

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT 3

PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out the Council's policies with regard to formal open space and playing pitches. The document is split into two sections. The first section provides advice and guidance in relation to proposed additional playing pitches and whether they are required. The second part examines the impact of new residential development on playing pitch demand.
- 1.2 Access to playing pitches can have a significant impact upon quality of life and this document aims to ensure there is adequate pitch provision throughout the district. The SPD is largely based upon the findings of a study entitled *An Assessment of Playing Pitches in the Rochford District*. This is included as an annex to the SPD itself.
- 1.3 This Supplementary Planning Document gives further clarification to Rochford District Replacement Local Plan Policy LT2.

PART A

2. ADDITIONAL PLAYING PITCHES

- 2.1 *An Assessment of Playing Pitches in the Rochford District* shows that the supply of pitches is currently meeting expressed demand. As a result of the findings of the study, new planning pitch provision standards for a number of sub areas have been established. The adoption of new standards is seen as beneficial because of the problems of setting standards on simply population intensity, such as with the National Playing Field Standard of 1.2Ha/1000 people. *An Assessment of Playing Pitches in the Rochford District* provides a more detailed study of the Rochford area taking into account factors such as:
 - the age of the population within the sub areas;
 - the level of likely demand;
 - the suitability of the pitches;
 - floodlighting;
 - changing rooms and other support facilities; and
 - travel distances to available facilities.
- 2.2 The new standards produced by the study reflect achievable aims for playing pitch provision within the plan period. They also serve to highlight areas of the district such as Hockley, which are relatively poorly provided for in comparison to other areas. The new standards are shown in Tables 1 and 2 below:

| TABLE 1 PROVISION OF PITCHES PER HEAD OF POPULATION FOR THE SUB AREAS | | | |
|--|-------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| SUB AREA | POPULATION | PITCHES / 000 (A, B1, B2) | NATIONAL PLAYING FIELD STANDARD |
| Rayleigh | 31,410 | 0.99 | 1.20 hectares per thousand population |
| Hockley | 17,164 | 0.7 | |
| Hullbridge | 7,425 | 1.34 | |
| Canewdon | 1,491 | 2.23 | |
| Rochford | 16,317 | 1.95 | |
| Great Wakering | 7,694 | 1.77 | |

| TABLE 2 SUGGESTED LOCAL STANDARDS | | |
|--|---|--|
| SUB AREA | SUGGESTED STANDARD Ha / 000 POPULATION | NATIONAL PLAYING FIELD STANDARD |
| Rayleigh | 1.15 | 1.20 hectares per thousand population |
| Hockley | 0.7 | |
| Hullbridge | 1.34 | |
| Canewdon | 1.68 | |
| Rochford | 1.36 | |
| Great Wakering | 1.77 | |

Design

POLICY STATEMENT PP1

It is important that any facilities which are provided, whether as a result of developer contributions or otherwise, are of sufficient quality to ensure they are of maximum benefit to the community. Proposed schemes will be assessed against the Sport England design and technical guidelines in all but exceptional circumstances.

- 2.3 Planning applications for playing pitches or associated facilities will be expected to comply with the following design guidelines in all but exceptional circumstances. Proposed schemes will normally be assessed against the Sport England design and technical guidelines. These guidelines set out best practice for the design and development of sports facilities. The guidelines are available on the Sport England website at www.sportengland.org/design_guidelines.
- 2.4 It should be noted that the Rochford District is largely designated as Metropolitan Green Belt. The use of land as a sports pitch may be considered an appropriate land use within the green belt (subject to the criteria set out in policy LT2 of the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan). However, the construction of significant club houses or large scale car parks are likely to be considered inappropriate in the Green Belt. *Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts (PPG2)*, as issued by the Office of the

Deputy Prime Minister, gives further information on what may or may not be appropriate within such areas.

Size of pitches

- 2.5 ~~In order to maximum their possible use, p~~Pitches ~~should~~ will be designed to the meet the recognised criteria set out in the sections that follow.

Association Football

- 2.6 For football pitches, the Football Association (FA) prescribes a minimum size for adult pitches. In general, football pitches within the Rochford District should be built to this standard. Although not currently an FA a requirement it is recommended that junior and youth teams play on smaller pitch. Under some circumstances, therefore, a smaller pitch may also be required. The recommended pitch sizes for different age groups are shown in the table below. More details are available from the FA's website.

