

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK EXECUTIVE PANEL – 7 JULY 2011

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLANNING POLICY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ASSESSMENT OF EAST HERTS SPORTS FACILITIES (MAY 2011)

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report presents for consideration and agreement the draft Assessment of East Herts Sports Facilities (ASF) and a range of recommendations and long term aspirations.

<u>RECOMMENDATION TO EXECUTIVE: to commend to Council that:</u>	
(A)	The draft Assessment of East Herts Sports Facilities be agreed and published:
(i)	as a technical study, forming part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts Local Development Framework;
(ii)	as a basis for informing future Development Control decisions concerning the development of, and developments affecting sports facilities; and
(iii)	as a basis for sports facility planning in the District.

1.0 Background

1.1 The Assessment of East Herts Sports Facilities (ASF), the subject of this report was presented to Community Scrutiny on 14 June 2011. The Community Scrutiny report recommended that the draft ASF be noted and agreed as planning guidance; and that the ASF be used to pursue external funding opportunities. It had the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINY:	
(A)	That the draft Assessment be noted and agreement given to use as planning guidance
(B)	That officers are asked to pursue external funding opportunities as appropriate

RECOMMENDATION FOR EXECUTIVE :	
(A)	That the views of Community Scrutiny Committee be considered
(B)	That the proposed recommendations/aspirations for indoor sports facilities be acknowledged and the Assessment be noted and published

- 1.2 East Herts is well served by a range of high quality, indoor and outdoor sports facilities. The ASF is about how the Council might make best use of its existing facilities and take advantage of external funding opportunities to add to this provision and help ensure it is better fit for purpose. It is not proposed that the Council adopt the recommendations (listed in **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**) in the Assessment as policy, but rather that they be acknowledged as aspirations. It is intended that the recommendations be delivered by sports providers in the commercial, voluntary and/or public sector and are not the sole responsibility of any one sector or agency.
- 1.3 In 2008, Sport England invited Councils in the south east area to attend workshops to discuss and join its Facilities Improvement Scheme (FIS). The ASF is one of the outcomes of this work and the subject of this report.
- 1.4 The purpose of the Assessment is to undertake a review of the current state of indoor and outdoor sports facilities in the District and to propose local planning standards as appropriate. In addition, it will inform future work on open spaces for sport and recreation, in line with the anticipated forthcoming Planning Policy Statement from Central Government on Creating Natural and Healthy Environments.
- 1.5 Led by the Planning Policy Team, a Steering Group was established with representatives from the Leisure, Contract Services, Community Projects and Property Teams and the East Herts Community Sports Network (CSN).

- 1.6 The scope of facilities included in the FIS and considered by the Steering Group, included: sports and leisure centres, swimming pools, sports halls, health and fitness centres, indoor tennis courts, indoor bowls rinks, athletics tracks, Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) and any specialist facilities. All sports facility providers have been included – commercial sector, voluntary and community sector, statutory and not-for-profit.
- 1.7 To develop the ASF, it was necessary to commission three reports:
- Facilities Planning Models (FPM),
 - An audit of all outdoor sport facilities in the form of an East Herts Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) which looked at all outdoor sports facilities, multi use games areas and playing pitches; and
 - An audit and assessment of all indoor sports facilities within the district (ASF)
- 1.8 Further desk-based research was also conducted, including the consideration of population figures and housing growth, analysis of physical activity rates among East Herts residents and a survey of village halls and community centres.
- 1.9 The Facilities Planning Model (FPM) is a Sport England strategic modelling tool, for swimming pools, sports halls and Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs). The model enables Officers to anticipate the future need for individual sports facility types as a result of population increases, such as that arising from a proposed development. Officers can then use the model's cost calculations as a starting point for negotiating developer contributions.
- 1.10 The PPS, which forms part of the ASF, was agreed by the Local Development Framework Executive Panel on 22 September 2010. It was agreed that the PPS would be used i) as a technical study, forming part of the evidence base, to inform and support the East Herts Local Development Framework; ii) as a basis for informing future Development Control decisions concerning development which affect playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities; and (iii) as a basis for informing the ASF (or as it was known at the time, the Sports Facility and Active Recreation Strategy or SFARS), and any Action Plans contained therein.
- 1.11 Working in partnership with an independent consultant Michael Presland, a draft ASF was prepared and given to the Community Projects Team to finalise and coordinate consultation with

stakeholders.

