Beaconside (managed jointly by the Council and Staffordshire University) and Alleyne’s School in Stone have significant spare capacity.
- 4.15 Within the next decade the Borough is likely to need at least ten full size ATPs: six or seven for football and at least the present three for hockey - and possibly one more when the proposed Strategic Development Locations are built out. In addition, at least one of the football ATPs should be designed so as to be suitable for contact rugby. Longer term, the Council should plan on the basis of something like ten ATPs for football, three or four for hockey and two for rugby.
- 4.16 The optimum location for ATPs is on education sites as this allows them to be used for educational purposes during the day, when community demand is minimal, and by the community in the evenings and at the weekend. Therefore there should also be some form of clubhouse suitable for community teams – ideally, each ATP should be the base for a community club. In *Creating a Sporting Habit for Life* (DCMS, 2012) the Government has given a commitment that:

Every secondary school in England will be offered a community sport club on its site and will have a direct link to one or more of the sports’ governing bodies. Through their Whole Sport Plans, the governing bodies will have to demonstrate the steps they will take to improve the transition from school to community clubs and County Sports Partnerships will be given new resources to create effective local links between schools and sport in the community.

- 4.17 It is not necessary for all ATPs to be full size. The 60 x 40 m ATP at the Bishop Lonsdale School in Eccleshall is a valuable local facility and can accommodate football training by teams of all ages

and matches involving players up to U12 and U16 by agreement with local leagues. It will be desirable for there to be a similar facility in Gnosall, at least.

4.18 Therefore the Council will:

- Work with local clubs, local leagues and the county governing bodies for football, hockey and rugby to draw up a plan that, when implemented, will provide the Borough with at least the ten ATPs suggested above, possibly supplemented by 60 x 40 m pitches. Working to a plan agreed with the county governing bodies should make it possible to access external funding, for example from the Football Foundation.
- Investigate, with the Staffordshire Football Association, ways of meeting football's desire for marked-out pitches in a range of sizes on artificial surfaces. For example, it will be possible to use 60 x 40 m 3G pitches for all football up to and including U12. In addition, if local leagues agree that teams up to and including U16 should play 9 v 9 matches, they will be suitable for teams in this age group as well.
- Seek to ensure that as many of the secondary schools in the Borough as possible – including any new school that may be needed in one of Stafford Strategic Development Locations - have at least one floodlit ATP together with changing and social accommodation suitable for community users. Most of these pitches should have a third generation surface.
- Investigate the potential for an additional ATP, designed for both football and contact rugby, to be shared by the University and Weston Road High School. This will also provide an accessible ATP on the eastern edge of Stafford town with good road links to some of the villages in the eastern part of the Borough.
- Require developers to contribute to the provision of additional ATPs through the Community Infrastructure levy

Improved Indoor Sports Provision

4.19

The Borough currently has nine sports halls and two public 25 m pools (at the Stafford Leisure Centre and Alleyne's School in Stone). It also has seven school and commercial pools with some degree of community use. However, the overall contribution of these other pools to meeting local demand is very limited indeed and can be ignored for planning purposes.

- 4.20 The only settlements in the Borough large enough to have a 25 m pool are Stafford and Stone.

Stafford

- 4.21 The Stafford Leisure Centre pools are used pretty much to capacity so there is likely to be a need for an additional pool when the proposed Strategic Development Locations around the town are built out. There will then also be a need for an additional sports hall and for obvious reasons it will be sensible to co-locate it with any new pool. There are two obvious locations:

- At any new school or, if no new school will be required, a multi-use community facility in the largest of the proposed Strategic Development Locations, ie to the North of Stafford
- At Walton High School, which has very limited indoor physical education facilities consisting of a small gymnasium only 21 x 12 m that dates from 1967 and a 16.7 x 7.4 m swimming pool. As it is close to the proposed East of Stafford Strategic Development Location and has extensive underused playing fields, this is a priority site for additional joint use provision. The Council has discussed the potential development of a sports hall and better pool with the school from time to time without success.

- 4.22 Until the County Council determines whether there will be a need for a new school in the Strategic Development Location to the North of Stafford, however, it is not possible to say which of these will be the better site. If there *is* a need for a new secondary school the Strategic Development Location will be better, for the simple reason that at least some of the required facilities for community use will inevitably be part of the school's physical education provision. If not, however, Walton High School will be.

Facilities Required

- 4.23 Whichever site is selected, any new sports hall and pool should be designed for joint school and community use. Ideally, therefore, as well as the facilities needed for the school's physical education work, they should include
- An additional small hall, approximately 12 x 12 m or, better, 12 x 18 m, suitable for activities such as martial arts, fencing, table tennis and

exercise to music (note, however, that if the school is to have two such halls there will be no need for an additional hall for community use)

- Larger and better equipped changing rooms than needed for purely school use, with lockers
- Reception and management staff accommodation
- Additional space for equipment storage
- Social facilities
- At least one meeting room
- A space that can be used by a playgroup, with its own toddlers' toilet provision

Operation and Management

4.24 The community use of school sports facilities has been a key element of public sports policy in the UK for over fifty years. However, there are many examples up and down the country where it does not work as well as it should. The shortcomings generally relate to:

- Limited availability of facilities at the weekend and during school holidays
- High costs of community use outwith core hours, especially at schools procured through public private partnerships
- Difficulties in providing cost-effective staffing for community use
- Concerns relating to pupil safety when school facilities are available for public use during the school day, for example by shift workers, unemployed or retired people
- Schools being unrealistic in relation to their needs and over-protective of their facilities
- Unclear lines of responsibility for accidental and other damage, whether from abuse or fair wear and tear
- Lack of clarity over the allocation of operating costs to school and community use
- School facilities being operated in a way that takes no account of the wider context of local authority provision

4.25 These problems are not insurmountable, however. The best way to overcome them is for the sports facilities to be physically separate from the school and managed by the Borough Council's leisure management contractor. The school then becomes a guaranteed user for certain times of the day and year. In effect, the school should use the community's facilities on the school site, rather than the community use school's facilities. In addition, the building must be designed in such a way as to

allow simultaneous use by school groups and community users. This can best be achieved by having separate school and public entrances and school changing facilities that open directly into specific facilities such as the sports hall.

- 4.26 Sport England should be able to provide information on sites where joint use operates successfully. If not there is an excellent example in Chipping Norton in West Oxfordshire where a local leisure centre is located on a school site and managed by a contractor appointed by the District Council.

Stone

- 4.27 In Stone, the Borough Council is currently considering the possibility of a new leisure centre at Westbridge Park. This seems to be a good suggestion, although other aspects of the proposals have generated significant local opposition.

St Lawrence's Primary School, Gnosall

- 4.28 Outside Stone and Stafford, the only "community use" pool is at St Lawrence's Primary School in Gnosall. It is only 16.7 x 7.2 m, showing its age and requires upgrading.

