

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 9TH NOVEMBER 2005

FACILITIES PLANNING MODEL FOR EAST AYRSHIRE

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of a summary of the findings of the Facilities Planning Model (FPM) which has been utilised by sportscotland to assist in establishing the priority needs for investment in sports facilities in East Ayrshire.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The FPM is a statistical tool used by sportscotland to assess the supply of, and likely demand for, sports facilities in a predetermined area. The Model is a prescriptive tool which prescribes an appropriate level of provision for a defined area in a way that reflects nationally determined expectations and policies. The level of provision required by the Model represents good practice and is based on what is actually happening in other parts of the country. The findings of the Model can be used to underpin sports facility investment strategies.
- 2.2 In short, the FPM distributes demand from the study area (East Ayrshire and, for some sports, a wider area) to facilities on the basis of catchment areas. It links people (demand) to facilities (supply) in terms of realistic travel patterns. It then identifies unmet demand and from this it estimates the number and size of facilities required at particular locations to meet the estimated level of demand. For this study population, estimates for 2011 were used. The main output from the Model is a series of tables and maps; this information is available for scrutiny if required. However, for the purposes of this report a summary of the main findings is presented.
- 2.3 The FPM was last run for East Ayrshire in 1998 and its findings helped to establish the three main priorities for investment in sports facilities. The priorities in 1998 were:-

1. New Swimming Pool for Cumnock

Progress - The new Visions facility opened to the public in 2004.

2. Competition Size Sports Hall for Kilmarnock.

Progress - New sports halls are included in the plans for new PPP schools in Kilmarnock and these will be available to the public.

3. New Sports Pitches for Kilmarnock and Stewarton

Progress - New pitches in Kilmarnock will be provided by housing developers at Altonhill (2 pitches) and Moorfield (1 pitch). In addition, synthetic grass pitches (SGP) are planned for the PPP schools in Kilmarnock.

Of the initial list the Stewarton sports pitches remain a high priority as no progress has been made in this area

3. **CONSIDERATIONS**

3.1 The FPM allows different scenarios to be examined to test how these would effect demand for facilities. Options tested in this run of the Model included access to school sports facilities; the effect of new facilities outside East Ayrshire; the effects of full community use of the new PPP sports facilities and options for the development of the Galleon Leisure Centre.

3.2 The key findings arising from the FPM are summarised below. The full report provided by sportscotland is available as a background paper to this report.

❖ Swimming

- The results confirm the importance of all five pools currently available for club and community use in East Ayrshire.
- There is no strong case for a swimming pool at any other location in East Ayrshire.
- The main issues for the existing pools are likely to be running costs and any refurbishment which may be necessary now or in the foreseeable future.

❖ Sports Halls

- Significant unmet demand for hall sports exists throughout East Ayrshire.
- All existing community sports halls should be maintained.

- Confirm community use of all proposed facilities in PPP project, promoting and monitoring use.

❖ Football Pitches

- The results suggest that there are sufficient pitches around East Ayrshire to cope with demand. In some settlements with more than one pitch, there may be scope for rationalisation.
- There is no obvious case for increased use of school or Junior Football Club pitches.
- The true balance between supply and demand, and future investment, programming and management priorities, can only be properly established by means of a playing fields strategy which would also consider areas of known high demand such as Stewarton and Mauchline.

❖ Rugby Pitches

- Existing clubs should be supported and developed; there should be enough pitches to cope with demand.
- Provision of the proposed 4th pitch for Kilmarnock RFC appears reasonable.
- There may be an opportunity to develop rugby activity at other settlements based on existing school pitches.

❖ Cricket Pitches

- The existing clubs should be supported and developed. Training requirements may include synthetic wickets and indoor practice facilities.

❖ Hockey Pitches

- With appropriate programming, the two new SGPs at the PPP schools in Kilmarnock should be able to meet all hockey demand in the north part of East Ayrshire.
- A new SGP at one of the secondary schools, probably in the Auchinleck/Cumnock area, is likely to be the best means of providing for hockey in the south although demand is much lower than in the north.

