

MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

PART 12: OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

- 12.1 This is the Assessment Report considering supply and demand issues for outdoor sports facilities, their ancillary facilities and recreational parks sport provision in Malvern Hills District. It covers the predominant issues for sports pitch provision that services football, rugby union, cricket, golf and hockey. It also considers outdoor facilities for bowls and tennis.
- 12.2 Please note that the audit tables include both public and private pitches in Malvern Hills District.

Context

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 17

- 12.3 PPG 17 defines outdoor sports facilities as those with either natural or artificial surfaces and either publicly or privately owned and should include:
- Tennis courts.
 - Bowling greens.
 - Sports pitches.
 - Golf courses.
 - Athletics tracks.
 - School and other institutional playing fields.
 - Other outdoor sports areas.
- 12.4 As outlined in the introduction to the accompanying 'Open Spaces Assessment Report', PPG 17 recognises the value of outdoor sports facilities along with other types of open spaces in delivering the following broad Government objectives:
- Supporting an urban renaissance.
 - Supporting rural renewal.
 - Promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion.
 - Health and well-being.
 - Promoting more sustainable development.

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Towards a Level Playing Field

- 12.5 The aims and objectives outlined in Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG 17) and the Companion Guide are reiterated in the Sport England playing pitch strategy methodology, 'Towards a Level Playing Field' (February 2003).
- 12.6 It should be noted that 'Towards A Level Playing Field' only deals with the assessment of playing pitch provision and does not cover assessments for other outdoor sports facilities. However, the principles and basic methodology can be applied to the assessment of these other sports.
- 12.7 The benefits of having a playing pitch strategy are identified as follows:

Corporate and strategic

- It ensures a strategic approach to playing pitch provision.
- It provides robust evidence for capital funding.
- It helps deliver government policies.
- It helps demonstrate the value of leisure services.
- It helps the Best Value process.

Planning

- It provides a basis for establishing new pitch requirements arising from new housing developments.
- It is one of the best tools for the protection of pitches.
- It provides a holistic approach to open space improvement and protection.

Operational

- Can result in more efficient use of resources.
- Quality of provision can be enhanced.

Sports development

- It helps identify where community use of school sports pitches is most needed.
- It provides better information to residents and other users of sports pitches.
- It promotes sports development and can help unlock latent demand.

- 12.8 The approach and guidance outlined in 'Towards A Level Playing Field' are fully endorsed by Sport England and the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR) as the appropriate methodology to provide detailed local assessments of playing pitch requirements and as such have been used in this study.

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12.9 Details of the methodology are outlined in Part Two of this document.

National Playing Fields Association (NPFA)

12.10 Both PPG 17 and 'Towards A Level Playing Field' identify the need to develop local standards of provision for playing pitches and other outdoor sports facilities.

12.11 Traditionally, the NPFA 'Six Acre Standard' (reviewed in 2001) has been used. This recommends a minimum standard of 1.6 hectares (four acres) per 1,000 people for outdoor sports. Within this, there is to be a specific allocation of at least 1.2 hectares (three acres) of land for pitch sports. The balance (i.e. 0.4 hectares or one acre) is required for non-pitch sports including athletics, tennis and bowls.

12.12 However, PPG 17 now requires local authorities to undertake detailed local assessments to provide evidence as a basis for developing a local standard, taking into account the quality, capacity and accessibility of outdoor sports facilities rather than just the quantity.

12.13 'Towards A Level Playing Field' does not give definitive instruction on how to calculate local standards for sports pitches but advises that the following need to be taken into consideration:

- Only pitches available for community use should be included.
- Quality of pitches.
- Provision of changing facilities.
- Pitch capacity.
- Future population estimates.