Destination Teenage Areas

- 4.29 Most of the teenage facilities in the Borough are also limited in the range of facilities they offer. The success of the recently provided "destination play" facilities in Victoria Park suggests that there is much to be gained by providing a few large play facilities – not necessarily quite as large as that in Victoria Park - in locations which will be accessible to a significant number of children and their parents or carers. In order to ensure a good distribution of high quality teenage facilities the Council should provide them in the following locations:

In Stafford town:

- Meadow Road
- Rowley Park
- Victoria Park (existing, although the Council wishes to add a multi-court)
- Wildwood Park, where the Council is already committed to a £225,000 investment in youth and play facilities
- The East of Stafford Strategic Development Location
- The North of Stafford Strategic Development Location
- The West of Stafford Strategic Development

Location

In other parts of the Borough:

- Barlaston
- Westbridge Park, Stone

Strategic Projects

	Location	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
Strategic green infrastructure	Enhance the Penk and Sow Parkland as recommended in the Green Infrastructure Strategy, for example by providing links to surrounding communities and the recreational access network; increasing multi-functionality; and enhancing access for all members of the community * <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 12</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	Create the Stafford Common Community Park as recommended in the Green Infrastructure Strategy, for example by de-culverting of the Sandyford Brook; creating gateways and interpretation at entrances; and increasing biodiversity <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy pages 12-13</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	Create the Stone Canal and Riverside Park as recommended in the Green Infrastructure Strategy, for example by the creation of multi-user pathways, enhancing biodiversity and installing signage <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 23</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	

	Location	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
Core path network	Develop walking and cycling routes from Stafford to Stone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stone to Stoke-on-Trent • Stafford to Eccleshall • Stone to Eccleshall <i>See above, paragraphs 4.6 to 4.9</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	Create a “spider’s web” network of paths for Stafford and Stone consisting of circular routes around the towns linking inwards to residential and employment areas and outwards to the wider countryside <i>See above paragraphs 4.6 to 4.9</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	With the County Council, designate and develop an accessible and well signed network of “core paths” based on rights of way <i>See paragraphs 4.6 to 4.9 above, the Green Infrastructure Strategy p 8 and 15 and the Evidence Base paragraph 2.9</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	

	Location	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
ATP network	Develop a network of at least ten full size artificial turf pitches in Stafford and Stone and a 60 x 40 m 3G ATP in Gnosall <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 6.30-6.42 and paragraphs 11.70-11.71</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Indoor sports provision	Undertake a detailed feasibility study relating to the need for an additional pool and sports hall in Stafford <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 13.25-13.42 and 13.49-13.70</i>			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	With the County Council and Walton High School investigate the provision of joint use indoor sports facilities at the school <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 13.49-13.70</i>				☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Enhance indoor sports provision in Stone by replacing the Westbridge Park Fitness Centre <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 13.49-13.70</i>				☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Encourage the County Council to upgrade the St Lawrence's PS pool, Gnosall <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 13.49-13.70</i>				☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Location	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
Play areas	Develop a network of destination play areas <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 9.15-9.29</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Teenage Facilities	Develop a network of destination teenage facilities <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 16.20-16.25</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

5: Local Projects

Introduction

- 5.1 Local projects are designed to have an impact at parish or settlement level, although cumulatively they should have a significant Borough-wide impact, particularly on overall levels of sustainability. However, in the main they are designed to meet **existing needs** by tackling quantitative or qualitative deficiencies in provision at the local level. As a result they will normally require investment by the Borough Council and/or the relevant parish council, ideally supplement by external funding and, where possible, by means of planning obligations or funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- 5.2 Local projects will generally be of three main types:
- Projects designed to boost local sustainability
 - Projects designed to remedy current qualitative or quantitative deficiencies in provision
 - Rationalisation and reinvestment in existing provision
- 5.3 The various local projects are summarised below.

Local Projects: Boosting Sustainability

Settlement	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
Borough-wide	Tree Cover Increase tree cover within settlements to provide shade and enhance air quality <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy pages 16-18</i>	✓	✓				✓	✓	
	Increase the number of trees beside heavily trafficked routes (eg the M6, A34, A449, A513, A518) and in areas where air quality is poor <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy pages 16-18</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
	Sustainable Development Draw up guidelines for and provide advice to the Borough's Town and Parish Councils in relation to the enhancement of biodiversity in local greenspaces <i>See Evidence base paragraph 2.28</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
	Ensure that developers and other providers design and manage all greenspaces in ways that will maximise their biodiversity and wildlife potential and provide access and interpretation where appropriate to encourage responsible use	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓

Settlement	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	Require new developments to incorporate green roofs to the maximum extent possible and encourage the owners of flat roofed properties to provide green roofs when re-roofing. <i>See The Plan for Stafford Borough, Policy N2 and accompanying text</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
	Ensure that all new developments incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) and retro-fit them into existing developments where possible <i>See The Plan for Stafford Borough, Policy N2 and accompanying text</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
	Plant vegetation to shelter buildings from the prevailing wind and reduce their energy consumption <i>See The Plan for Stafford Borough, Policy N2 and accompanying text</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
	Design greenspaces in areas identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as liable to flooding in such a way as to provide flood storage <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy pages 20-21</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	

Settlement	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	<p>Friends Groups</p> <p>Foster the development of Friends Groups for those major greenspaces for which no such group currently exists</p> <p><i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy pages 28-29 and above paragraph 3.8</i></p>			✓		✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Walking and Cycling Routes</p> <p>Link rural settlements to the main towns along multi-user routes such as disused railway lines and canal corridors</p> <p><i>See above paragraph 4.8</i></p>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Create sustainable access routes to Cannock Chase</p> <p><i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy pages 8, 19</i></p>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Improve sustainable access routes to strategic greenspaces and historic and visitor attractions</p> <p><i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy pages 8, 12, 19, 20, 23, 26</i></p>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Link residential areas, employment centres and the wider countryside</p> <p><i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy pages 3, 7, 10, 12, 15, 16, 20, 21, 23, 25, 32</i></p>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Settlement	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	River and Canal Networks Buffer water networks to reduce grazing and run-off and erosion, protecting water quality from siltation and excess nitrate run-off <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy pages 6, 7</i>	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓
	Encourage drainage ditch management that maximises biodiversity and connectivity <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 6</i>	✓		✓					
	Increase and improve access to rivers and canals where practicable <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy pages 6, 7</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
	The Rural Landscape Relay and maintain hedge lines <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy pages 6, 10, 16</i>	✓		✓					
	Clear silted ponds <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 6</i>	✓							
	Create corridors alongside hedges through unmanaged field margins <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 6</i>	✓		✓					

Settlement	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	Encourage native woodland planting and/or biomass planting on low value agricultural soils <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 6</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
	Implement traditional woodland management regimes to restore the biodiverse character of woodland <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 25</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
	Management of developer-provided greenspaces and facilities Review the effectiveness of available mechanisms for the long term management and maintenance of spaces and facilities provided on-site by residential developers and draw up a new policy to provide guidance for developers <i>See Chapter 8 below</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Stafford Town	Walking and Cycling Routes Create networks of pedestrian and cycle routes linking housing and employment areas and the town centre, separated from vehicular traffic, wherever possible		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Settlement	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	<p>Tree Cover</p> <p>Provide street trees to provide shade, intercept rainfall and enhance air quality along road corridors leading the town centre and in the town centre itself</p> <p><i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy pages 2, 30</i></p>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Flood Storage Capacity</p> <p>Increase flood storage capacity in the areas identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as liable to flooding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West of Queensville Bridge • South of Doxey Road and west of Castle St • Car parks between Castletown and Broadfield • Employment areas to the west of Greyfriars Street and Gate Street • Common Road and Tollgate Drive industrial estates • Stafford Technology Park and University area • Land either side of Queensway • Land north of the A518 opposite Portal Road • East of Fairway and south of the River Penk <p><i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy pages 20-21</i></p>	✓					✓	✓	

