

LOCAL PLAN SUB COMMITTEE - 15 JULY 2019

PART I – NOT DELEGATED

5. LOCAL PLAN – OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION TOPIC PAPER (DCES)

1 Summary

- 1.1 This topic paper will summarise the findings of the Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study (2019), identify key issues which the new Local Plan will need to address and propose policy wording to be contained within the new Local Plan.

2 Details

- 2.1 Under paragraph 96 of the NPPF, it sets out 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 and surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform what provision is required in an area.

- 2.2 The Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study (OSSR) was commissioned as a joint study with Dacorum, Hertsmere and St Albans. The OSSR determines the provision and quality of existing facilities, identifies any surplus or deficiencies of provision, establishes the likely future needs and assists with the setting of new provision standards in the new Local Plan.

- 2.3 The OSSR consists of:

- **Open Space Assessment** – provides detail with regards to what open space provision¹ exists in the area, its condition, distribution and overall quality. It also considers the future requirements for provision and direction on future provision of accessible and high-quality provision for open spaces
- **Indoor Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment** – an assessment of need for sports halls, health and fitness and specialist facilities and looks at all indoor and built facilities² for sport and physical activities including community centres and village Halls. It identifies any deficiencies and/or surpluses of provision and identifies opportunities for new, enhanced and rationalised provision.
- **Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment** – is a supply and demand assessment of playing pitches and other outdoor sports facilities³ in accordance with Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance and Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance.

¹ Open Space includes parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural greenspaces, amenity green space, provision for children and young people and allotments.

² Indoor Sports facilities include sports halls (including school sports halls), swimming pools, health and fitness suites, dance studios, gymnastics provision, indoor bowls, squash courts, village/community halls.

³ Outdoor sports facilities include football, rugby union, rugby league, hockey, cricket, bowls, tennis, athletics (including road running), netball, golf, water sports facilities, archery, cycling

- 2.4 These studies and accompanying strategies and action plans recommend numerous priority projects for Three Rivers that the Leisure Team will consider and will be subject of future reports to the Leisure Committee. Specific projects will be identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan that will accompany the Local Plan.
- 2.5 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) will set out the additional infrastructure required to support growth within the District up to 2036. It will include a review of existing provision for social infrastructure, (such as health and education facilities), physical infrastructure, (such as transport and utilities) and green infrastructure, (such as parks and open spaces).
- 2.6 This Topic Paper only concerns itself with the recommendations that can be translated into local plan policy so that there is a mechanism to support delivery and secure provision and investment into provision where the opportunity arises.
- 2.7 **Open Space Assessment**
- 2.8 The Open Space Assessment (OSA) provides details with regard to what open space provision exists in the District, its condition, distribution and overall quality. It also considers the future requirements based upon population distribution and planned growth over the plan period.
- 2.9 The open space typologies definitions are set out in the table below:

Open Space Typology	Primary purpose
Parks and gardens	This typology often covers urban parks and formal gardens (including designed landscapes), which provide accessible high-quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events. Country park sites may also provide opportunities and functions often associated with parks and can therefore be included within this section (if present)
Natural and semi-natural greenspaces	The natural and semi-natural greenspace typology can include woodland (coniferous, deciduous, mixed) and scrub, grassland (e.g. down-land, meadow), heath or moor, wetlands (e.g. marsh, fen), wastelands (including disturbed ground), and bare rock habitats (e.g. cliffs, quarries, pits) and commons. Such sites are often associated with providing wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.
Amenity greenspace	This is defined as sites offering opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas. It includes informal recreation spaces, housing green spaces, village greens and other incidental space.
Provision for children and young people	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, MUGAs, skateboard areas and teenage shelters.
Allotments	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.

Open Space Typology	Primary purpose
Cemeteries and churchyards	Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.

- 2.10 It is important to note that only sites that are publicly accessible are included in the study (i.e. private sites or land, which people cannot access are not included) and each site was classified based on its primary open space purpose to ensure that each type of space is only counted once as set out in the relevant guidance.
- 2.11 In accordance with best practice recommendations, a size threshold of 0.2 hectares is applied to the inclusion of some typologies within the study. Sites of a smaller size, particularly for the typologies of amenity greenspace and natural and semi-natural greenspace tend to have a different role. Often this is for visual purposes (e.g. small incremental grassed areas such as highway verges) and is therefore considered as offering less recreational use in comparison to other forms of open space. Subsequently sites below 0.2 hectares for these typologies are not audited. However, any sites below the threshold (i.e. those that are identified through consultation as being of significance) were included.
- 2.12 There is a total of 200 accessible sites, equating to over 1,073 hectares of open space. The largest contributor to provision is natural and semi-natural greenspace (870 hectares), accounting for 81% of open space.
- 2.13 The table below provides an overview of accessible open space provision.