POLICY STATEMENT PP2

Proposed football pitches in the Rochford District should comply with the following standards.

| Suggested pitch size (metres) | Suggested size of goal posts (metres) | Pitch dimensions (metres) | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | | Length | | Width | |
| <i>Length x Width</i> | <i>Height x Width</i> | <i>Max</i> | <i>Min</i> | <i>Max</i> | <i>Min</i> |
| Youth U17 - U18 and Seniors | | | | | |
| 101 x 64 | 2.44 x 7.32 | 120 | 90 | 90 | 45.5 |
| Mini Soccer U7 - U8 | | | | | |
| 46 x 27 | 1.83 x 3.66 | 45.75 | 27.45 | 27.45 | 18.3 |
| Mini Soccer U9 - U10 | | | | | |
| 55 x 37 | 1.83 x 3.66 | 54.9 | 45.75 | 36.6 | 27.45 |
| Youth U11 – U12 | | | | | |
| 73 x 46 | 2.13 x 6.4 | 82 | 68.25 | 50.77 | 42 |
| Youth U13 – U14 | | | | | |
| 82 x 50 | 2.13 x 6.4 | 91 | 72.8 | 56 | 45.5 |
| Youth U15- U16 | | | | | |
| 91 x 55 | 2.44 x 7.32 | 100.6 | 82.3 | 64 | 45.5 |

Cricket

- 2.7 The English Cricket Board (ECB) and the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) state the pitch should be a rectangular area of the ground 22 yards/20.12m in length and

10ft/3.05m in width. It should be bounded at either end by the bowling creases. There is no defined law concerning the out-field area although most competitions require the boundary line to be between 50 and 90 yards from the centre of the pitch. Any proposed cricket pitch within the Rochford District should comply with these requirements.

POLICY STATEMENT PP3

Any proposed cricket pitch in Rochford District should be a rectangular area of 22 yards/20.12m in length and 10ft/3.05m in width, with the boundary line 50 to 90 yards (45.72 to 82.30 metres) from the centre of the pitch, in accordance with the England Cricket Board and the Marylebone Cricket Club.

Hockey

2.8 The English Hockey Association (EHA) defines full size and mini-hockey pitches as shown in table 4 below. It is important to note that synthetic turf pitches are now required for competitive level hockey. Proposals for synthetic turf pitches, as with conventional pitches, will be assessed against the criteria set out in Policy LT2 of the Replacement Local Plan.

POLICY STATEMENT PP4

A full size hockey pitch should measure 91.4 m in length and 55 m in width, with a mini hockey pitch measuring 55 m in length and 43 m in width in accordance with the England Hockey Association. However it is important to note that synthetic turf pitches are required for competitive level hockey.

| Table 4 RECOMMENDED PITCH SIZE FOR HOCKEY | | |
|--|--|--|
| | FULL SIZED PITCH | MINI-HOCKEY PITCH |
| Length | 91.4m | 55m |
| Width | 55m | 43m |
| Shooting Circles | Radius of 14.63m | Radius of 14.63m |
| Penalty Stroke Spot | 6.4m from the goal line into the pitch | 5m from the goal line into the pitch |
| Penalty Corner Markers | 10m from each goalpost on the back-line | 10m from each goalpost on the back-line |
| Corner Markers | 5m from the corner of the pitch on the side-line | 3m from the corner of the pitch on the side-line |

Rugby

POLICY STATEMENT PP5

It is recommended that Rugby pitches be no more than 100m long and 70m wide, with the possibility that they may also be used for association football.

Changing Areas and Support Buildings

2.9 Guidelines for the layout and size of supporting buildings and changing facilities are set out in Sport England design and technical guidelines. It is important to note that in areas of the district designated as green belt, proposals for changing facilities or other support buildings should not exceed the minimum space requirements set out in the Sport England guidelines, other than in exceptional circumstances.

POLICY STATEMENT PP6

The use of land as a sports pitch may be considered as an appropriate land use within the Green Belt (subject to the criteria set out in policy LT2 of the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan). However, the construction of support buildings in excess of the sizes recommended below, or the construction of large scale car parks, ~~are likely to~~ **will be considered inappropriate within the Green Belt.**

Assessment of Playing Pitches – Changing Areas

In Areas of Green Belt, support buildings and changing facilities should not exceed the minimum space requirements set out in the Sport England Design and Technical Guidelines. This recommended space per pitch should allow for two sports teams, officials and storage:

Association Football - 40m²

Cricket - 38m²

Hockey - 40m²

Rugby (League & Union) - 48m²

Additional space for the provision of toilet and shower facilities may also be required.

2.10 The policies in PPG2 provide a general presumption against inappropriate development in the green belt. Therefore the design of such changing facilities should aim to minimise any potential impact on the openness of the green belt

Infrastructure

2.11 It is important that sufficient infrastructure should be in place surrounding the developments.

POLICY STATEMENT PP7

Any planning application for new playing pitch facilities should demonstrate an adequate level of accessibility to the site by sustainable forms of transport.

Drainage

2.12 Insufficient drainage is often a problem that renders facilities unavailable for use. This is a high priority for the improvement of pitches in the district. It is important that pitches and facilities are designed to include good drainage.

- 2.13 Well drained soil encourages grass growth and can make a significant contribution to the quality of the pitch. There are five main types of drainage systems currently used:
- Undrained pitches
 - Pipe drained
 - Silt drained
 - Sand carpet
 - Suspended water table
- 2.14 Whilst the installation of drainage can sometimes be costly it can significantly improve the match cancellation rate and avoid the need to supply a new pitch. Pitches with improved drainage are also able to accommodate matches more frequently before they become unplayable. Proper consideration of drainage at the planning stage is essential. As is set out in the next section of this SPD, developer contributions will also be required, when appropriate, ~~in order~~ to improve the drainage of existing pitches in the district.