Settlement	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	<p>Walking and Cycling Paths</p> <p>Create access routes that connect Rowley Park, Rising Brook and Highfields to the wider access network and the countryside to the east, including the Penk and Sow Natural Parklands</p> <p><i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 17</i></p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Promote the use of the Stafford Town Centre Riverside Walk and Cycleway as a sustainable transport route</p> <p><i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 18</i></p>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Link Wildwood Park to the Penk Valley by installing a bridge across the canal</p> <p><i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 19</i></p>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Create access to the Penk and Sow Natural Parklands from Silkmore Road and St Leonard's Avenue</p> <p><i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 16</i></p>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Settlement	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	<p>Enhance the main green corridors through the town for both people and wildlife:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Way for the Millennium/Castletown • Way for the Millennium/Doxey and Stafford Castle • Cycle route out of the north east of the town • Riverside Walk to the Penk and Sow Natural Parklands and out to the canal network <p><i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy pages 20-21</i></p>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	<p>Doxey and Tillington Marshlands</p> <p>Encourage the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to manage the land adjacent to the Doxey and Tillington marshlands in sympathy with the needs of the reserve</p> <p><i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 6</i></p>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Provide interpretation at entrances to natural greenspaces to explain their importance to biodiversity and encourage responsible use</p> <p><i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy pages 12, 14-17, 19</i></p>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Improve and maintain pathways in the Doxey and Tillington marshlands in a condition that encourages use in most areas but discourages the use of the more sensitive parts of the reserve</p> <p><i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 15</i></p>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	

Settlement	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	Manage areas to the west, south and east of Doxey close to the marshlands reserve in ways that will promote wildlife and reduce the number of people using the reserve <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 6</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	Buffer the water network to reduce siltation of the Doxey and Tillington marshlands caused by excessive soil loss upstream <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 6</i>	✓		✓			✓	✓	
	Protect and enhance hedge-lines and woodland in Doxey and the Stafford Castle area to maintain landscape character and connectivity for wildlife <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 16</i>	✓		✓			✓		
	Ministry of Defence Stafford Encourage the MoD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create areas for wildlife within the base • To retro-fit a sustainable urban drainage system, linked to a similar system in any new development of the base <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 16</i>	✓		✓			✓		

Settlement	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	<p>Kingston Pool Covert Local Nature Reserve</p> <p>Manage in ways that will maximise the wildlife potential of the site and provide access and interpretation to encourage responsible use</p> <p><i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 20</i></p>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Replant woodland and restore wet woodland to promote biodiversity and increase flood capacity</p> <p><i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 20</i></p>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Stafford Common</p> <p>Create sustainable transport routes that link Tillington, Holmcroft and Parkside to the employment areas to the east of the Common, the town centre and the wider cycle network</p> <p><i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 12</i></p>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	<p>De-culvert Sandyford Brook to increase biodiversity, landscape value and flood resilience</p> <p><i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 14</i></p>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
	<p>General</p> <p>Increase rainwater storage capability</p> <p><i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy pages 2, 7, 12, 14, 18, 20, 26, 30,</i></p>	✓			✓		✓	✓	

Settlement	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	Manage greenspaces in ways that will enhance biodiversity <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy pages 1-4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 15, 20, 21, 23, 25, 30-32</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	

Local Projects: Remedying Existing Deficiencies

Settlement	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
Borough-wide	Improve signage of the rights of way network <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy pages 4, 8, 16, 19, 23</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Green Gyms Create “green gyms” in accessible greenspaces with a significant nearby residential catchment (eg Rowley Park, Wildwood Park and Westbridge Park in Stone) <i>See Green Infrastructure Strategy page 19</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Provision in Key Service Villages	Barlaston Provide at least an additional 375 sq m of play provision for children and upgrade existing provision <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.4 to 19.11</i>			✓		✓			
	Provide at least one and ideally two floodlit multi-courts in different parts of the village <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.4 to 19.11</i>				✓	✓			
	Provide at least 500 sq m of teenage facilities <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.4 to 19.11</i>			✓	✓	✓			

Settlement	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	Eccleshall Upgrade the existing provision for children or provide better facilities on a more accessible site <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.12 to 19.21</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Provide at least 500 sq m of teenage facilities <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.12 to 19.21</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Encourage the Parish Council to work with other parish councils in the north-west planning area to identify the potential need for a bowling green <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.12 to 19.21</i>			✓	✓		✓		
	Gnosall Provide a floodlit 60 x 40 m 3G artificial turf pitch <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.22 to 19.27</i>				✓		✓	✓	
	Enhance the small greenspaces in the town (Barley Orchard, Manor Road and Sellman Street) <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.22 to 19.27</i>	✓		✓		✓			
	Encourage the Parish Council to investigate the potential demand for a tennis club <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.22 to 19.27</i>				✓	✓		✓	

Settlement	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	Encourage the Parish Council to work with other parish councils in the south-west planning area to identify the potential need for a bowling green <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.22 to 19.27</i>				✓	✓		✓	
	Great Haywood Encourage the Parish Council to investigate the potential demand for allotments <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.28 to 19.32</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
	Provide at least 850 sq m of children's play facilities <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.28 to 19.32</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Provide a floodlit multi-court <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.28 to 19.32</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Provide at least 375 sq m of facilities for teenagers <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.28 to 19.32</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Haughton Enhance the Jim Jarvis Recreation Ground, particularly in relation to visual amenity and biodiversity <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.33 to 19.36</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Settlement	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	Hixon Encourage the Parish Council to investigate the potential need for allotments <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.37 to 19.40</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
	Provide a second children's play area with an area of at least 600 sq m in the north eastern part of the village <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.37 to 19.40</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Advise the Parish Council on the acceptability of floodlighting for the multi-court off Church Lane <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.37 to 19.40</i>				✓	✓	✓		
	Little Haywood and Colwich Encourage the Parish Council to investigate the potential demand for allotments <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.41 to 19.45</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
	Encourage the Parish Councils to work with other parish councils to identify the potential need for a bowling green to serve the south-east planning area <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 20.41 to 20.45</i>			✓	✓			✓	
	Increase the size and play value of the play area off St Mary's Road <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.41 to 19.45</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	

Settlement	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	Provide a floodlit multi-court and not less than 350 sq m of teenage facilities on a suitable site, for example close to the village hall off Chilwell Avenue <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.41 to 19.45</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Tittensor Provide a ball court for teenagers <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.46 to 19.48</i>								
	Weston Provide at least 200 sq m of facilities for teenagers on a suitable site <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.49 to 19.52</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Woodseaves and High Offley Provide a floodlit multi-court <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.53 to 19.57</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Yarnfield Encourage the Parish Council to investigate the need for a small allotments site <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.58 to 19.61</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	

