DRAFT SYNTHETIC SPORTSGROUNDS MANAGEMENT PLAN

ATTACHMENTS:	**1. IMPLICATIONS** **2. DRAFT SYNTHETIC SPORTSGROUNDS MANAGEMENT PLAN**
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	**MELANIE SMITH – COMMUNITY, CULTURE & LEISURE DIRECTOR**
AUTHOR:	**JULIE WHITFIELD – OPEN SPACE CO-ORDINATOR**
CITY STRATEGY LINK:	**1.3.1 ACCESSIBLE OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR THE COMMUNITY ARE PROVIDED**
MEETING DATE:	**11 DECEMBER 2017**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek Council's endorsement of the draft *Synthetic Sportsgrounds Management Plan* for consultation with neighbouring residents of synthetic sportsgrounds.

2. OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **Endorse the draft *Synthetic Sportsgrounds Management Plan* dated November 2017 for consultation with neighbouring residents of synthetic sportsgrounds.**

2. **Note the consultation undertaken on the draft *Synthetic Sportsgrounds Management Plan* with the four main users of synthetic fields in the City.**

3. **Receive a report by April 2018 on the results of consultation with neighbouring residents of synthetic sportsgrounds regarding the draft *Synthetic Sportsgrounds Management Plan*.**

3. BACKGROUND

In 2011 Council adopted a Management Plan for the new synthetic sportsground at Northbridge Oval (NBO). The Plan covered hours of use and allocation, traffic and parking controls, community liaison, noise and code of conduct.

Since that time, further management plans have been required as follows:

- Thomson Oval (TO), Artarmon in 2015 where the same plan was also applied to the synthetic sportsground when installed
- The DA consent 2014/237 for Chatswood High School Oval (CHS) required a Management Plan for the synthetic sportsground which opened in August 2017.
- Gore Hill Oval (GHO) will be converted to synthetic surface in 2018.

A Synthetic Sportsgrounds Management Plan that covers all synthetic sportsgrounds in the City is considered to be a more efficient and effective means of communicating the guidelines for use of these sites which are often in use up to 7 days per week and 12 hours per day. Attachment 2 provides a copy of the draft *Synthetic Sportsgrounds Management*

Plan for Council's endorsement for consultation with neighbouring residents of synthetic sportsgrounds.

4. DISCUSSION

Regional under supply of sportsgrounds

Northern Suburbs Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC) adopted a Regional Plan for Synthetic Sportsfields in 2016, and is currently finalising a review of its 2011 Regional Sportsground Strategy.

Both documents highlight the following issues for the region:

- High levels of over allocation and use of existing sportsgrounds (up to 67% of grounds are allocated above recognised benchmarks)
- Shortage in current supply of sports facilities (particularly sportsgrounds – at least 15%)
- Growth in sport participation numbers (particularly female participation)
- Ongoing demand and supply issues in future years with the gap between demand and supply likely to widen in most NSROC Council areas

From 2011 to 2036, the population of the NSROC region will grow by 200,000 (or 36.4%) to 752,600. Existing sportsgrounds (already over capacity) will not be able to cater for additional population growth and participation numbers.

Solutions to under supply of sportsgrounds

Forecasts have shown that Councils will need to increase the capacity of sportsgrounds by over 40% (through a range of initiatives and new facilities) to cope with existing and future demands.

These initiatives include:

- Working with sports to develop and implement game formats and programs to create more 'yield' (intensity of use)
- Partnering with schools and/ or other institutions to use existing or develop new facilities
- Installing or upgrading lighting
- Reconfiguring playing fields to improve functionality
- Upgrading drainage and/ or surface quality
- Installing additional multi-purpose synthetic surfaces or special purpose surfaces *(*draft *NSROC Regional Sportsground Strategy Review 2017)*

Synthetic sportsgrounds are part of the answer to increasing public access to open space, and optimising the use of existing sportsgrounds by doubling the available hours of ground hire. The increase of usage hours is coupled with an amenity impact of extra people and car movements occurring in residential areas which abut any synthetic field. The draft *Synthetic Sportsgrounds Management Plan* seeks to manage these impacts.

Draft Synthetic Sportsgrounds Management Plan for Willoughby

A new draft *Synthetic Sportsgrounds Management Plan* has been prepared and was issued to the four main users of synthetic fields in the City, being AFL NSW/ACT, Cricket NSW, Northern Suburbs Football Association (NSFA) and Northbridge Football Club (NFC).

Figure 1 provides the differences between the current and proposed bookable times at each of the ovals covered by the draft *Synthetic Sportsgrounds Management Plan.*

Figure 1: Comparison between current and proposed bookable times

Day	Draft *Synthetic Sportsgrounds Management Plan*: bookable times	Bookable times prior to *Synthetic Sportsgrounds Management Plan*		
		Northbridge Oval (NBO) and Thomson Oval (TO)– under current Management Plan	**Chatswood High School (CHS) prior to conversion to synthetic**	**Gore Hill Oval (GHO) prior to conversion to synthetic**
Mon- Fri	7am - 9.30pm: NBO, TO 4.30pm- 9.30pm: CHS 7am- 10pm: GHO[1]	No change	3.30pm -9.30pm. Condition of DA 2014/237 was that the lights should be turned off by 10pm daily.	Previously 7am-9pm. Increase due to additional capacity from new surface being created, regional role and its location outside of residential areas
Saturday	8am-7pm all winter season: NBO,TO,CHS 8am- 9pm: GHO	8am – 7pm for 50% of the Winter Season and 8am-5pm for the remaining 50% of the season. Increased to accommodate demand.	8am -5pm Increased due to additional capacity from new surface being created.	Previously 8am -7pm all winter season, with a small number of games finishing at 9pm in the 2016 and 2017 seasons. Increase due to additional capacity from new surface being created, regional role and its location outside of residential areas
Sunday	9am – 6pm, with one rest Sunday per month: NBO,TO, CHS which provides greater access for the community and some respite for impacted residents 8am – 6pm (GHO)	No change	Not previously available for Sunday bookings. Increased due to additional capacity from new surface being created.	No change - Sunday was previously allowed at Gore Hill oval due to its location outside of residential areas and the fact junior games are played on a Sunday
Public Holidays	Not available for sports bookings which provides greater access for the community and some respite for impacted residents	Not available for sports bookings	Not available for sports bookings	Not available for sports bookings

