

ASSESSMENT OF PLAYING PITCHES IN ROCHFORD DISTRICT

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report proposes that Members adopt a study into playing pitch provision in the District as Local Plan Supplementary Planning guidance (LPSPG).

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The purpose of assessing the provision of playing pitches in the District is to ensure that there is adequate availability to fulfil demand now and in the foreseeable future.
- 2.2 There are two aspects to provision: the quality of existing pitches and ancillary facilities and the overall quantity of pitches available. The quality of pitches is a matter that is currently being addressed by the Authority, but the issue of pitch provision is a land-use planning issue. If additional playing pitches are required in the District over the period to 2011, then appropriate allocations will be required in the emerging replacement Local Plan.

3 PITCH ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 A detailed assessment of pitch provision in the District has now been prepared using methodology endorsed by Sport England. A copy of the study has been placed in the Members Lounge.
- 3.2 The study concludes that the supply of pitches is currently meeting expressed demand, although in Hockley and Canewdon, there is little spare capacity to cater for any upturn in demand.
- 3.3 However, population projections suggest there will not be a significant increase in demand for pitches over the Local Plan period to 2011. It is also relevant to take into account that some parts of the District do have a surplus of provision and, given the relatively short travelling distances involved, it is not considered that there will be a problem fulfilling any unmet future requirements in Hockley and Canewdon.
- 3.4 During the winter though, some of the pitches in Rayleigh suffer from being waterlogged. This is an issue that is being addressed, but there is no doubt that there can be pitch availability problems from time to time during the winter.

4 LOCAL PLAN ISSUES

- 4.1 A policy decision has been taken to allocate the site of the redundant Park School for a mixed development scheme, which includes about 2.5 ha of new playing pitches (2 senior pitches and 3 mini pitches). This will increase the current surplus of pitches in Rayleigh from 2 to 4 full size pitches.
- 4.2 Taking account of the new provision on Park School, it is considered that there is no requirement for any new allocations to be identified for playing pitches in the replacement Local Plan in the period to 2011.
- 4.3 The pitch assessment study has a number of recommendations for action by the Council, but in respect of land-use planning it recommends:-
- a. disaggregating the required standards for the provision of sports pitches from those for the provision of open space.
 - b. adopting specific standards for provision in individual sub-areas of the District (Rayleigh, Hockley, Hullbridge, Canewdon, Rochford and Great Wakering).
 - c. Policy protection for existing pitches to prevent alternative use and to maintain provision.
 - d. that consideration be given to using developer contributions to assist with the improvement of existing sports pitches and ancillary facilities.
- 4.4 In looking at these recommendations, it is considered that all can sensibly be incorporated into the replacement Local Plan.
- 4.5 The pitch assessment is a key document for the Authority and it is considered that it can usefully be adopted as Local Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance and cross-referenced to text and policies in the Local Plan as appropriate.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The provision of sports pitches is a key community issue.

6 RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that the Committee considers the following and **recommends** accordingly

That, subject to Members' comments, the Playing Pitch Assessment document be adopted as Local Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance and that arrangements be made to incorporate the matters outlined in Paragraph 4.3 of this report into the replacement Local Plan. (HPS).

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Background Papers:

None

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