Settlement	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	Extend and enhance the Greenside children's play facilities (note: already in hand) <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.58 to 19.61</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Provide a floodlit multi-court and teenage facilities on the site of the former BT Training Centre (note: already in hand) <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 19.58 to 19.61</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	

Local Projects: Rationalisation and Re-investment

Settlement	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
Borough-wide	<p>Children's Play Provision</p> <p>As the Council develops the network of destination play areas, review play provision and seek to rationalise it in order to remove sites of very little play value and have fewer but larger sites with higher play value</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base Paragraphs 9.26-9.29</i></p>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<p>Cricket Pitches</p> <p>Encourage cricket clubs to provide artificial wickets in order to maximise opportunities for junior coaching and matches and allow all players to practice more</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraph 11.72</i></p>				✓	✓	✓	✓	

Settlement	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	<p>Football Pitches</p> <p>Consult with the Staffordshire Football Association and local football leagues in order to agree a realistic target for the extent to which the Council should aim to move local league football onto third generation pitches over the next ten years and therefore the number of 3G pitches it will need, and where, plus the number of grass pitches it will be necessary to retain, together with the number required in appropriate sizes for 5-a-side, 7-a-side, 9-a-side and 11-a-side matches.</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 11.3 to 11.10</i></p>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<p>Identify a limited number of grass pitch sites on which to develop multi-pitch complexes with a range of pitch sizes for players of different ages and enhance the facilities (eg drainage, pavilions) as necessary</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraph 11.73</i></p>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Foster the development of community football clubs by encouraging existing small and struggling clubs to merge</p> <p>See Evidence Base paragraph 11.73</p>				✓	✓	✓	✓	

Settlement	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	<p>Local Sports Clubs</p> <p>Help local sport clubs enhance their facilities as necessary, provided they have a clear development plan in place and their proposals are supported by the relevant sports governing body</p>				✓	✓	✓	✓	
Stafford	<p>Allotments</p> <p>Review the demand for allotments in Stafford town and consider rationalising provision onto fewer but better sites by disposing of those sites with low quality and value and using the capital receipts to invest in better sites</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 5.34-5.36</i></p>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Stafford and Eccleshall	<p>Rugby Pitches</p> <p>Help the Stafford and Eccleshall Rugby Clubs to find new sites</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraph 12174</i></p>				✓	✓	✓	✓	

6: Strategic Development Locations

- 6.1 Finally, projects in the proposed Strategic Development Locations are designed to meet the **additional needs** that will arise as they are built out. They reflect the recommendations in the *Green Infrastructure Strategy* and the provision standards set out in the updated *Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision Assessment*. Therefore it should be possible for the Council to require developers to meet a significant proportion of these needs through planning obligations.
- 6.2 The various projects in the Strategic Development Locations are summarised below.

Strategic Development Location	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
East of Stafford	Allotments Require developers to allocate and lay out at least 0.3 ha for allotments either within the Strategic Development Location or within easy walking distance of it <i>See Evidence Base Chapter 5 and paragraph 18.30</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	
	Footpaths and Cycleways Require developers to provide good pedestrian links from the Strategic Development Location to the Fairway Wetland and Kingston Pool Covert and also within the Covert		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Require developers to contribute to the upgrading of the footpath along the River Sow to the town centre to a surfaced cycleway		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Multi-functional greenspace Require developers to provide a network of fairly small linked greenspaces throughout the housing area with a total area of at least 2.4 ha with as many dwellings as possible adjoining a greenspace <i>See Evidence Base Chapter 12 and paragraphs 18.35-18.36</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Strategic Development Location	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	<p>Provision for Children and Teenagers</p> <p>Require contributions from developers in the northern half of the Strategic Development Location to upgrade the children's play facilities at Longhurst Drive or (preferably) Kensington Drive</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base Chapter 9 and paragraph 18.33</i></p>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Require developers in the southern and eastern part of the Strategic Development Location to provide on-site children's play facilities</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base Chapter 9 and paragraph 18.33</i></p>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<p>North of Stafford</p>	<p>Allotments</p> <p>Require developers to provide and lay out or fund not less than 1.5 ha of allotments</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base Chapter 5 and paragraph 18.3</i></p>			✓		✓	✓	✓	

Strategic Development Location	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and Reinvestment
	<p>Multi-functional Greenspace</p> <p>Require developers to lay out the area in between the two housing allocations as a destination park of at least 10 ha; this figure may include any playing fields that may be provided as part of any new school but only if they will be available for community use</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraph 18.11</i></p>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Require developers to create attractive, safe green corridors from the two housing areas to the east and west of the new destination park and then across Beaconside Road into the Common. They should also link north to the proposed local centre, any new schools and the wider countryside to the north.</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraph 18.11</i></p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<p>If there is a need for a new school within the Strategic development Location, ensure that the school playing fields incorporate a floodlit artificial turf pitch with a stand-alone changing pavilion and clubhouse intended for community use, so that it will be possible to create a new pitch sports club that will be able to operate without the need for a school janitor to be on duty</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 18.8 to 18.10</i></p>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Strategic Development Location	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	<p>Require developers to create and then implement a landscape-led masterplan for the housing areas with a network of secondary greenspaces, designed for informal activities such as kickabouts and natural play, linked by green corridors.</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 508, 510</i></p>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Require developers to ensure that as many dwellings as possible look out onto a greenspace</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 508, 510</i></p>			✓				✓	
	<p>Provision for Children and Teenagers</p> <p>Require developers to provide or fund a destination play area in the new park with an area of around 3,000 sq m plus smaller play facilities within the housing areas.</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 188-219, 482-506, 508, 511-512</i></p>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Strategic Development Location	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	<p>Require developers to make or fund provision for teenagers, ideally within the new destination park, containing at least a floodlit multi-court, a skateboard area and a shelter. The multi-court should be designed and located so that it can also be used by the any school provided as part of the Strategic Development Location. However, if it is on the school site it must be “open access” at all times.</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 18.7 and 18.11</i></p>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Indoor Sports Facilities</p> <p>Require developers to contribute to additional indoor sports facilities in any school located within the Strategic Development Location through a planning obligation. If the facilities are to be provided outwith the Strategic Development Location, require developers to contribute to their provision through the Community Infrastructure Levy.</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base Chapter 13 and paragraphs 18.14 to 18.17</i></p>				✓	✓	✓	✓	

