

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK EXECUTIVE PANEL –  
23 SEPTEMBER 2010

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLANNING POLICY AND  
TRANSPORT

EAST HERTS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY AND OUTDOOR SPORTS  
ASSESSMENT (JULY 2010)

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

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**Purpose/Summary of Report**

- This report presents for consideration the Playing Pitch Strategy and Outdoor Sports Assessment, prepared for the Council by Knight Kavanagh and Page (KKP) consultants.
- It also seeks agreement to use the Playing Pitch Strategy and Outdoor Sports Assessment as a technical document to support the evidence base of the East Herts Local Development Framework (LDF).

**RECOMMENDATION FOR EXECUTIVE: that**

<b>(A)</b>	<p>The East Herts Playing Pitch Strategy and Outdoor Sports Assessment – July 2010 be agreed and published:</p> <p>(i) as a technical study, forming part of the evidence base, to inform and support the East Herts Local Development Framework;</p> <p>(ii) as a basis for informing future Development Control decisions concerning development which affect playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities; and</p> <p>(iii) as a basis for informing the Sports and Active Recreation Facilities Strategy (part of the Facilities Improvement Scheme) and any Action Plans contained therein.</p>
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- 1.1 In 2008, Sport England invited Councils in the south east area to attend workshops to discuss and join their Facilities Improvement Scheme (FIS). The East Herts Council Sport and Active Recreation Facilities Strategy 2010 - 2021 is the outcome of this work. The Playing Pitch Strategy, the subject of this report forms one part of the Sport and Active Recreation Facilities Strategy.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Sport and Active Recreation Facilities Strategy is to set out a plan for the development of sports facilities in the district and proposes local planning standards. The scope of facilities considered includes; sports and leisure centres, swimming pools, sports halls, health and fitness, athletics, bowls, tennis, squash, synthetic turf pitches, netball courts and multi use games areas as well as outdoor sports facilities. All sports facility providers have been included in this scope including those provided by the private sector, voluntary and community sector and other public providers, as well as facilities within neighbouring districts and boroughs.
- 1.3 To develop the Sport and Active Recreation Facilities Strategy it was necessary to commission three reports;
  - all indoor sports facilities within the district.
  - an audit of all outdoor sport facilities in the form of a Playing Pitch Strategy
  - undertaking of a Facilities Planning Model for swimming pools sports halls Synthetic Turf Pitches.
- 1.4 As such, in October 2009 the Council commissioned Knight, Kavanagh and Page (KKP) Consultants to undertake a Playing Pitch Strategy and Outdoor Sports Assessment (PPS) of the District.
- 1.5 Led by the Planning Policy Team, a Steering Group was established with representatives from the Leisure, Contract Services, Community Development and Property Teams and the Interim Chair of the Community Sports Network (CSN).
- 1.6 During the course of preparing the PPS, the consultants undertook extensive consultation, including phone calls, letters and face-to-face meetings. A variety of stakeholders were contacted including local sports clubs and organisations, schools, school sports partnership representatives, town and parish councils, leagues, national governing bodies and Sport England. During May 2010, the consultants also made a draft PPS available to members of the East

Herts CSN, inviting comments. A full list of those consulted is included in Appendix Two of the Assessment Report.

- 1.7 Through analysing consultation responses, site assessments, data analysis and GIS mapping work, the PPS provides:
- a comprehensive assessment of the supply of, and demand for, outdoor playing pitches in East Herts, through the application of the Sport England Playing Pitch Model (a tool which calculates team generation rates and the current and future capacity of sites);
  - an analysis of the quantity and quality of outdoor sports facilities in the district;
  - advice on local standards of provision for planning purposes, for outdoor sports facilities;
  - consideration of the adequacy of existing provision against these standards;
  - recommendations on appropriate strategy and policy responses; and
  - an approach towards developer contributions.

