



**WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**AUGUST 2018**

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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# WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the executive summary for Waverley's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS). Both the Strategy and the preceding Assessment Report have been produced in accordance with Sport England guidance and both have achieved sign off from National Governing Bodies (NGBs). The study covers the period up to 2032, in line with the emerging Local Plan.

### Scope

The project provides guidance and support in order to understand and assess the need for outdoor sports facilities. It provides a strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing provision and covers the following sports:

- ◀ Football pitches
- ◀ Cricket pitches
- ◀ Rugby union pitches
- ◀ Hockey pitches (sand/water-based AGPs)
- ◀ Third generation turf pitches (3G pitches)
- ◀ Outdoor bowling greens
- ◀ Outdoor tennis courts
- ◀ Outdoor athletics tracks

### Vision

A vision has been set out to provide a clear focus with desired outcomes for the PPS. It seeks to support the Council and its partners in the creation of:

*'An accessible and sustainable network of sports facilities that provides and promotes local opportunities and a healthy, active lifestyle for Waverley residents at all levels of play from grassroots to elite'*

### Headline findings

The existing position for all sports is either that demand is broadly being met or that there is a shortfall. In terms of the future position, current shortfalls will expand and new shortfalls will emerge in respect of some facility types in some areas. For example, it is predicted that increased demand for football and rugby union will exacerbate current shortfalls and significantly reduce any pockets of already limited spare capacity. As such, there is a need to protect all existing outdoor sports facilities, or to deliver an equal or better quantity and quality of provision to offset any loss of provision prior to the loss taking place.

Theoretically, surpluses and shortfalls expressed for pitch sports could be largely addressed via pitch quality improvements at existing sites; however, the extent of increased capacity achievable through this route would clearly depend upon practical opportunities arising and funding being identified to deliver and sustain enhancements. Given current budget restraints, significant quality improvements are considered to be unlikely, meaning that other opportunities need to be explored such as greater use of sites currently unavailable for community use (e.g. educational sites) and/or pitch re-configuration.

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Notwithstanding the above, clear shortfalls are identified in relation to 3G AGPs. These cannot be alleviated without new provision. Given this, there is a distinct need to explore the feasibility of future provision at strategic sites in Waverley to meet this demand. Given that resource to improve the quality of grass pitches is limited, increased 3G provision could help reduce grass pitch shortfalls via transfer of play, thus reducing overplay, which in turn can aid grass pitch quality improvements.

Furthermore, whilst the supply of hockey suitable AGPs is currently deemed sufficient to meet demand, any significant growth will result in the need for additional provision or for existing provision to be made more readily available (e.g. by floodlighting non-floodlit pitches or by making pitches unavailable to the community available).

### **Sport-by-sport recommendations**

A number of relevant scenarios have been tested against key issues for each sport, resulting the following recommendations.

#### ***Football***

- ◀ Protect existing pitch quantity (unless suitable replacement provision is agreed upon and provided).
- ◀ Ensure that all teams play on pitches of the correct size and explore reconfiguration to accommodate more youth 11v11 pitches where possible.
- ◀ Increase use of 3G pitches to raise available pitch capacity to address future shortfalls.
- ◀ For overplayed pitches assessed as poor/standard quality, prioritise investment and review maintenance regimes to bring them up to an appropriate standard to sustain use and improve quality (first and foremost via the FA's Pitch Improvement Programme, utilising an IOG Regional Pitch Advisor for support).
- ◀ Provide security of tenure for clubs using unsecure sites via community use agreements.
- ◀ Work to accommodate latent and future demand at sites which are not operating at capacity or at sites which are not currently available for community use.
- ◀ Improve ancillary facilities at key sites currently serviced by poor provision e.g. Weybourne Recreation Ground and Monkton Lane.
- ◀ Where appropriate, develop partnerships and/or lease arrangements with large, sustainable, development-minded clubs to manage their own sites.
- ◀ Ensure adequate provision to meet increased demand generated by housing developments, by securing appropriately calculated developer contributions using the Sport England demand calculator.
- ◀ Create additional pitches within the locality of large housing developments where there is an identified need through consultation with the FA.

#### ***3G pitches***

- ◀ Protect current stock of 3G pitches.
- ◀ Create additional 3G pitches within each analysis area, first and foremost to satisfy football training and match play demand, ensuring that planning conditions are met.
- ◀ Encourage a partnership-based approach between the FA and the RFU to ensure the increase in 3G pitches helps alleviate rugby grass pitch shortfalls.

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- ◀ Support proposals to develop World Rugby compliant 3G pitches at Farnham and Horsham rugby clubs and maximise usage among multiple rugby clubs.
- ◀ Ensure that all new 3G pitches are constructed to meet FA/RFU recommended dimensions and quality performance standards to meet performance testing criteria.
- ◀ Transfer as much football match play as possible onto 3G pitches, focusing on mini and youth 9v9 demand as well as demand currently attracted to council sites.
- ◀ Ensure that all existing and future 3G pitches are FA tested every three years to go onto and remain on the FA register.
- ◀ Ensure that 3G pitches suitable for rugby activity are tested every two years to sustain World Rugby compliance.
- ◀ Encourage all current and future providers to implement sinking funds to ensure long-term sustainability.
- ◀ 3G provision on the Dunsfold Aerodrome development is considered a priority by the Football Foundation.
- ◀ Create additional pitches within the locality of large housing developments where there is an identified need through consultation with the FA and RFU.
- ◀ Surrey FA and the Football Foundation have identified two new sites to establish 3G pitches to reduce the current shortfall. These are located at Snoxhall Playing Fields (Cranleigh) and Farnham Heath End School (Farnham).