Strategic Development Location	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	<p>Artificial Turf Pitch</p> <p>If there is to be a new school in the Strategic Development Location, ensure that it includes a floodlit artificial turf pitch, complemented by a clubhouse and changing accommodation for community users and require developers to part fund it.</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base Chapter 6 and paragraphs 18.4 to 18.5</i></p>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<p>Grass pitches</p> <p>Require developers laying out the destination park to ensure that grassed as areas will be suitable for use as pitches if required; this will require that the land is level and adequately drained to be used as playing fields.</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 18.8 to 18.10</i></p>				✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Tennis and Multi-courts</p> <p>Require developers to provide at least one open access floodlit multi-court. Ideally, it should be located close to the artificial turf pitch in any new secondary school.</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 18.12</i></p>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Strategic Development Location	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
West Of Stafford	Allotments Require developers to provide or fund at least one allotments site with an area of not less than 1.5 ha. <i>See Evidence Base paragraph 18.19</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
	Multi-functional Greenspace Require developers to include some greenspace provision within the eastern part of the Strategic Development Location, ideally at the heart of it <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 18.25 to 18.26</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Require developers to provide or fund a park of about 6 ha close to the centre of the main part of the Strategic Development Location as possible, with green corridors extending radially outwards to link to housing groups <i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 18.25 to 18.26</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Strategic Development Location	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	<p>Provision for Children and Teenagers</p> <p>Require developers to make on-site provision for children's play in the eastern part of the Strategic Development Location in the form of a natural play area, ideally at the heart of it</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 18.22</i></p>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Require developers to make appropriate provision for children's play in the main part of the Strategic Development Location. Ideally this should take the form of a "destination" play area in the central park suggested above</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 18.22</i></p>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Require developers to fund the enhancement of the existing teenage facilities at Castle View as this will then improve provision for teenagers living in Doxey as well as the Strategic Development Location.</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraph 18.28</i></p>								

Strategic Development Location	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	<p>Artificial Turf Pitches</p> <p>Require developers to contribute to new third generation artificial turf pitches</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraph 18.20</i></p>				✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Tennis and Multi-courts</p> <p>Require developers to provide at least at least one open access floodlit multi-court</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 18.27</i></p>				✓	✓	✓	✓	
Stone	<p>General</p> <p>Review the need for greenspace and sport and recreation provision in Stone shortly before the Strategic Development Location comes forward for development.</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraph 18.40</i></p>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Allotments</p> <p>Require developers to provide up to 0.2 ha of allotments if there is a shortfall in local provision when the Strategic Development Location comes forward for development</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraphs 18.41</i></p>			✓		✓	✓	✓	

Strategic Development Location	Project	Natural systems and processes	Walking and cycling paths	Greenspace provision	Sport and recreation provision	Community involvement	Maximising outcomes	Learning from success	Rationalisation and reinvestment
	<p>Multi-functional Greenspace</p> <p>Require developers to provide some amenity greenspace or, better, a small park with an area of about 2 ha on the western side of the Strategic Development Location with links into the surrounding countryside and towards the town.</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraph 18.48</i></p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Provision for Children and Teenagers</p> <p>Require developers to provide an equipped play area of at least 230 sq m, ideally as part of the small park suggested above.</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraph 18.44</i></p>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<p>Require developers to make a financial contribution to a destination play area in Westbridge Park, to include facilities for both children and teenagers.</p> <p><i>See Evidence Base paragraph 18.44</i></p>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

7: Delivery of the Strategy

Introduction

- 7.1 The Green Infrastructure Strategy and the updated Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment both identify the need for a number of projects at various scales across the Borough.
- 7.2 Delivery of these projects will inevitably require considerable resources. The main sources of finance to fund them are likely to be:
- Planning Obligations
 - Community Infrastructure Levy
 - External Funding
 - The Borough Council's own resources

Overview

- 7.3 As much as possible, the Council aims to deliver the strategic projects in or through the proposed Strategic Development Locations, secured by either planning conditions or planning obligations. Although the Council may introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule at some time in the future, its current thinking is that the level of funding secured through the CIL is likely to be limited to contributions from large developments of 2,000 to 2,500 dwellings. However, as there will be competing demands for limited CIL receipts, the sum available for open space, sport and recreation provision is likely to be modest.
- 7.4 Strategic projects are designed to deliver significant benefits to people and wildlife in either the whole of the Borough or significant parts of it. They therefore relate mainly to the development of high profile facilities at accessible locations. They are not necessarily linked to any specific development proposals in *The Plan for Stafford Borough*, although delivery will be easiest when they are as the Council should then be able to secure them through planning obligations. However, for those which are not, it will have to rely on other sources of funding.

Planning Obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy

- 7.5 Past government designed planning obligations to tackle the problem of planning authorities having to refuse planning applications because the infrastructure needed to support developers' proposals – for example, school places, water and sewerage, sport and recreation provision - was not in place and could not be afforded. They provided a means whereby developers would either provide or fund it.
- 7.6 From their introduction, the use of planning obligations has been subject to a number of tests designed to ensure they are fair and reasonable. However, they have not prevented some councils from abusing the system. One of the purposes of CIL is therefore to return planning obligations to their original fairly limited purpose of requiring developers to provide or fund only infrastructure that is directly related to a proposed development. CIL and planning obligations are therefore intended to be complementary:
- CIL is intended to fund the infrastructure needed to support the development of an area – what might be called “strategic infrastructure”
 - Planning obligations are used to make a specific planning application acceptable in planning terms, primarily through site-specific mitigation of the impacts of the proposed development
- 7.7 As part of this, with effect from either the introduction of a formally approved charging schedule or April 2014, whichever is the earlier, CIL Regulation 123 will prohibit Councils from seeking more than five obligations to any infrastructure that could be funded through CIL.
- 7.8 In relation to green infrastructure and sport and recreation provision the amount of infrastructure that the Council can reasonably require developers working in the SDLs to provide will sometimes not be sufficient to deliver worthwhile provision. For example, if it requires developers in the North of Stafford SDL – the largest of the proposed SDLs - to fund an artificial turf pitch, application of the quantity standard for ATPs will justify only about 0.6 of a pitch. Furthermore, if the Council seeks to secure the other 0.4 of a pitch from other developers it runs the risk of falling foul of the “no more than five obligations” rule, assuming – and this is a fairly big assumption - that they are willing to contribute to provision in the SDL
- 7.9 The practical implication of this for the Council is

that it will probably need to draw up a CIL charging schedule for “strategic” green infrastructure, greenspace and sport and recreation provision. Appendix A sets out the quantity standards derived in the accompanying Evidence Base and also the amount of each form of provision that the Council can reasonably require developers to provide in each of the SDLs. It suggests that the Council will have to rely on the CIL to deliver, or partly deliver, at least:

- The network of artificial turf pitches
- At least some of the proposed destination play areas and teenage facilities
- Indoor sports facilities

The Community Infrastructure Levy

- 7.10 The Community Infrastructure Levy is a locally based tax on development and intended to finance the infrastructure needed to increase the supply of housing, particularly in the south east of England. Local authorities can charge the levy on new developments in their area, provided they have a Charging Schedule in place which sets out the infrastructure required in the area, what it will cost and how the cost will be apportioned across different types of development. In addition, they must ensure that application of the levy will not make developments non-viable. Details of the charging schedule must be subject to both public consultation and public examination, usually by a planning inspector. However, councils are not required to charge the CIL if they do not want to do so.
- 7.11 Where a Neighbourhood Plan is in place – and the vision underpinning *The Plan for Stafford Borough* indicates that the Council wants to see this – 25% of CIL receipts has to be passed from the planning authority to the relevant parish or town council. They will then be able to it on whatever they see fit and not necessarily on local infrastructure. Several Neighbourhood Plans are already in the course of preparation in the Borough. In effect, local communities are to be bribed to accept development, although they may not get the infrastructure needed to support it.
- 7.12 CIL is therefore a bit of a mess. The original 2010 Regulations have already been amended three times and the vast majority of councils have yet to start using them. They have to calculate the amount of funding they need and then draw up a charging schedule designed to deliver necessary infrastructure to allow development to go ahead.