POLICY STATEMENT PP8

Any new playing pitch facilities ~~should~~ will be designed to include good drainage.

Developer contributions will also be required, when appropriate, to improve the drainage of existing pitches in the district. ~~In order to~~ To address facilities with insufficient drainage, priority will be given to the facilities highlighted in Table 5.

PART B

3. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND PLAYING PITCH PROVISION

- 3.1 New residential development has the potential to increase demand for leisure facilities, including demand for playing pitches.
- 3.2 Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 *Open Space, Sport and Recreation* (PPG17), states that local authorities need to ensure provision is made for local sports and recreation facilities either through an increase in the number of facilities or through improvements to existing facilities. It also states that planning obligations should be used to seek increased provision of open spaces including local sport and recreational facilities, together with the enhancement of existing facilities. In accordance with this, Policies HP5 and HP21 of the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan make it clear that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) will explore all means at their disposal to ensure sufficient infrastructure provision, including an adequate supply of formal open space.
- 3.3 ~~In order to~~ To maintain and improve the levels of playing pitch provision in the district, developer contributions will be sought on new residential development to provide new facilities or to enhance existing ones.

POLICY STATEMENT PP9

The LPA will require contributions towards the provision of additional, or the enhancement of existing, playing pitches in all cases of residential development including both allocated and windfall sites. In some cases a contribution towards the improvement or maintenance of existing facilities may be considered in preference to the provision of a new facility. Developer contributions will not be required when the proposed development incorporates the adequate provision of leisure facilities or playing pitches, providing that such leisure facilities can be secured for community use. The level of contribution required will be dependent on the level of additional playing pitch demand generated, together with the current costs of providing such playing pitches at the time of the application.

- 3.4 The additional level of leisure facility demand will be calculated based on the size and type of dwellings proposed, cross-referenced with the standard of 1.20 hectares of playing pitch / 1000 people. In cases of the development of sheltered housing, contributions to playing pitch provision will not usually be required.

Ensuring Pitches are Secured for use by the Community

- 3.5 ~~In order to~~ To ensure that playing pitches are available to the community it is important to secure as many pitches as possible for this use. Pitches that are not in secured community use can result in the level of provision changing unpredictably as there will be no guarantee of the pitch remaining available for public ~~to~~ use. **The local planning authority will, therefore, require pitches and formal space provided under policies HP5 or HP21 of the Replacement Local Plan, or provided by way of other developer contributions and obligations, to be secured for community use by way of legal agreement.**

Improvement of Existing Facilities

- 3.6 Even in areas of the district where there may appear to be adequate numbers of pitches *An Assessment of Playing Pitches in the Rochford District*, found that the pitches were often unusable due ~~to the~~ their poor quality ~~of the facility~~.
- 3.7 Where contributions are required under policies HP5 (Infrastructure) and HP21 (Planning Obligations) of the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan, an equivalent contribution towards the improvement or maintenance of existing facilities may ~~in some cases~~ be considered in preference to ~~the provision of~~ a new facility. The Companion Guide to PPG17 suggests that even when the quantitative standards in the area are not exceeded, if ~~there they~~ are below standard facilities, developer contributions may be sought to fund enhancements (paragraph 9.9, p.56). In Rochford District, these circumstances are likely to be found where the area already shows sufficient provision as set out in the annex, *An Assessment of Playing Pitches in the Rochford District*, and where the improvement of an existing facility would be sufficient to cope with the increased demand for formal open space.
- 3.8 Insufficient drainage is often a problem that renders facilities unavailable for use and hence this is a high priority for the improvement of the district's pitches. As part of the

research carried out in the *Assessment of Playing Pitches in the Rochford District* (shown as an appendix) seven sites were identified where improvements to pitch drainage were urgently required. The sites are listed below in Table 5 and also included in Table 6.4 of the Replacement Local Plan. Contributions intended to improve drainage will be required under Rochford District Replacement Local Plan Policies HP5 and HP21, and as set out by PPG17, even though there may otherwise be an adequate supply of playing pitches. Any improvements to drainage should follow the guidelines on drainage in the first part of this SPD.

| TABLE 5 PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING PITCH FACILITIES | | | | |
|---|--------------------|----------------|---|---------------------------|
| Location | Sub area(s) | Sector | Suggested improvement | Suggested priority |
| Rawreth Recreation Ground | Rayleigh | Council / Club | Improve pitch drainage | High |
| John Fisher Playing Field | Rayleigh | Council | Improve pitch drainage | High |
| Grove Playing Field | Rayleigh | Council | Improve pitch drainage | High |
| Clements Hall Playing Field | Hockley | Council | Improve pitch drainage and carry out leveling | Medium |
| Ashingdon Recreation Ground | Rochford | Council | Improve pitch drainage | Medium |
| Hullbridge Playing Field | Hullbridge | Council | Improve pitch drainage | High |
| Fairview Playing Field | Rayleigh | Council | Improve drainage to pitch 4 | High |

ANNEX

AN ASSESSMENT OF PLAYING PITCHES IN THE ROCHFORD DISTRICT