Open space typology	Number of sites	Total amount (hectares)
Park and gardens	5	20
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	75 ⁴	870
Amenity greenspace	43	148
Provision for children & young people	51	7
Allotments	17	12
Cemeteries	9	16
TOTAL	200	1,073

- 2.14 The provision standards used to determine deficiencies and surpluses for open space are set in terms of quality, accessibility and quantity. The OSA undertakes the following:
- a quality and value assessment
 - an accessibility assessment, and
 - a quantity assessment against national benchmarks

⁴ If inaccessible sites are included; a total of 118 sites equivalent to 1,320 hectares exists

2.15 Appendix 1 provides further details on these assessments.

2.16 **Summary of the Assessments**

2.17 Parks and Gardens

- There are five sites classified as parks and gardens totalling over 20 hectares. This is an equivalent to 0.21 ha per 1,000 population.
- FIT suggests a standard of 0.80 ha per 1,000 population. Three Rivers is below this.
- The largest contributors to provision is Leavesden Country Park (19.84 ha) located in the Abbots Langley Analysis Area. In contrast, the Chorleywood, Sarratt and Watford Rural analysis areas do not have any formal park provision.
- There are catchment gaps in parks provision in some areas of high population density. This is most prominent in the Watford Rural analysis area. Despite gaps being present, all are met by other types of open space provision including amenity greenspace and natural and semi natural greenspace.
- With the exception of one site; Dickinson Square, all parks in Three Rivers score above the 60% quality threshold. The highest scoring site is Leavesden Country Park, with an overall score of 72%. The site is a Green Flag Award holder.
- All assessed sites score highly for value, with the important social interaction, health benefits, ecological value and sense of place sites offer being recognised.

2.18 Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace

- There are 118 natural and semi-natural greenspace sites covering over 1,320 hectares. This includes all sites including those considered as inaccessible. There are 75 sites considered accessible; an equivalent to 9.39 ha per 1,000 population.
- FIT suggests a standard of 1.80 ha per 1,000 population. Three Rivers (and all individual analysis areas) are well above the FIT standard.
- There is a good distribution of natural and semi-natural sites across the area.
- A total of 53% of sites rate above the threshold set for quality with 35 sites rating below the quality threshold. This is mainly due to a lack of ancillary features. However, this is often intentional in order to reduce inappropriate uses whilst encouraging greater conservation.
- All but two sites rate above the threshold for value. This demonstrates the added benefit natural and semi-natural greenspaces can provide especially in terms of contributing to flora and fauna. Larger sites may also provide a good level of recreational offer.

2.19 Amenity Green Space

- There are 43 amenity greenspace sites equating to over 147 hectares of provision. This is an equivalent to 1.60 ha per 1,000 population

- FIT suggests a standard of 0.60 ha per 1,000 population. Three Rivers is above this.
- Mapping demonstrates that all areas of greater population density are generally well served by amenity greenspace provision based on a 480m catchment. However, there are some gaps observed to the east of the Watford Rural Analysis Area and north of Croxley Green Area.
- Over three quarters (88%) of assessed amenity sites rate above the threshold for quality. The majority of sites to score lower for quality are observed as being basic, small pockets of green space and lack ancillary features.
- In addition to its multifunctional role, amenity greenspace makes a valuable contribution to visual aesthetics for communities – hence all sites rate above the value threshold.

Provision for Children and Young People

- There are 51 play sites identified; a total of over seven hectares.
- Fields in Trust (FIT) suggests 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population as a guideline quantity standard. Three Rivers has a current provision level of 0.08 hectares per 1,000 population.
- The mapping highlights that all areas of greater population density across the District have access to at least one form of play area. Small gaps are noted in the densely populated areas of Abbots Langley Analysis Area as well some densely populated parts on the north east of Croxley Green Analysis Area.
- A greater proportion of play sites (83%) rate above the threshold for quality. Lower quality scoring sites tend to reflect a lack in and/or range of equipment and/or its general condition.
- All play provision rates above the threshold for value; reflecting the social, healthy and developmental benefits provision can provide.