- 3.3 It should be noted that the FPM has not been calibrated to take into account any potential use of synthetic grass pitches for football matches, and does not therefore examine how demand for grass pitches might be affected by the provision of SGPs in Kilmarnock. Developing a sports pitch strategy for East Ayrshire would allow these issues to be addressed.
- 3.4 As a statistical Model, the FPM cannot take into account all local circumstances and therefore when priorities for investment are being analysed it is important to consider local need and expectations in tandem with the FPM findings. In terms of current localised issues the following additional factors would impact upon the prioritisation process:-
1. Most of our larger communities have access to a sports hall, however Stewarton does not.
 2. Growing communities such as Mauchline and Stewarton will require an additional range of facilities to meet the expectations of their residents.
 3. Community use of school sports facilities, including those at the new PPP developments, has the potential to ensure that most local sports facility needs are met. Full community use would be represented by access by the public for at least 40 hours per week of evening and weekend use with an element of 'pay and play' use by individuals rather than block booked club use.
 4. Opportunities to offer new facilities as part of the wider Regional Sports Facilities Programme by sportscotland should be developed with appropriate partners. Larger scale facilities can benefit both the local community, sports organisations and facilitate community regeneration. Sportscotland is keen to see Ayrshire-wide co-operation in identifying regional projects.
 5. Where facilities require upgrading or even replacement, this needs to be taken into account in the Council's Capital Programme planning. Leisure facilities require regular upgrading and refurbishment to ensure that they meet the needs of customers. For some facilities, replacement may be the best option as economic factors may dictate that it would be better to re-locate a range of new build facilities rather than continue to maintain and operate an outdated building.
 6. There may be strong local support for the provision of a particular facility even though the FPM does not indicate high levels of unmet demand. The FPM assumes that people are willing and able to travel within a facility's catchment area; this may not be the case.

The FPM assumes that much of the demand for athletics facilities in East Ayrshire is met by use of Dam Park in Ayr; however there would be strong demand for an athletics track in Kilmarnock and a new facility would allow athletics to grow and develop in the area. It may be seen as entirely appropriate for a town of Kilmarnock's size to have its own athletics track to meet local needs and this should be taken into account when prioritising new facility developments.

7. Any programme of investment should have sufficient flexibility to allow new opportunities to be exploited as they arise, for example, working in partnership with housing developers it may be possible to provide new facilities that exceed basic community needs but improve the overall stock of facilities.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications attached to this report.

5. LEGAL AUTHORITY/IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications attached to this report.

6. POLICY/COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Facility Planning Model provides information and analysis that can inform the Council's programmes for investment in sports facilities. The provision of sports and leisure facilities for community use supports several key priorities contained in the Community Plan and emerging Culture and Leisure Strategy.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The FPM has provided a detailed analysis of the supply and demand for sports facilities across East Ayrshire. Whilst there would seem to be few major facility deficits emerging from the Model's findings when this information is considered along with local circumstances, it is possible to identify priorities for consideration.

- 7.2 The key priorities are as follows:-

1. Additional sports pitch provision in Stewarton (at least two pitches are required at a single location).
2. Ensuring that the sports facilities included in the PPP Academies in Kilmarnock are open to full community use to address unmet demand in the north of East Ayrshire.

3. Provision of indoor sports facilities in Stewarton.
4. Development of community use of school indoor sports facilities and swimming pools across East Ayrshire.
5. Support for the Regional Sports Facility Programme in partnership with neighbouring Local Authorities and other partners.
6. Development of a sports pitch strategy for East Ayrshire to inform future investment and usage plans and support the delivery of the forthcoming Culture and Leisure Strategy.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

- i) note the summary of the findings of the Facilities Planning Model;
- ii) approve the priorities shown in 7.2 as the basis for future investment in sports facilities; and
- iii) otherwise note the content of this report.

William Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

WS/JAG/KH
24th October 2005

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. FPM Report - sportscotland 2005

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should contact John Griffiths, Head of Leisure Services on 01673 578179.

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