

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.

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