2.20 Allotments

- There are 17 allotment sites: equating to more than 12 hectares.
- Current provision of 0.13 hectares per 1,000 population is below the NSALG recommended amount (0.25 hectares per 1000 people).
- Most allotment sites across the District are owned by the Local Authority but managed by either allotment associations or Parish Councils.
- The majority of allotment sites (80%) score above the threshold for quality.
- All allotments rate above the threshold for value except for one site. This reflects the associated social inclusion and health benefits, amenity value and the sense of place offered by such forms of provision.

2.21 Cemeteries

- There are nine cemeteries and churchyards, equating to over 16 hectares. The largest contributor to provision is Carpenders Park Cemetery (7.64 hectares).
- No standards are set for cemeteries. The need for additional cemetery provision should be driven by the requirement for burial demand and capacity.
- Over three quarters of cemeteries in Three Rivers (78%) score above the quality threshold.
- Those sites scoring below the threshold tend to be smaller sites, which as a result have fewer ancillary features including bins.
- All but one identified cemeteries and churchyards are assessed as being of high value.

2.22 Current Provision against recommended quantity standards

2.23 The table below shows the position for each sub-area as to whether it is sufficient or identified as having a shortfall against the recommended quantity standards for each type of open space except for cemeteries.⁵

Analysis area	Parks and gardens		Natural & Semi-natural		Amenity greenspace		Allotments	
	(Hectares per 1000 population)							
	0.21		9.39		1.60		0.13	
	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -
Abbots Langley	0.93	+0.72	1.62	-7.77	2.31	+0.71	0.08	-0.05
Chorleywood	-	-0.21	17.17	+8.43	0.14	-1.46	0.32	+0.19
Croxley Green	0.01	-0.20	7.18	-2.21	0.47	-1.13	0.28	+0.15
Rickmansworth	0.01	-0.20	10.08	-0.69	1.90	+0.30	0.10	-0.03
Sarratt	-	-0.21	137.81	+128.42	1.21	-0.39	0.53	+0.40
Watford Rural	-	-0.21	4.22	-5.17	1.92	+0.32	0.03	-0.10

2.24 All analysis areas are observed as having shortfalls in some form of open space against recommended standards.

2.25 Against the recommended standards Croxley Green, Rickmansworth and Watford Rural are identified as having quantity shortfalls against three types of open space. Only the Abbots Langley Analysis Area is identified as not having a shortfall in parks and gardens.

⁵ No quantity or accessibility standards are suggested for cemeteries. Provision of this type should be informed by information such as burial demand.

2.26 The table below shows the position for each sub-area as to whether it is sufficient or identified as having a shortfall against the recommended standard in terms of provision for children and young people.

Analysis area	Hectares per 1000 population	
	Current provision	Sufficiency/deficiency against 0.08 recommended standard
Abbots Langley	0.11	+0.03
Chorleywood	0.01	-0.07
Croxley Green	0.07	-0.01
Rickmansworth	0.08	Level
Sarratt	0.05	-0.03
Watford Rural	0.08	Level

2.27 The Abbots Langley Analysis Area is the only sub-area to be above the recommended standard for play provision. Rickmansworth and Watford Rural are both level with the recommended quantity standard. Croxley Green is only just below the recommended standard for play provision. Both Chorleywood and Sarratt are below.

2.28 Future requirements

2.29 The figures provide an initial indication to the levels of open space provision required as a result of new housing growth in order for the current levels of provision to be maintained. It should be treated as a starting point for further exploration and negotiation to ensure new populations are served by adequate open space provision.

Open space type	Quantity standards (per 1,000 population)	Future requirement (hectares)
Parks & gardens	0.21	6.11
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	9.39	273.16
Amenity greenspace	1.60	46.54
Allotment	0.08	2.33
Provision for children & young people	0.13	3.78

2.30 Indoor Leisure Facilities

2.31 The Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy (ILFS) was developed in accordance with available guidance including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) and relevant guidance produced by Sport England and Fields in Trust⁶

⁶ Includes Sport England's Assessing Needs and Opportunities for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities and their Active Places Power and Facilities Planning Model (interactive tools that facilitates the strategic planning of sport provision and community sports facilities)

2.32 Two of the main assessments used in the study are:

- Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM). The FPM seeks to assess whether the capacity of existing facilities for a particular sport are capable of meeting local demand, and
- The Sport England's Sports Facilities Calculator which quantifies additional demand generated by new populations and development based on population projections.