### **Cricket**

- ◀ Protect the existing quantity of cricket squares.
- ◀ Work with clubs and grounds staff to review quality issues with regard to pitches to ensure that, going forward, the quality of sites assessed as poor or standard is improved and that the quality of sites presently assessed as good is sustained.
- ◀ Ensure security of tenure for all clubs with lease arrangements in place by ensuring agreements have over 25 years remaining.
- ◀ Work with clubs without secure lease arrangements to provide longer term security.
- ◀ Work with key stakeholders and clubs to improve ancillary provision where issues are identified, notably at Churt Cricket Club.
- ◀ Consider options to increase and improve stock of suitable practice facilities, particularly at sites currently without such provision.
- ◀ Address overplay via increasing NTP stock, installing them alongside grass wickets in order to reduce pressure on grass wickets.
- ◀ Alternatively, if space allows, explore the feasibility of extending grass wicket squares with additional wickets at overplayed sites.
- ◀ Where sites remain overplayed, explore the feasibility of transferring demand to sites with actual spare capacity.
- ◀ Create additional pitches within the locality of large housing developments where there is an identified need through consultation with the ECB.

### **Rugby union**

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of rugby union pitches.
- ◀ Reduce overplay via improved maintenance and/or the installation of new/better drainage systems, particularly at club sites.
- ◀ Support proposals to develop new World Rugby compliant 3G pitch at Farnham RFC and maximise usage of this new provision from multiple clubs. Alternatively, support the establishment of a WR compliant 3G pitch at Farnham Heath End School,

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ensuring Farnham Rugby Club are provided with a formal community use agreement to provide the Club with access to the pitch.

- ◀ If overplay remains, consider providing additional World Rugby compliant 3G pitches to satisfy demand from Guildford and Haslemere Community rugby clubs, preferably in partnership with FA developments (RugbyShare programme).
- ◀ Explore the feasibility of supporting changing room improvements at Cranleigh Rugby Club and Woolmer Hill Recreation Ground.
- ◀ Create additional pitches within the locality of large housing developments where there is an identified need through consultation with the RFU.

### **Hockey**

- ◀ As a minimum, protect the 12 full size AGPs currently in use by hockey clubs for hockey.
- ◀ Explore resurfacing carpets that have reached or are reaching the end of their lifespan (normally ten years).
- ◀ Ensure that providers have sinking funds in place to ensure pitches can be refurbished when required and to guarantee long-term sustainability.
- ◀ Ensure any future demand can be accommodated on the current supply of pitches.
- ◀ Should demand increase to a level that cannot be accommodated, pursue the creation of additional pitches.
- ◀ Development of any new provision should be placed at sites with existing hockey provision, with accessible and appropriate ancillary facilities.
- ◀ Pursue long-term security of tenure for all clubs through community use agreements.
- ◀ Explore installation of floodlighting on those pitches at Cranleigh School Sports Centre from which the provision is absent.
- ◀ Ensure that no 3G pitch conversions take place that are detrimental to hockey.
- ◀ Priorities relocating football from key hockey sites to new 3G provision to help meet growing hockey demand at peak training times. Hockey development in the Area would benefit from consolidating hockey to a few sites, rather than spreading provision to alternative sites.

### **Bowls**

- ◀ Explore re-designation of the green at Guildford Rugby Club.
- ◀ Protect remaining greens for continued bowling activity.
- ◀ Improve green quality at sites assessed as standard quality and maintain the quality of greens assessed as good.
- ◀ Sustain current ancillary provision quality and seek improvements if and when deterioration occurs.

### **Tennis**

- ◀ Protect all tennis courts.
- ◀ Support clubs operating above recommended capacity by securing access to additional (existing) courts where required.
- ◀ Explore floodlighting additional club courts to increase capacity.
- ◀ Improve quality at well used council sites to increase and encourage recreational play.
- ◀ Consider Clubspark scheme as a way to improve courts and to increase and record usage.

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- ◀ Consider creation of additional tennis courts linked to large housing developments, such as at Dunsfold Aerodrome.

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### ***Athletics***

- ◀ Protect facilities at Charterhouse Club and Woolmer Hill Recreation Ground.
- ◀ Consider extending the track at Woolmer Hill Recreation Ground to better cater for the needs of Haslemere Border AC.
- ◀ Support the Parkrun event as well the Run Together group and the Couch to 5k group to sustain and increase participation.

### **Aims**

Based on the headline findings and sport by sport recommendations, the following overarching aims and their associated recommendations are considered key.

These are based on three Sport England themes:

- ◀ To **protect** the existing supply of outdoor sports facilities where it is needed for meeting current and future needs;
  - ◀ Ensure, through use of the PPS, that outdoor sports facilities are protected through implementation of local planning policy.
  - ◀ Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs through a range of solutions and partnership agreements.
  - ◀ Maximise community use of education facilities where needed.
- ◀ To **enhance** outdoor sports facilities and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites;
  - ◀ Improve quality.
  - ◀ Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites).
  - ◀ Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding.
  - ◀ Secure development contributions.
- ◀ To **provide** new outdoor sports facilities where there is current or future demand to do so;
  - ◀ Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate current and future demand.
  - ◀ Rectify quantitative shortfalls through the current pitch stock.

### **Delivering the Strategy**

The PPS seeks to provide guidance for maintenance/management decisions and investment made across Waverley. By addressing the issues identified in the Assessment Report and using the strategic framework presented in the Strategy, the current and future sporting and recreational needs of the Borough can be satisfied.

It is important that there is regular annual monitoring and review against the actions identified in the Strategy. This monitoring should be led by the local authority and supported by all members of the steering group. As a guide, if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years, Sport England and the NGBs would consider the PPS and the information on which it is based to be out of date.