

Draft Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sports Strategy 2012-2026

Executive Summary

The Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy has been developed over 2011 using best practice guidance from Sport England. It assesses current and future demand over the next 20 years and provides a robust framework for resource prioritisation and informed planning decisions.

The strategy has been developed through consultation with Sport England, National Governing Bodies of Sport, sports clubs, league associations, schools, universities, colleges and council employees. It has been informed by a review of the council's pavilions and reviewing our sports provision.

While there are some links with the City's Green Spaces Strategy, there are also a number of key differences; on supply and demand for sports facilities, producing a robust planning document and also demonstrating the need for developer contributions.

The number of outdoor areas used for sport and physical activity that are accessible to the public include; 116 playing pitches, 12 Synthetic Turf Pitches, 58 tennis courts and 14 Multi Use Games Areas. The playing pitches are used for a number of different sports including football, cricket, rugby and hockey.

The objectives of the strategy are:

1	To gather the best available supply and demand data on playing pitches and other outdoor sports facilities.
2	To assess the supply and demand data in line with available national guidance and identified good practice.
3	To ensure a good level of consultation with key parties throughout the development of the strategy.
4	To provide a robust evidence base, which can be used by a range of Council departments and other parties to help protect and improve the provision of playing pitches and other outdoor sports facilities.
5	To establish a clear prioritised list of actions which will help to maintain and increase participation levels in sport and physical activity within the City.
6	To establish clear prioritised infrastructure requirements including where new facilities are required and existing facilities should be enhanced, including ancillary facilities e.g. pavilions.
7	To identify and promote good practice regarding the provision, management and maintenance of playing pitches within the City.
8	To establish a process to ensure the regular review and update of the strategy and the information on which it is based.

These objectives support the Council's corporate plan outcome of Strong and Active Communities, helping to achieve the far reaching cross societal health, wellbeing and community benefits enabled by taking part in sport and physical activity.

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The strategy incorporates all sectors including local authority, education (both schools and universities), private sports grounds and develops its recommendations based on facilities that are accessible to the community.

One of the key conclusions is that there is currently a shortage of playing pitch provision that has secured community use; this is especially prevalent in cricket.

An additional conclusion highlights that the Council's sports pavilions have generally been identified as being poor quality and in need of investment.

Summary of key recommendations:

- Explore community use of key pitch facilities to address the current shortage of playing pitch provision with secured community use.
- Utilise and over-mark adult football pitches to address the shortfall of junior and mini pitch provision and seek to provide an additional two mini football pitches within the Barton Housing Scheme.
- Maintain the 'good' quality standard of sports pitches and outdoor sports facilities to ensure there is no reduction in their capacity.
- Develop a business case to improve the Council's pavilions.
- Review the levels of participation in bowls to ensure value for money of facilities.
- Explore a funded improvement and maintenance program for Oxford's Multi Use Games Areas, Tennis Courts and Athletics Track.
- Use the strategy as an evidence base to help set the Community Infrastructure Levy, which is a new means for assessing developer contributions.
- Use the strategy as an evidence base to seek external funding against sports projects.
- To ensure that Oxford continues its recent trend of increasing participation in sport and physical activity, it is important that the action plan is implemented and that the strategy is updated on an annual basis and refreshed every five years.

If you would like to read the full version of this strategy and provide feedback please visit:
www.oxford.gov.uk/consultation