[1] NBO: Northbridge Oval, TO: Thomson Oval, CHS: Chatswood High School, GHO: Gore Hill Oval

Adjustments to the draft *Synthetic Sportsgrounds Management Plan*

Some adjustments were made to the original draft plan following feedback from the main users. These adjustments have been included in Figure 1 and are also detailed below.

1. **AFL NSW/ACT comments:** 'women and girls competitions having priority for Sunday bookings', many AFL boys games are scheduled for Sundays only.
   Response: The Plan has been amended to say 'Women and girls sports are to have equal access to synthetic sportsground bookings.'

2. For 'a rest day on one Sunday of every month', AFL fixtures are set for Gore Hill on every Sunday in the season.
   Plan has been amended to exclude Gore Hill from the Sunday rest day requirement.

3. **Cricket NSW comments**: general support; no adjustments required for the draft Plan.

4. **NSFA comments:** generally supportive, except for Saturday nights (see comment in Feedback below).

5. **NFC comments:** appreciates that the draft Plan is now simpler than the original Northbridge plan, however they require further extension to access times, reduction in Public Holiday rest days, and removal of public access to oval in match time (see comments in Feedback below).

Feedback that has not been incorporated into the draft *Synthetic Sportsgrounds Management Plan*

Suggestions from the main user groups not included in the revised draft are as follows:

1. **NFSA and NFC**: want the synthetic fields to be available to 9pm or 9.30pm on Saturday nights to accommodate 4 hour game blocks for senior games (ie 1pm-5pm and 5pm– 9pm).
   Response: the draft Plan allows for Saturday night hire up to 9pm at Gore Hill, and 7pm at Northbridge, Thomson and Chatswood High School. This time restriction recognises that the latter 3 ovals are in residential areas, and provide respite to local neighbours.

2. **NFC**: has requested that Sunday hire commence at 8.30am.
   Response: the draft Plan allows for 8am starts at Gore Hill, and 9am starts at Northbridge, Thomson and Chatswood High School in recognition of the neighbouring residential areas.

3. **NFC** has requested that Sunday hire be extended to 7pm.
   Response: the draft Plan allows for Sunday night hire up to 6pm. This time restriction recognises that access to these grounds for the general community should be supported.

4. **NFC** has requested that Easter Monday be deleted from the list of Public Holidays, and that the Monday Queens Birthday Public Holiday be nominated as the rest day for June.
   Response: the draft Plan retains the 10 Public Holidays when the grounds are not available for competition match hire, as recognition that these grounds are used up to 7 days per week and up to 12 hours per day in residential areas.

5. **NFC** has requested that the ground not be available for general public access when competition matches are being played.
   Response: the draft Plan maintains a 4 metre curtilage around the marked field perimeter so that the community can access the outer areas of the ground for walking/ exercise/casual play when the field is in match use.

To date feedback on the draft Synthetic Sportsgrounds Management Plan has not been sought from impacted residents. Local residents and other community members have on occasion provided feedback to Officers regarding the impact that synthetic sportsgrounds the local amenity. This feedback has guided the development of the draft Plan. It would be timely to undertake consultation on the draft Synthetic Sportsgrounds Management Plan with residents neighbouring the relevant synthetic sportsgrounds.

5. CONCLUSION

The draft *Synthetic Sportsgrounds Management Plan* – see Attachment 2 – provides a practical guide to the use and management of synthetic sportsgrounds in the City. It has adopted some of the recommendations provided by the main user groups who wish to maximise the sports opportunity provided by these synthetic grounds. Additionally the plan seeks to protect the amenity for residents living near these grounds, and also provides days when the grounds can be accessed by the general community. As the main users of the grounds have had provided input into the Draft *Synthetic Sportsgrounds Management Plan,* it is appropriate to offer neighbouring residents the same opportunity. The results of this consultation will be reported to Council by April 2018.

ATTACHMENT 1

IMPLICATIONS	COMMENT
City Strategy Link:	1.3.1 Accessible open space and recreational facilities for the community are provided.
Business Plan Objectives, Outcomes/ Services	To understand our community and stakeholder needs, and to respond to external influences and organisational priorities.
Policy	The draft Plan is complementary to Council's Policy *Sporting Fields- Sunday Use for Competition (1996).*
Consultation	Northbridge Football Club, Chatswood Rangers Football Club and Northern Suburbs Football Association provided their preferences prior to compiling the draft plan. Main stakeholders for synthetic grounds- AFL NSW/ACT, Cricket NSW, Northern Suburbs Football Association and Northbridge Football Club were then invited to comment on the draft plan. Where applicable, their issues were addressed in the final draft.
Resource	Internal resources will be used to undertake consultation with neighbouring residents of the synthetic sportsgrounds covered in the draft Plan.
Risk	Minor risks to social/ political and reputational category of Council's Risk Management Framework. Community will have an expectation that Council will comply with the actions outlined in the Plan.
Legal	Not applicable.
Legislation	Consistent with requirements of *the Local Government Act 1993* and the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.*
Budget/Financial	Not applicable.

Synthetic Sportsgrounds Management Plan- 2017.pdf

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