

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
RECREATION & LEISURE COMMITTEE
27 January 2021**

Officer: Gary Farmer – Head of Operations

PLAY PITCH QUALITY PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Purpose of the Report

To update members on the commissioning of Performance Quality Standard (PQS) testing on all our grassed playing surfaces following the Town Clerk's report on the Play Pitch Strategy presented to this Committee on 25th November 2020 and subsequent Minute reference 25/20.

Background

Shropshire Council's Play Pitch Strategy provides an assessment and recommendations of the following types of facilities:

- Football [including 3 G pitches
- Cricket
- Rugby Union
- Tennis Courts
- Netball
- Bowling Greens

As part of the process in developing the Strategy, consultants undertook a desktop and/or visual inspection of these sites. It was however evident from the results that there wasn't a consistent approach to the assessment. It was therefore recommended that we commission a Sports Surface Consultant to undertake a PQS on all our grass play surfaces.

The PQS is a recognised national standard developed by the Sports Turf Research Institute, the National Playing Fields Association and the Institute of Groundsmanship. The methods for testing is covered in the British Standards (BS7370:P3 and BS7044:P2. It has been adopted by Sport England as a basic quality standard for natural grass pitches and is recognised by the FA as the recommended minimum quality standard for the construction and maintenance of pitches which may be located at a variety of locations including club sites, parks and recreation grounds.

The test covers the following:

- Ground cover (desirable grass species)
- Presence of pests, diseases and weeds
- Grass rooting depth
- Thatch (partially decayed organic material) depth
- Stone content
- Infiltration rate (i.e. surface drainage rate)
- Gradient along and across the direction of play
- Surface evenness
- Surface hardness

- Traction
- Ball rebound resilience
- Ball roll

A competent professional has now been commissioned and will work closely with the Recreation and Formal Space Manager who will be able to provide background information on the complex and conflicting sporting demands at these facilities as well as an overview of current maintenance programmes within the staff resources and specialist turf machinery available.

The report will include:

- Performance Quality standards of ground conditions.
- Assessment of current drainage systems and proposed improvements
- Soil Testing
- Recommendations over specifications and service delivery improvements.

This process will not only provide a valuable assessment of pitch standards across the Council's estate, but will set required levels of maintenance in accordance with the needs of the actual facility rather than general perception. This will also inform any necessary amendments to the Play Pitch Strategy, the Shrewsbury Place Plan and the Council's long term sports development plan.

RECOMMENDED:

- i. **That the Report be noted;**
- ii. **That a further report to be presented to Committee once the survey work is completed;**