

9 March 2020	ITEM: 6
Local Development Plan Task Force	
Thurrock Active Place Strategy	
This report is public	

Executive Summary

In order to inform the preparation of the Local Plan the Council commissioned the production of the Thurrock Active Place Strategy (APS). This comprises of a suite of studies which will underpin the plan-making process by informing relevant policies on open space and sports facilities in the Borough. It will also assist the Council in identifying specific sites and priorities for improvement and development of new recreational opportunities, including open space as well as both indoor and outdoor sports facilities.

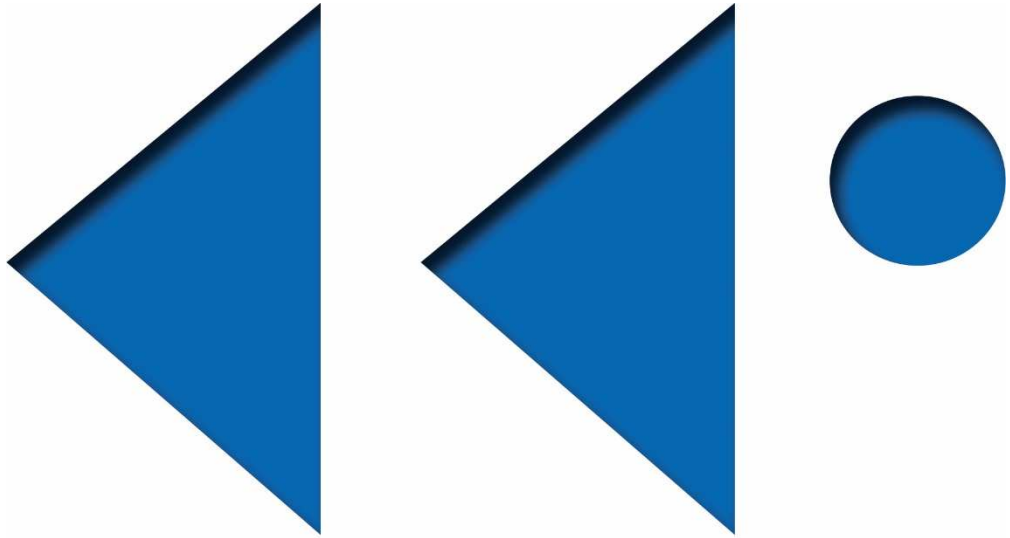
This Report provides the supporting context to the presentation to the Taskforce Meeting by Knight Kavanagh & Page (KKP), the consultants appointed to undertake the commission.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the planning policies for England, detailing how these are expected to be applied to the planning system and providing a framework to produce distinct local plans reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities.
- 1.2 NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and establishes that to do this the planning system needs to focus on three themes: economic, social and environmental.
- 1.3 The NPPF requires that planning policies 'should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities, and opportunities for new provision'. Specific needs and quantitative and qualitative deficiencies, as well as surpluses in local areas, should also be identified to inform what provision is required in an area. The NPPF further states that existing open space, sports and recreation sites, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:
 - An assessment has been undertaken, which has clearly shown the site to be surplus to requirements; or
 - The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or

- The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.
- 1.4 Responding primarily to the need to have a robust evidence base in place from which to develop suitable and sound policies for open space and sports provision, the Council commissioned consultants KKP to prepare the APS.
 - 1.5 There are four strands to the APS: Open Space and Play areas; Indoor and Built Sports Facilities; Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport; and an Active Travel Strategy. Each of these consists of a separate assessment of current provision and a Strategy Report (a 'Standards Paper' for open space) on each thematic area for the improvement of existing facilities and the provision of new recreational facilities over the Local Plan period.
 - 1.6 In delivering each of the studies all relevant national guidance and methodology has been followed to ensure that Thurrock has a robust evidence base that informs future planning policy and wider investment decisions. Each of the strands making up the APS has also been subject to extensive consultation part of the process (the Playing Pitch Strategy element being formally signed off by Sport England as well as all of the participating National Governing Bodies (NGBs)).
 - 1.7 Further details on the emerging technical findings, conclusions and study recommendations will be provided to the Members of the Taskforce by KKP at their meeting on 9 March 2020. A copy of the Consultants Presentation will be made available to the Members when available.