2.33 The ILFS provides details in respect of the indoor sports facilities in the District, their condition, location, availability and overall quality. It further considers demand for facilities based on population distribution, planned growth and takes into consideration health and socio-economic determinants.

2.34 The ILFS undertook an assessment of the provision of the following:

- sports halls
- swimming pools
- Health and fitness facilities
- Dance Studios
- gymnastics
- indoor bowls
- squash
- village halls and community centres

2.35 Sports Halls

2.36 These are indoor multi-purpose sports halls which are the primary sports facilities for community sport. They are venues which allow a range of sport and recreational facilities to be played such as badminton, basketball, netball, indoor cricket nets, football (5-a-side and training), martial arts, archery, fencing etc.

2.37 The standard methodology for measuring sports halls is the number of badminton sized court areas contained within the floor area. Any shortfall or deficit is expressed as the number of courts.

2.38 There are 20 different sports halls (of all sizes) on 15 different sites across the District and a further 22 publicly available sports halls within two miles⁷ of the District boundary.

2.39 The ILFS determined that the overall supply of sports halls in the District is good, with sports halls distributed across the urban area and with relatively high levels of satisfied demand. There is around a further 26.8% of capacity available in sports hall capacity, before reaching the 80% comfort level, globally across Three Rivers' sports halls. The most popular hall sports in the Three Rivers area, identified in the report, are badminton, netball, and basketball.

⁷ The two-mile boundary is indicative of how far people may be willing to travel and is used for modelling purposes.

2.40 The projected increase in population will lead to an increase in demand for sports hall space. The modelling shows that there will be a need for an additional 2.05 courts, up to 2026, and a further 1.44 courts up to 2036.

2.41 As there is a current surplus of supply over demand even at peak times, the study recommends that the estimated increase in demand should be accommodated by the current sports hall stock. There is, however, a need to invest in maintenance and improvements to those sports halls which have been identified as being below average condition.

2.42 Swimming Pools

2.43 There are 10 swimming pools at seven sites in Three Rivers, six of which are main/general pools (4 lanes x 20m or larger in size). The audit identified that there is a good supply of water space with facilities seemingly located in the right places. Two swimming pools (William Penn Leisure Centre and Sir James Altham) offer pay and play access. It is worth noting that Sir James Altham Pool is in the process of being replaced by South Oxhey Leisure Centre in 2020 but will remain open until the new facilities open.

2.44 The new swimming pool at South Oxhey Leisure Centre will improve the quality of the stock of swimming pools available and is likely to retain current and attract new users, thereby increasing swimming participation in the District.

2.45 Over half of residents live within one mile of a swimming pool and all residents live within 20 minutes' drive of one. There is a high level of import and export with residents using facilities in other authorities⁸.

2.46 Sport England has a benchmark of 70% where it deems a swimming pool to be considered as busy. Occupancy above this level suggests that a pool 'uncomfortably full' with insufficient space to swim. Three Rivers pools collectively are operating at 49.7% capacity, well below the 70% level.

2.47 The ILFS concludes that:

- There is no hotspot of unmet demand and the District does not currently warrant additional provision.
- There is sufficient capacity to enable the sport to grow and accommodate immediate population growth.
- The spare capacity identified in the Facilities Planning Model (20.3%) can sufficiently satisfy the demand identified in the Sports Facilities Calculator (1.47 lanes up to 2026 and a further 1.01 lanes up to 2036).

2.48 This means there is no need for a new facility to be built – future demand is expected to be met by existing capacity.

2.49 Health and Fitness Suites/Dance Studios

2.50 The popularity of health and fitness facilities and demand for dance studios for class-based programmes is continuing to rise nationally. Health and fitness facilities and

⁸ There are a further 10 community swimming pools available within a two mile radial catchment of Three Rivers which is indicative of how far people might be likely to travel.

associated class-based programmes have the potential to impact positively on all residents in Three Rivers.