1.12 A consultation event, supported by the CSN, was held on the 27 January 2011 at Wodson Park Sports Centre where more than 20 representatives of local sports clubs attended. Representatives of National Governing Bodies of indoor sports and Village Hall/ Community Centre Management Committees were also invited. A list of those consulted along with the notes from the event, is included in Appendix 1 of the full Assessment document, available on line at: www.eastherts.gov.uk/SportsFacilitiesAssessment

1.13 The ASF document provides:

- A comprehensive audit of the supply of, and demand for the various sports facility types in East Herts
- An analysis of the quantity and quality of existing indoor sports facilities in the district;
- Proposals on local standards of indoor sports provision for planning purposes;
- Consideration of the adequacy of existing provision against these standards;
- Recommendations on appropriate responses for each facility type; and
- An approach towards delivery and resources

2.0 Strategy Report

2.1 Comprised of 10 chapters, the Assessment contains the national and local context for sports and sets out the methodology of undertaking the desk-based assessment (Chapters 1 to 4).

2.2 Chapter 5 details the current level of built sports facilities provision and future needs using the planning tools described in Chapter 4. Each sports facility type contains a conclusion summarising the findings of the assessment for that facility and highlights where there are particular deficiencies in provision or quality that will need to be addressed, along with suggestions as to how to manage these issues in future.

2.3 Chapter 6 looks at the contribution village halls and schools make to the level of sport facility provision across the District. The report identifies the greatest need in the area of community use and working with partners to obtain best use of existing buildings.

2.4 Chapter 7 includes the previously agreed Playing Pitch Strategy

and Outdoor Sports Assessment.

- 2.5 Chapter 8 identifies the key issues, options and recommendations for indoor sports facilities. (A summary of these is contained in **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**). The recommendations are intended to ensure that the individual sports facility types are better fit for purpose and are suitable for the changing needs of a growing population and changing demographic. A key recommendation is to make more efficient use of existing facilities through improved management and promotion of opening times for example. Another method is the use of Community Use Agreements as a means of opening school facilities to the public when not needed for school activities.
- 2.6 Chapter 9 covers delivery through partnerships, including the CSN and local sports clubs, resources, planning gain and identifies local standards for indoor and outdoor sports provision. Chapter 10 concludes with a statement on monitoring and review.
- 2.7 Potential future work could include a fuller assessment into the availability of particular facilities (including schools) throughout the day, hours of usage, age and condition in order to facilitate better use of facilities and to inform a maintenance programme.
- 2.8 It is the intention that the Assessment of Sports Facilities will become a key part of the evidence base informing the development of the Core Strategy, Site Allocations and Development Management documents along with informing decisions on planning applications.
- 2.9 As a result of the robust approach to analysis and consultation, Sport England is very pleased with the overall strategy and, if adopted, will be using the East Herts document as a national good practice example of a sports facilities assessment.
- 3.0 Implications/Consultations
- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

Summary: Assessment of East Herts Sports Facilities (May 2011)

Draft Assessment of Sports Facilities (May 2011)

East Herts Playing Pitch Strategy and Outdoor Sports Audit Strategy Report (July 2010), Knight Kavanagh and Page

All are available online at www.eastherts.gov.uk

Hard copies can be made available for Members on request from the Planning Policy Team or Community Projects Team.

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ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

<p>Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives:</p>	<p>Promoting Prosperity and well being; providing access and opportunity <i>Enhancing quality of life, health and well being of individuals, families and communities, particularly those that are vulnerable</i></p> <p>Pride in East Herts <i>Improve standards of the built neighbourhood and environmental management in our towns and villages.</i></p> <p>Shaping now, shaping the future <i>Safeguard and enhance our unique mix of rural and urban communities, ensuring sustainable, economic and social opportunities including the continuation of effective development control and other measures.</i></p> <p>Leading the way, working together <i>Deliver responsible community leadership that engages with our partners and the public.</i></p>
<p>Consultation:</p>	<p>27 January 2011 with East Herts Community Sports Network</p>
<p>Legal:</p>	<p>It is a statutory duty under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for East Herts Council as the local planning authority to produce and keep up-to-date sound and robust Development Plan for the district. The Assessment of Sports Facilities forms part of the evidence base used to ensure the Local Development Framework is justifiable and deliverable.</p>
<p>Financial:</p>	<p>There will be on-going costs associated with the recommended policies and future technical work if this is undertaken. It is envisaged that future developments could be achieved through developer contributions and partnership working with sports clubs, governing bodies and facility managers.</p>
<p>Human Resource:</p>	<p>Depending on how the Assessment of Sports Facilities is taken forward there could be staffing implications in terms of providing a central resource for the management, co-ordination and promotion of the district's sports facilities.</p>
<p>Risk Management:</p>	<p>Failure to follow the recommendations contained in the Assessment may result in sports facilities that are inadequate for the 21st century and not fit for purpose, leading to a decline in participation in sports and recreation</p>

and resultant longer-term risks to the health and wellbeing of the district's residents and visitors.

In order to be found sound the Core Strategy and other planning documents should be based on technical evidence and the views of the community and stakeholders. There is widespread support for raising the profile of sports clubs and increasing recreational activity. To not take the reports into account in the production of key planning documents could lead to challenges that they are unsound.