February 2020



KNIGHT, KAVANAGH & PAGE

Members presentation



Active Places Strategy overview Thurrock

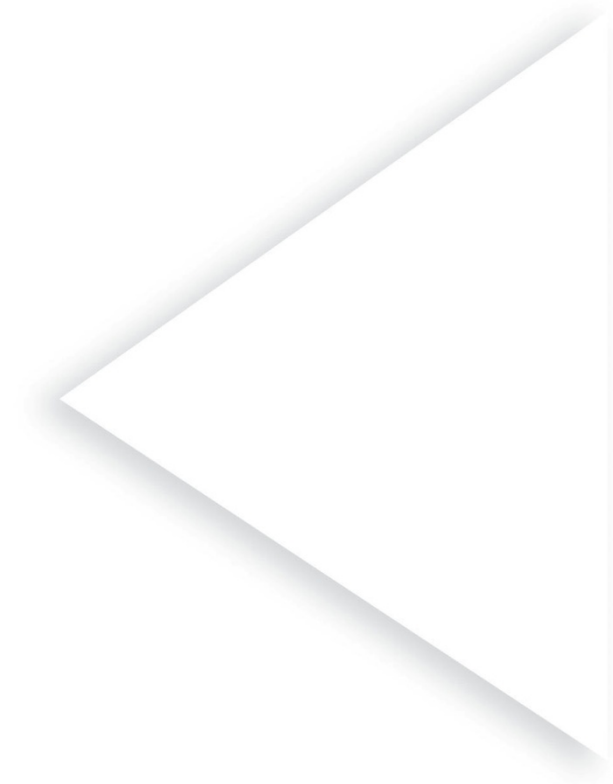
Clare MacLeod Principal Consultant/Director
March 2020

Methodologies



- ◀ **Compliance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**
 - ◁ Sport England - PPS
 - ◁ Sport England - ANOG
 - ◁ PPG17 Guidance, Green Flag, the London Plan
- ◀ **Common approach:**
 - ◁ Prepare and tailor the approach
 - ◁ Audit local provision
 - ◁ Gather views on the supply of and demand for provision
 - ◁ Assess the supply and demand information and views
 - ◁ Develop the strategy - recommendations

Open spaces



Typologies

- ▶ Parks & gardens
- ▶ Natural & semi-natural
- ▶ Amenity greenspace
- ▶ Play provision
- ▶ Allotments
- ▶ Cemeteries
- ▶ Civic space



Consultation



- ◀ Community consultation survey - 207 responses
- ◀ 10 Community forums
- ◀ 6 community organisations and friends of groups
- ◀ Thurrock CVS
- ◀ Public Health
- ◀ and key stakeholders

Findings



- ◀ 301 sites – equivalent to 1,296 hectares
- ◀ Positive perceptions in general
- ◀ Over 56% of sites rate above threshold for quality

Allotments	AGS	Cemeteries	Civic space	NSN	Parks	Play
76%	46%	82%	100%	64%	50%	56%

- ◀ 92% of sites rate above threshold for value

Parks and gardens

- ◀ 24 sites, over 68 hectares (0.40 hectares per 1,000 population) – below FIT 0.8
- ◀ One Green Flag site (Coalhouse Fort and Park)
- ◀ 26% of people very satisfied with availability yet only 12% very satisfied with quality

Natural and semi-natural greenspace

- ◀ 37 sites, over 980 hectares (5.68 hectares per 1,000 population) – above FIT 1.8
- ◀ Over 2/3 due to Belhus Wood, Langdon Hill Country Parks and various marshes

Findings



Amenity greenspace

- ◀ 102 sites, over 187 hectares (1.08 hectares per 1,000 population) – above FIT 0.6 hectares per 1,000 population
- ◀ Number of smaller verge style sites accounts for proportion of lower scores
- ◀ Most sites (93%) rate above the value threshold-suggesting multifunctional role

Play provision

- ◀ 96 sites, over 8 hectares (0.05 hectares per 1,000 population) – below FIT 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population
- ◀ Made up of LAPS, LEAPS, NEAPS and Youth provision
- ◀ Lower quality sites; often result of range/quality of equipment
- ◀ Satisfaction towards play provision good but not for older age ranges

Findings



Allotments

- ◀ 26 sites, over 29 hectares (0.17 hectares per 1,000 population) – below NSALG standard of 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population
- ◀ Good distribution throughout Thurrock
- ◀ Waiting lists demonstrate demand outweighs supply

Cemeteries

- ◀ 11 sites, over 20 hectares. Demand should be led by remaining burial capacity
- ◀ No issues highlighted

Civic Space

- ◀ 5 sites equating to 2 hectares
- ◀ Mainly shopping and urban venues
- ◀ Quality and value is good

Recommendations



- ◀ Current provision levels per 1,000 population for each typology should be used to inform future on and off site requirements
- ◀ Sites serving multi-functional roles and/or helping to serve gaps in provision should be protected and prioritised for enhancement
- ◀ Lower quality sites should look to be enhanced; ability for some sites to help meet other areas of need...
- ◀ Consideration to consolidate some provision ensuring bigger and better sites (individuals will travel further to access a site of high quality)

Playing Pitch Strategy



Consultation – response rates



2019/2020

- ◀ Football – 82% of teams
- ◀ Cricket - 100% of clubs
- ◀ Rugby union – 100% of clubs
- ◀ Hockey – 100% of clubs
- ◀ Tennis – 100% of clubs
- ◀ Bowls – 64% of clubs
- ◀ Athletics – 100% of clubs
- ◀ Primary schools - 56%
- ◀ Secondary schools - 100%
- ◀ Colleges - 100%

2015/2016

- ◀ Football – 78% of teams
- ◀ Cricket - 100% of clubs
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- ◀ Athletics – 100% of clubs
- ◀ Primary schools - 71%
- ◀ Secondary schools - 100%
- ◀ Colleges - 100%