- 2.51 There are seven 'main' health and fitness gyms in Three Rivers (health and fitness gyms with 20+ stations). Generally, such facilities tend to be located in more densely populated areas of the District with 61% living within one mile of such a facility and all residents within 20 minutes' drive time. The audit suggests an undersupply of facilities across the District. However, there is a substantial amount of health and fitness provision within two miles of the District boundary, with 31 health and fitness gyms offering over 2,300 stations. Within TRDC there has been a recent closure a health and fitness facility at Abbots Langley citing local competition as a reason for its closure.
- 2.52 In depth feasibility work would be needed prior to investing in additional facilities to ensure there is sufficient demand given the significant supply within close proximity to the authority.
- 2.53 Dance studios are an important element of the wider health, fitness and conditioning market.
- 2.54 The KKP audit found 13 studios, all of which were subject to a non-technical assessment. None are reported to be private use only, four have pay and play access and the others require a membership or there is a need to be a member of a sports club or association. The majority of the studios are in good condition with only two rated below average. An additional new studio has been added as part of the facility upgrade at South Oxhey Leisure Centre.
- 2.55 Gymnastics
- 2.56 There are no dedicated facilities for gymnastics in the District. The 5 British Gymnastics affiliated teams within the District use existing community facilities including the YMCA Abbots Langley, scout huts, sport centres, Rickmansworth School and The Reach Free School.
- 2.57 The majority of provision is for pre-school and early years with one competitive club that reports being restricted by facilities.
- 2.58 Projected housing growth in the area is likely to lead to an increase in demand for gymnastics particularly at a recreational level.
- 2.59 Indoor Bowls
- 2.60 There are no indoor bowls facilities in Three Rivers. There are seven indoor bowls facilities within 30 minutes' drive of Three Rivers; they offer a total of 33 rinks varying from three to six at different sites.
- 2.61 Consultation with English Indoor bowling Association confirms that it does not consider Three Rivers to be a priority area as facilities in the adjoining local authority areas can cater for current demand. It also reports that it can cater for the future anticipated demand as projected below for the period 2018 to 2030.
- 2.62 Squash Courts
- 2.63 Squash is limited to recreational play with no clubs located in the District.

2.64 Three sites provide eight courts in Three Rivers. Venues are restricted to the central areas of the District. Abbots Langley and South Oxhey do not have local access to squash courts. There are 11 sites and 41 squash courts in neighbouring authorities within 20 minutes' drive of Three Rivers.

2.65 The IFLS concludes that there is no requirement to build additional courts but there is a need to maintain/improve the condition of existing courts and support the development of squash where possible.

2.66 Community Centres and Village Halls

2.67 There are 37 identified village halls and community centres in the District. They are important local facilities which can provide access to a range of physical activities including dance, fitness classes, martial arts, table tennis, carpet bowls etc.

2.68 Although community centres generally rely on volunteers to operate, many offer facilities to the local community at the times needed i.e. morning, afternoon and evening and activities tend to reflect the needs of the local community.

2.69 The IFLS concludes that areas with higher population density are serviced by village halls or community centres and there is no need to develop additional venues for the current population.

2.70 The projected growth in housing development is likely to lead to the need for additional spaces for indoor activity; community spaces which can enhance physical activity, cultural and sporting activity need to be considered by planners when developing new neighbourhoods.

2.71 Playing Pitch Strategy

2.72 The Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) was developed in accordance with Sport England guidance and under the direction of a steering group led by the Council and including National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) and builds upon the preceding Assessment Report and is capable of:

- Providing adequate planning guidance to assess development proposals affecting outdoor sports facilities, as appropriate, directing CIL contribution secured through development and informing and shaping local planning policy
- Informing the protection and provision of playing pitches
- Informing land use decisions in respect of future use of existing playing pitch areas and playing fields (capable of accommodating pitches)
- Providing a strategic framework for the provision and management of playing pitches
- Supporting external funding bids and maximising support for laying pitches
- Providing the basis for ongoing monitoring and review of the use, distribution, function, quality and accessibility of playing pitches.

2.73 The following types of outdoor sports facilities were included in the PPS:

- Football
- Rugby Union

- Rugby League⁹
- Hockey
- Cricket
- Bowls
- Tennis
- Athletics (including road running)
- Netball
- Golf
- Others as appropriate i.e. water sports facilities, archery, cycling

2.74 Playing pitch sports (football, rugby, cricket and hockey) were assessed using the guidance set out in Sport England's PPS Guidance: An approach to developing and delivering a PPS.