However, having gone through the process of drawing up a charging schedule and having it approved by an Inspector or other appropriate examiner as both justified and not likely to affect the viability of developments unacceptable, they will lose 25% of the receipts in areas where a Neighbourhood Plan is put in place. One way round this will be for councils and developers to agree that the latter will provide necessary infrastructure rather than pay the levy, but this is likely to work only in relation to single developments and be difficult to deliver effectively for developments that involve a number of developers and phased delivery over a lengthy period.

7.13 In passing, it is worth noting that all past attempts to tax development have failed and the government has indicated that it intends to undertake a wholesale review of the operation of CIL in 2015.

External Funding

7.14 There are a number of potential sources of external grant funding open to the Borough Council and its Town and Parish Council partners. They include:

- **Parks for People:** the Big Lottery Fund offers grants of up to £500,000 towards projects designed to regenerate public parks of national regional or local heritage value. The Heritage Lottery Fund also offers funding towards the restoration of historic parks and gardens.
- **Football Foundation Facilities Scheme:** this offers grants of up to £500,000 that will help to improve local facilities for football and other sports, designed to sustain or increase participation amongst people of all ages and abilities. The grants can help fund grass pitch improvements (including changing facilities), artificial turf pitches and floodlighting.
- **Football Foundation Build the Game Scheme:** this scheme offers grants of up to £100,000
- **Sport England Improvement Fund:** this can provide funding for medium-sized projects that will improve the quality and experience of sport. The funding of £45M over five years will be allocated in five rounds of £9M per year with a very short application period for each round. Grants will be between £150,000 and £500,000.
- **Sport England Inspired Facilities Fund:** this can provide funding for building modernisation,

floodlighting, outdoor sports surfaces, community club buildings and sports equipment. Community groups and town and parish councils can seek funding of between £20,000 and £50,000 and local authorities and schools for between £20,000 and £150,000.

- **Sport England Protecting Playing Fields Fund:** this scheme is designed to support the safeguarding or improvement of natural turf playing fields. It offers grants of up to £50,000 that come with fairly onerous conditions.
- **Governing Body Whole Sport Plan Grants:** Sport England has provided capital funding to a number of sports governing bodies for them to invest in local facilities that are high priorities in their Whole Sport Plans.

7.15 The Department for Communities publishes guidance on sources of funding available to community and voluntary organisations for green spaces entitled *Potential Funding for Community Green Spaces*.

7.16 Nearly all of the funding schemes change regularly and a number have limited “windows” in which the Council and its partners will be able to submit applications. For example, it was necessary to submit applications to the most recent round of Sport England’s Improvement Fund from 24 April to 29 May 2013, a period of only five weeks. The basic message for the Council is that it needs to have projects pretty much ready to go when the details of projects eligible for each round are announced.

The Council’s Own Resources

7.17 The Council’s capital and revenue budgets are coming under ever more pressure, although there are some signs of the government wishing to do more to promote investment in capital projects which may gather pace over the next year or so. At current interest rates, it can obviously borrow cheaply and so its priority should be projects that will not incur high revenue costs.

7.18 The Council also has significant holdings of land. Its “own resources” therefore also include any capital receipts it may be able to generate by selling off poorly used or unwanted assets. In terms of the National Planning Policy Framework, it is certainly possible to dispose of some grass pitches, for example, in order to fund the development of artificial ones as this will increase the overall

“playing capacity” in the Borough.

Development of a Charging Policy

- 7.19 A key element when drawing up a charging policy is to identify realistic charges for different forms of provision. The quantity standards in Appendix A provide one element of this by setting out the amount of provision per person that residential developers should provide or fund. The other key element is the unit cost of each different form of provision.
- 7.20 Sport England publishes broad capital and life cycle cost guidance on its website (www.sportengland.org). It updates the costs at intervals but the current capital cost guidance relates to the second quarter of 2012 so is approximately a year old. It covers:
- Artificial turf pitches
 - Athletics tracks
 - Bowling greens
 - Changing rooms/clubhouses/pavilions
 - Grandstands
 - Grass pitches for cricket, football and rugby
 - Indoor bowls centres
 - Indoor tennis centres
 - Multi-use games areas
 - Outdoor tennis courts
 - Skate parks
 - Sports halls
 - Swimming pools
- 7.21 The main advantage of using the Sport England figures when drawing up a charging schedule is that they are likely to be regarded as robust by Planning Inspectors. However, they have a few drawbacks:
- They do not allow for any regional variations in building costs
 - They include percentage add-ons for external works, professional and other fees and expenses (and the first year's maintenance for grass pitches) but it is not possible to disaggregate all of these costs if it is necessary to do so – for example, to get the cost for an artificial turf pitch that does not require any parking
 - The costs exclude a number of potentially significant items, such as ground levelling, long services connections and SUDS attenuation
 - Some of the costs seem abnormally high or low

8: Management and Maintenance

Introduction

8.1 The policies in *The Plan for Stafford Borough* require developers in the Strategic Development Locations to provide most forms of greenspace, sport and recreation provision on-site. However, the Plan says nothing about long term management and maintenance.

8.2 The “liveability” of a residential environment depends on many things, including its layout, the design of the dwellings, the quality of the landscaping, the behaviour of residents and visitors and how well owners maintain their properties. One of the most critical factors for the long term is the maintenance of common areas such as publicly accessible greenspaces and car parking areas and, in flatted developments, common entrances. How these common areas are managed determines the image of both the development itself and the wider area in which it is set. It is therefore a legitimate concern for the Council and perfectly reasonable for it to require developers to put in place effective arrangements for long term management and maintenances.

Possible Approaches

8.3 The main options open to the Council are:

- For the Council to adopt the common areas or facilities and the developers to pay a commuted sum to it to fund long term management and maintenance
- For the developers to appoint a factor or other agent to manage the maintenance and recover the costs from property owners
- For the Council to require that householders or other property owners create and fund a residents’ association to oversee the maintenance of the common areas

8.4 The first of these approaches is not sensible. Commuted maintenance sums last for only a limited period of time and the longer this is the higher

commuted sums will be and the more that developers will resist paying them. More seriously, when the commuted sums run out the Council, as the land owner, has to fund maintenance from its revenue budget and this tends to result in this budget being spread ever more thinly across more and more land. As a result, standards of maintenance inevitably fall.

8.5 The second approach also has drawbacks, not least that the Council and local property owners have little or no control over the quality of long term maintenance. There have also been very few instances of where factors appointed by developers have not been severely criticised by property owners.