Findings



- ◀ Significant current shortfalls of adult, youth 11v11, youth 9v9 and mini 7v7 football pitches; future shortfalls of all pitch types.
- ◀ Current shortfall of 4 full size 3G pitches and a future shortfall of 6.
- ◀ Overall shortfall of cricket squares.
- ◀ Overall shortfall of rugby union pitches.
- ◀ Current hockey demand is met - oversupply of sand-based AGPs (scope for 3G conversion).
- ◀ Current and future demand for tennis satisfied - but Thurrock TC needs access to floodlit provision.
- ◀ Current and future demand for bowls accommodated on the current supply of greens... potential scope to amalgamate clubs onto fewer greens.
- ◀ Demand for Athletics is met, but track requires resurfacing and other initiatives should be promoted (e.g. Park Run).
- ◀ Priority for netball is to improve court quality to sustain usage, particularly at Hassenbrook Academy.

Recommendations



- ◀ Given identified shortfalls, any provision permanently lost must be replaced to an equal or better quantity and quality in a suitable location.
- ◀ The majority of shortfalls can be addressed via quality improvements and/or improved access to sites that are unavailable or currently used minimally.
- ◀ Numerous sites have security of tenure issues that need resolving, or provision replacing (e.g. Pegasus Club and Lakeside Sports Ground)
- ◀ Specific need for an increased number of 3G pitches (potential sites identified in the LFFP) and non-turf cricket wickets.
- ◀ Additional floodlighting would fully alleviate overplay at rugby union sites, enabling training demand to be spread across a greater number of pitches.
- ◀ At least one sand-based AGP should be protected and retained for continued hockey use (i.e. the pitch at Palmers College).
- ◀ The development of hub sites at key strategic locations to cater for demand and provide opportunities for multi-sports provision should be considered, e.g. Blackshots Recreation Ground.
- ◀ The need for onsite provision within large housing developments or offsite contributions should be assessed – using Sport England calculator to guide.

Indoor Facilities



Findings



- ◀ Reliance on school sports facilities....especially sports halls.
- ◀ Under supply of swimming pools.
- ◀ Pools beyond their anticipated life expectancy.
- ◀ Additional population requires additional provision.
- ◀ Some areas of the authority are poorly resourced.
- ◀ Opportunities to link community sports facilities to new school developments (potentially losing the battle)
- ◀ Co-location with other services – Integrated medical centres, libraries, etc.

Vision and objectives



To create a network of high quality, accessible and sustainable sport and leisure facilities, which offer inclusive services for all; enabling the inactive to become active and more residents to fulfil their potential by participating in sport and physical activity, thus improving their long-term health and well-being.

- ◀ To develop a fit for purpose network of better quality (indoor and outdoor) facilities in strategic locations in order to meet the sport and physical activity needs of existing communities and new residents to Thurrock; maximising the following:
 - ◁ Thurrock's investment in new school stock.
 - ◁ Thurrock's planned integrated medical centres.
 - ◁ The opportunities to engage with other services and where possible create multi agency hubs through the co-location of services

Indoor facility objectives

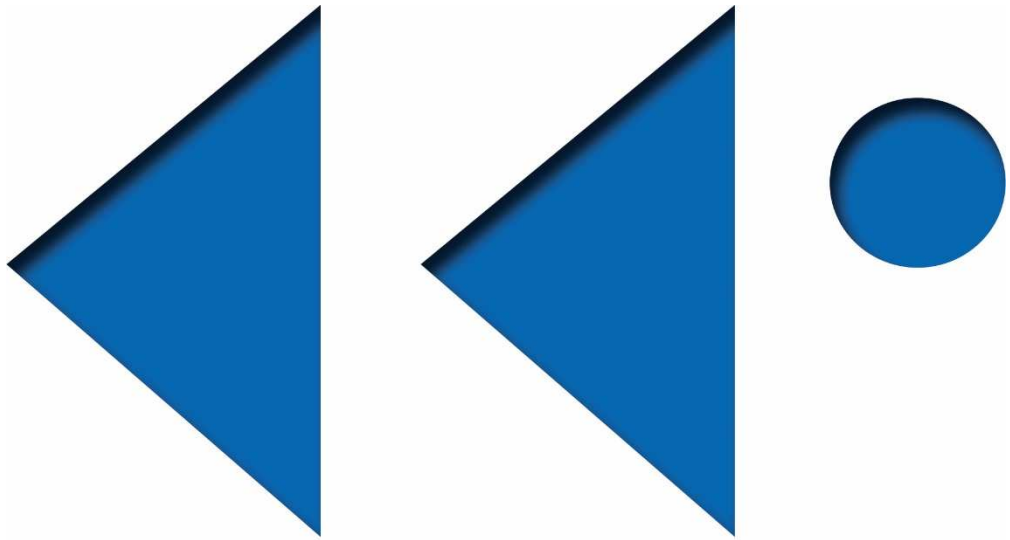


- ◀ To work with colleagues in Education to ensure that any new schools or improvements to sports facilities in existing schools are accompanied by a community use agreement.
- ◀ To work with selected schools to increase their availability for community use.
- ◀ Use the development of new facilities as a catalyst for requiring the Council's leisure management contractor to have a wider focus on health inequalities

Questions



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