2.75 For the remaining sports/facilities, the supply and demand principles of Sport England methodology: Assessing needs and Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities were followed to ensure compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). (Appendix 2)

2.76 The purpose of this study is to identify current levels of provision within the District across the public, education, voluntary and commercial sectors and to compare this with the current and likely future levels of demand. The primary purpose is therefore to provide a strategic framework that ensures the provision of outdoor sports facilities meet the local needs of existing and future residents up until the 2036 Local Plan period.

2.77 PPS Conclusions

2.78 The existing position for all pitch sports is either, demand is currently being met, or there is a current or future shortfall. There are current shortfalls on grass pitches for football, rugby union and cricket.

2.79 For football, current shortfalls are identified in the Abbots Langley, Chorleywood, Croxley Green and Rickmansworth analysis areas and it is anticipated that these shortfalls will be exacerbated in the future, with new shortfalls appearing on alternative pitch configurations. There are no current or future shortfalls in the Sarratt or Watford Rural analysis areas. (Appendix 3 Analysis areas)

2.80 For rugby union and cricket, both current and future shortfalls can be attributed to specific club sites. Both current and future shortfalls for rugby union are attributed to Chess Valley RUFC. Likewise, for cricket, current and future shortfalls are attributed to Abbots Langley CC and Bushey CC.

2.81 For all remaining sports, the current stock of facilities is meeting demand and is expected to do so in the future, although there is a requirement to increase quality at specific sites across each sport.

2.82 The study identifies a clear shortfall for three full size 3G pitches¹⁰ which cannot be alleviated unless new provision is created. There is a need to explore the feasibility

⁹ Following consultation with RFL, Three Rivers is not considered a priority area for establishing a new rugby league club as

Hemel Stags RLFC located in Dacorum adequately serves Three Rivers.

¹⁰ 3G pitches – made of longer synthetic grass which offers better grip, smoother playing

of future provision at strategic sites in the Abbots Langley, Chorleywood and Croxley Green analysis areas which contain the highest level of football demand.

2.83 It should be noted that Watford Council has consulted on a masterplan which includes a 3G pitch for Woodside Playing Fields which if it progresses would serve the Abbots Langley analysis area and a proposal for the conversion of a full size pitch to a 3G pitch at St Clement Danes School is progressing through the Football Foundation and is likely to be provided within the next 12 months. This would address the shortfall in Chorleywood analysis area.

2.84 PPS Recommendations

2.85 It is important that the current levels of provision are protected, maintained and enhanced to secure provision now and in the future. For most sports the current and future demand for provision identified in Three Rivers can be overcome through maximising use of existing stock through a combination of:

- Improving quality in order to improve the capacity to accommodate more demand
- Transferring demand from overplayed sites to sites with spare capacity
- The re-designation of facilities
- Securing long term community use at school sites including those currently unavailable
- Working with commercial and private providers to increase usage
- Support proposals for 3G pitches

2.86 The Local Plan will therefore need to include policies that will: (for sports halls, gymnastics, squash, community centres and village halls)

- protect existing facilities (open spaces, sport and recreation facilities including playing pitches (both in use and currently not in use), golf facilities, sport halls, village halls, community centres and children's play spaces)
- ensure new development supports such facilities through developer contributions for the maintenance and improvement of existing facilities or through new provision
- ensure development resulting in the provision of community facilities which are not usually available to the public (such as school sports facilities) will be required to enter into Community Use Agreements

2.87 The proposed Draft Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities and Children's Play Space is set out in Appendix 4 to this report.

2.88 A separate topic paper (Community, Leisure and Cultural Facilities) will consider policy issues relating to community centres and village halls.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

The Council has a legal requirement to produce a Local Plan.

surface and is more weather proofed than regular grass pitches,

4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets.

Financial, Legal, Equal Opportunities, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website, Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

None specific.

5 Recommendation

- 5.1 That the Local Plan Sub Committee note the contents of this report and recommend to the Policy & Resources Committee the Draft Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities and Children's Play Space Policy as set out in Appendix 4.

Report prepared by: Claire May, Head of Planning Policy & Projects

Background Papers

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2019)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Open Space Quality, Value, Accessibility and Quantity Assessments

Appendix 2 National Planning Policy Framework and Sport England's Policy

Appendix 3 Analysis areas

Appendix 4 Draft Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities and Children's Play Space Policy