## 2.0 Assessment Report

- 2.1 Comprised of 20 parts, the Assessment Report contains the national and local context for sports and methodology of undertaking the assessment (Parts 1 to 6). Parts 7 through to 18 assess the quantity and quality of football, cricket, rugby, hockey, bowls, golf, tennis, athletics, netball, multi-use games areas, lacrosse and polo. Part 19 considers education provision with Part 20 summarising and concluding the Assessment Report.
- 2.2 The Assessment Report presents the results of the assessment by sport and also by five sub-areas (A1(M) Corridor, Hertford-Ware Area, M11 Stort Corridor, North of Harlow and the Rural Area), in order to facilitate a spatial analysis of demand and supply. Such spatial analysis makes it easier to identify issues such as deficits in the supply of sports pitches and enables a more effective strategy to be developed to manage these issues.
- 2.3 The Assessment Report identifies the greatest issues in football facilities as football has by far the greatest level of participation of any sport in the district, with a significant projected increase in the future for both junior boys and girls football. Whilst there is a small surplus of adult football pitches, it is not appropriate in most circumstances to simply re-designate these for junior use, as this

would create problems in the longer-term in relation to access to pitches for both age ranges and in terms of pitch rotation, rest and maintenance requirements.

### 3.0 Strategy Report

- 3.1 Comprised of nine parts, the Strategy Report contains a summary of issues raised in the Assessment Report and sets out a series of strategies for dealing with these issues (Parts 1 and 2). Part 3 includes a strategic framework for facility improvements (based on the Council's priorities and visions). Part 4 sets out five strategic objectives, with Part 5 detailing 18 management objectives designed to fulfil the strategic objectives. A further 10 sport-specific objectives are also included for each sport covered in the Assessment Report. These are the objectives that future planning policies and decisions should strive to fulfil.
- 3.2 Part 5 also includes a series of tables that detail the issues raised in the Assessment Report and makes recommendations for dealing with each specific issue. These tables, although separate from the Action Plan contained within Part 6 should be used to inform Policy and Development Control decisions.
- 3.3 Part 6 of the Strategy Report contains a series of Action Plans for each sport and has been created to be undertaken over an eleven-year timescale. The Action Plans do not identify all quality improvements required, but instead issues are assessed against a range of criteria in order to ensure that the Action Plans prioritise particular quality, management and development issues. Each Action Plan contains both generic and site-specific actions.
- 3.4 Part 7 establishes local playing pitch standards based on current and projected supply and demand and explains how these can be used to secure developer contributions. Part 8 describes the type of regular monitoring that will be required to maintain the information provided in the assessment database. Part 9 concludes the report.
- 3.5 The PPS will now form part of the Council's Sport and Active Recreation Facilities Strategy, (part of Sport England's Facilities Improvement Scheme), and will inform future work on open spaces for sport and recreation, which will take the form of a PPG17 update audit and assessment, in line with the anticipated forthcoming Planning Policy Statement on Creating Natural and Healthy Environments (currently at consultation stage).

#### 4.0 Implications/Consultations

- 4.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

#### Background Papers

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

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

Available online at [www.eastherts.gov.uk/pps](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/pps)

Hard copies can be made available for Members on request from the Planning Policy Team. Public inspection copies are available at reception at the Council's offices in Hertford and in Bishop's Stortford.

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ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

<p>Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives (delete as appropriate):</p>	<p><b>Caring about what's built and where</b>  <i>Care for and improve our natural and built environment.</i></p> <p><b>Shaping now, shaping the future</b>  <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><b>Leading the way, working together</b>  <i>Deliver responsible community leadership that engages with our partners and the public.</i></p>
<p>Consultation:</p>	<p>See Pages 15-16, 20-21 and 178-186 of the Assessment Report</p>
<p>Legal:</p>	<p>None, as a result of this report, at this stage</p>
<p>Financial:</p>	<p>None, as a result of this report, at this stage</p>
<p>Human Resource:</p>	<p>None, as a result of this report, at this stage</p>
<p>Risk Management:</p>	<p>Failure to follow the recommendations contained in the Playing Pitch Strategy Report would result in the inadequate quantity and poor quality of outdoor pitches and ancillary infrastructure, leading to a decline in participation and resultant longer-term risks to the health and wellbeing of the district's residents and visitors.</p>