8.6 The third approach has most to offer, provided that it can be done in a way that does not expose the Council to long term risks or costs. The way to do this is through the use of three standard planning conditions, covering:

- The quality of on-site greenspace and sport and recreation provision
- Short term management and maintenance
- Long term management and maintenance

Condition 1: The Quality of Greenspace and Outdoor Sport and Recreation Provision

Standard Conditions

8.7 The layout, design, specification and construction of the approved greenspaces and outdoor sports and recreation facilities shall comply in all respects with, or exceed, the quality standards adopted by the Council or such other standards as the Council, at its sole discretion, may approve in writing

Reason: to ensure that on-site greenspaces and sport and recreation facilities are designed, specified and constructed in accordance with best practice and fit for purpose

Condition 2: Short term Management and Maintenance

8.8 The developer shall maintain all of the common areas of the approved development for a period of at least twelve months (or such other period as the Council may specify in writing) from the date of conclusion of missives relating to the sale of the last dwelling within it, or occupation of the last dwelling for rent, and shall remain responsible for management and maintenance of the common areas until such time as the Council agrees in

writing that (a) they have been laid out, designed, specified, constructed and maintained to a satisfactory standard and (b) satisfactory arrangements complying with Standard Condition 3 are in place. The “common areas of the development” are defined as on-site greenspaces and/or sports facilities and other spaces, facilities, features or parts of the development that are not the exclusive property of any identifiable individual dwelling owner, such as communal parking areas, the common entrances to flatted developments and estate lighting.

Reason: to ensure that the common areas of the development are laid out, constructed and in an acceptable condition, and acceptable long term arrangements for their management and maintenance are in place, before the developer relinquishes responsibility for them.

Condition 3: Long Term Management and Maintenance

8.9 Before the conveyancing of the first dwelling for sale or occupation of the first dwelling for rent, whichever is the former, the developer shall put in place long term arrangements acceptable to the Council that will ensure the common areas of the development are managed and maintained in an appropriate manner.

Reason: In order to ensure adequate and appropriate long term maintenance of the common areas of the development.

Compliance with the Conditions

8.10 The best approach to compliance with Standard Conditions 2 and 3 will be for the management and maintenance of the common areas of a residential development to be the shared responsibility of the dwelling owners. However, the components of SUDS schemes, such as ponds and swales, will have to be adopted and thereafter maintained by the County Council. Making the common areas of development the responsibility of householders on a joint and several basis will best be achieved by:

- The preparation, by the developer, of a detailed management and maintenance specification for the common areas of the development for the consideration, and after any reasonable amendment that may be required, approval of the Council
- The incorporation, by the developer, of an identical clause or clauses in the title deeds for all of the properties in the development:

- (a) Requiring the various owners to form a Residents Association to manage, or appoint a Factor to manage, the necessary maintenance works to an agreed standard, which shall not be lower than the specification approved by the Council
- (b) Requiring the owners to contribute to the upkeep of the common areas of the development on an equitable basis
- (c) Granting the Council the right to select and appoint a maintenance contractor to undertake the maintenance to the approved specification if, in its opinion and acting reasonably, the arrangements made in accordance with (b) above have proved ineffective or have not been implemented as set out in the title deeds
- (d) Granting any maintenance contractor appointed by the Council in accordance with (c) above the right to recover the costs of maintenance from the dwelling owners, plus a reasonable percentage to cover any administrative costs incurred in recovering those costs

Notes

- This approach refers to owners rather than the tenants of any rented properties in order to ensure that appropriate maintenance payments are made even if a property is unoccupied.
- The Council should publish and revise as appropriate from time to time guidance on management and maintenance specifications in order to assist developers on the standards of maintenance it regards as acceptable and appropriate.

8.11 In addition, and in order for the Council to be satisfied that the developer has complied with Standard Condition 3, it should require the developer to ensure that any solicitor or other legal agent acting in relation to the sale of any of the approved dwellings, and prior to the sale of the first approved dwelling or occupation of the first approved dwelling for rent:

- Provides a draft copy of the proposed standard clause(s) relating to the management and maintenance of the common areas to be included in the title deeds for each property
- If necessary, incorporates any amendments to the proposed standard clauses relating to

management and maintenance of the common areas required by the Council, such amendments to be reasonable

- If necessary, provides a copy to the Council of the final draft clause(s) relating to management and maintenance of the common areas for its written approval
- Provides a written warranty to the Council that the approved standard clause(s) relating to management and maintenance of the common areas will be incorporated into the title deeds for each of the approved dwellings. This can be done either for each individual dwelling prior or, preferably, as a general undertaking relating to the development as a whole.

8.12 If the developer does not comply with these requirements, or such other arrangements as the Council may approve in writing prior to the sale of the first approved dwelling for sale, or occupation of the first dwelling for rent, the Council will seek an injunction preventing the sale or occupation of any of the dwellings, as appropriate, until such time as arrangements for long term management and maintenance that are acceptable to it are in place.

Adoption by the Council or other appropriate body

8.13 In exceptional circumstances, the Council may at its sole discretion agree to adopt on-site greenspaces and/or outdoor sport and recreation facilities designed, specified, laid out and constructed by developers if:

- The provision meets the appropriate quality standard(s) in all respects at the time of adoption (ie complies with Standard Conditions 1 and 2)
- The developer provides a commuted maintenance sum on or before the date of adoption of the space or facilities by the Council, sufficient to fund the management and maintenance for a period of 20 years
- The developer pays all of the legal costs relating to the transfer of the land or facilities to the Council

Other Approaches

8.14 The Council will be willing to consider, on their merits, other approaches developers may wish to propose in order to comply with its standard conditions. However, it will always require to be satisfied that any arrangements the developer may



propose will be at least as effective as those set out above and based on BS7370, Grounds Maintenance.

9: Further Work

9.1 While this strategy provides clear evidence of local for additional or better green infrastructure, greenspace or space and recreation provision, there will be a need for the Council to undertake some further work. This will include:

- The preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document to provide guidance to developers on how the Council will apply at least Policies C7 and N2 in *The Plan for Stafford Borough* and the provision standards set out in Appendix A below.
- A detailed assessment of the possible need for an additional 25 m pool and sports hall within Stafford, including the most appropriate location and mix of facilities and how best to fund them. It may be desirable to commission special runs of Sport England's Facilities Planning Model.
- A detailed assessment of how best to progress the Council's current proposals for the development of a new leisure centre in Stone and the replacement of the ageing Westbridge Park Fitness Centre.
- The preparation of a CIL Charging Schedule for open space, sport and recreation provision
- Seeking the advice of Sport England on examples of where joint provision on school sites has worked well, ideally where the school uses community facilities rather than the community using school ones, and using information on these projects in discussions with the County Council over the development of community facilities and community clubs on school sites.
- Working with local football leagues to establish the likely number of U7-U16 teams likely to play 5 v 5, 7 v 7 and 9 v 9 matches from season 2014-15 and therefore the number of marked

out pitches in various sizes likely to be required.

- Building the recommendations of this strategy into *The Plan for Stafford Borough*, in particular:
 - **Policy Stafford 1 – Stafford Town, Infrastructure**, and accompanying text
 - **Policy Stafford 2 – North of Stafford, Infrastructure**, and accompanying text
 - **Policy Stafford 3 – West of Stafford, Infrastructure**, and accompanying text
 - **Policy Stone 1 – Stone Town, Infrastructure**, and accompanying text
 - **Appendix D, Infrastructure**
 - **Appendix E, Performance Indicators and Targets**
 - **Appendix G, Local Space Standards**
 - Planning briefs and master plans for the proposed Strategic Development Locations

Appendix: Revised Quantity Standards

Introduction A1 This appendix summarises the recommended changes to the Quantity Standards set out in Appendix G to The Plan for Stafford Borough, Local Space Standards. It then applies the recommended standards to the proposed Strategic Development Locations.

Revised standards	Standard in <i>The Plan for Stafford Borough</i>	Recommended Revised Standard
Allotments		
Urban	4 sq m/person	3.5 sq m per person
Rural	1.6 sq m/person	1.6 sq m per person
Artificial Turf Pitches		
Borough-wide	0.53 sq m/person	0.6 sq m per person
Athletics		
No Standard	No standard	No standard
Bowling greens		
Borough-wide	0.18 sq m per person	0.16 sq m per person
Play Provision		
Borough-wide	0.4 sq m per person	0.45 sq m per person
Golf		
Borough-wide	1 hole to 1100 people	1 hole to 1100 people
Grass pitches		
Cricket	3.2 sq m per person	5.0 sq m per person
Mini-soccer	1.5 sq m per person	1.0 sq m per person
Junior football	2.4 sq m per person	2.6 sq m per person
Adult football	3.8 sq m per person	3.8 sq m per person
<i>Football sub-total</i>	<i>7.7 sq m per person</i>	<i>7.4 sq m per person</i>
Mini-rugby		0.4 sq m per person
Midi rugby		1.0 sq m per person
Adult rugby		1.4 sq m per person
<i>Rugby sub-total</i>	<i>2.4 sq m per person</i>	<i>2.8 sq m per person</i>
Total	13.3 sq m per person	14.6 sq m per person

Greenspace			
Amenity	16 sq m per person		
Parks and Gardens	1 sq m per person		
Urban total	17 sq m per person	15 sq m per person	
Rural all types	8.5 sq m per person	10 sq m per person	
Tennis and multi-courts			
Borough-wide	0.35 sq m per person	0.45 sq m per person	
Teenage Facilities			
Borough-wide	0.15 sq m per person		
Urban		0.3 sq m per person	
Rural		0.2 sq m per person	
Indoor Sports			
Sports halls	0.1 sq m per person	0.09 sq m per person	
Swimming pools	0.06 sq m per person	0.04 sq m per person	
Tennis courts	0.028 sq m per person	0.04 sq m per person	

Use of the Standards

- A2 Each of these standards is “stand-alone” – in other words, there is no double counting within them. Therefore the Borough Council should apply each of them as appropriate to a proposed development. If it will be desirable to combine two or more types of provision into a single space (eg a multi-functional greenspace might also contain any combination of pitches, a play area, teenage facilities and tennis or multi-courts) the provision required by the separate application of each of the standards to the various component parts should be aggregated to determine the total provision required.

Allotments

- A3 The lower urban standard reflects a slight decline in the demand for allotments nationally plus the increase in the Borough’s population from 2001-2011.

Artificial Turf Pitches

- A4 The slightly higher standard reflects the need for a slightly more comprehensive network of ATPs. The standard relates only to the area of pitch required per person but any new pitches should be accompanied by suitable changing and social accommodation for community users.

Bowling Greens

- A5 The slightly lower standard for bowling greens reflects recent growth in the Borough’s population and decline in the popularity of bowls.

Play Provision

- A6 Although the total quantity standard is unchanged, in urban areas it now splits into destination play facilities (0.2 sq m per person) and local facilities (0.2 sq m per person). In rural areas the 0.4 sq m per person is appropriate for local provision.

Grass Pitches

- A6 The changes to the quantity standards reflect recent changes to participation in the pitch sports, the desirability of providing marked-out pitches for mini and youth football and rugby (reducing the number of adult pitches needed to accommodate them) and the Borough's population. In particular there are now more men's cricket and rugby teams than in 2009.
- A7 The standard relates only to the area of pitch required per person but any new pitches should be accompanied by suitable changing and social accommodation for community users.
- A8 As the Borough develops more third generation (3G) artificial turf pitches and they become used more and more for football training and matches it will be possible to reduce the quantity standard for football. In broad terms, each full size artificial turf pitch will reduce the number of adult football pitches required in the Borough. In broad terms, one ATP is equivalent to three or four grass pitches in terms of its capacity to accommodate matches. Accordingly, each ATP that is provided will make it possible to reduce the quantity standard for adult football pitches by approximately 0.15 sq m per person.
- A9 In general it will be better for the Council to agree an amount of provision with developers based on the composite quantity standard of 14.6 sq m per person and then decide how best to lay out the land to meet local needs rather than apply the sport-specific quantity standards. This will make it possible, for example, to create multi-pitch sites for a sport such as football or rugby which will be much better in sports development terms than a number of pitches for different sports.

Multi-functional Greenspace

- A10 The composite standard for multi-functional greenspace reflects a need for greater flexibility in the balance between different types of provision that the Borough Council can ask developers to

provide. The urban and rural standards also vary slightly from the earlier standards primarily as a result of changes to the Borough's population.

Tennis and multi-courts

A11 The higher standard reflects the desirability of a more extensive network of courts across the Borough than in 2009.

Teenage Facilities

A12 The revised higher standard reflects the success of the Borough Council's development of "destination" teenage facilities in Victoria Park and the desirability of providing a network of similar facilities, particularly in Stafford and Stone.

Indoor Sports Facilities

A13 The revised standards reflect the most recent Facilities Planning Analysis for sports halls and pools from Sport England and the success of the recently provided Baseline indoor tennis centre in the Borough.

A14 Each of the quantity standards relates to the total area of building and not only a specific sports facility. The area of sports facility "activity area" required by application of the quantity standards is given by dividing:

- The quantity standard for sports halls by 2
- The quantity standard for pools by 4
- The quantity standard for indoor tennis courts by 2

The Strategic Development Locations

A15 The table below applies the revised standards to the four proposed strategic development locations. This therefore identifies the quantity of provision that the Council can reasonably require developers in each of them to provide or fund.

	North of Stafford	West of Stafford	East of Stafford	West of Stone
Proposed dwellings	3,100	2,200	600	500
Average occupancy	2.33	2.33	2.33	2.33
Residents	7,223	5,126	1,398	1,165
Allotments (ha)	2.5	1.8	0.5	0.4
3G Artificial turf pitches (sq m)	4,335	3,075	840	700
3G Artificial turf pitches (pitches)	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.1

Local Play (sq m)	1,800	1,300	350	290
Destination play (sq m)	1,445	1,025	280	235
Grass pitches (ha)	10.6	7.5	2.0	1.7
Multi-functional greenspace (ha)	10.8	7.7	2.1	1.8
Tennis and multi-courts (sq m)	3,250	2,300	630	525
Teenagers – local (sq m)	1,445	1,025	280	233
Teenagers – destination (sq m))	720	515	140	120
Sports halls (sq m)	650	460	125	105
Swimming pools (sq m)	290	205	60	50
Indoor tennis courts (sq m)	290	205	60	50