



**Stafford Borough Council
PPG17 Assessment and
Open Space, Sport and Recreation
Facilities Strategy
Appendices A-E: March 2009**



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A

Comments on the Consultation Draft Strategy

Introduction

1 In late 2008, the Borough Council circulated a consultation draft strategy to stakeholders and also made it available on its website. This appendix sets out the comments received by the Council and our response to them. Some of the comments relate to the fact that the consultation draft was considerably shorter than the full report of over 250 pages plus appendices. All of the comments have been reported verbatim; the only elements omitted are those that did not relate directly to the content of the strategy such as “Thank you for consulting ... I set out below our comments on the draft”.

2 In broad terms, three general issues stand out from the consultation responses that are worth a reasonably detailed response:

- A desire by national agencies to see their agendas given greater prominence and priority
- Concerns over the suggestions in the strategy that football and rugby will “almost certainly” move to artificial surfaces in future
- A desire by national agency consultees to see their provision standards, or benchmarking data, used as key elements of the strategy

National Agency Agendas

3 A strategy that merely repeats what everyone else has already said is not a strategy but a literature review. This is not to disparage the strategies, views and priorities of agencies such as Natural England, Sport England and others; they are a valuable input. However, if this strategy included many of the comments on the draft – for example, descriptions of the work of British Waterways, Natural England or the Woodland Trust – it would be unnecessarily long and such descriptions would add very little to it. Its role is to set out a balanced view of what is needed for Stafford, taking account of the wider policy context as necessary. Given the limited resources available

to it, the Borough Council cannot be expected to respond positively to everything for which other agencies are responsible and those things to which they believe it should give priority. This said, the strategy deliberately identifies a number of cross-cutting issues that are critical to the future of the Borough, its communities and its flora and fauna, as tiny components of a wider world that it is experiencing rapid and sometimes uncertain change.

4 Related to this, some consultees have asked the Council to give priority to using planning obligations in ways that will help deliver their particular objectives. Most development proposals will give rise to a range of impacts that it may be desirable to mitigate. In many cases, it will not be possible to negotiate all the obligations that may be desirable and the Council will then have to determine its priorities in the light of the likely impacts of the development and the context within which it is set. Accordingly it is not possible for the Council to give any general commitments relating to the priority it will accord to any particular planning obligations. However, it will be publishing a Supplementary Planning Document setting out how it intends to use planning conditions and planning obligations in relating to open space, sport and recreation provision.

5 Some of the comments on the draft – written in October 2008 – indicate that other strategies, not yet published, may be useful. This may well be the case, but if everyone has to wait until everyone else has published their strategy, no-one will ever complete one. However, this is not to deny that it will be sensible of the Borough Council to keep other relevant strategies under review.

Artificial Surfaces for the Winter Pitch Sports

“Here’s the truth – children don’t want to play sport on badly drained 1950s scraps of land. They want showers, fences and floodlights. They want quality facilities.”

Tessa Jowell MP, Sport Summit, July 2003

6 The draft strategy forecast a significantly growth in the use of artificial surfaces for football and rugby until for most practical purposes they replace grass, reflecting the changes adopted by hockey some years ago. This aroused the scorn of one of the two football respondents (although the other wanted to have access to an ATP for training purposes) while Sport England’s comments repeatedly challenged the acceptability of artificial surfaces. In essence, its concerns are:

- National governing bodies do not support the development of ATPs instead of grass pitches, more as complementary training facilities, and national government policy set out in PPG17 focuses on protecting grass pitches (which are likely to be lost to

ATPs)

- The assumption that climate change will lead to increasing water-logging of grass pitches and a shift from 11 a-side to 5 a-side football is a sweeping generalisation and not one which is robustly demonstrated
- Suggestions that the Council should press the local leagues to move matches onto artificial pitches might be misplaced as it is the national governing bodies who would have to adopt such policies and practices and national policy does not support such a shift

7 Clearly, therefore, the draft strategy failed adequately to explain the reasons underpinning its emphasis on the future use of artificial surfaces. They relate to national policy; climate change; growing acceptance by players and governing bodies; the shift from 11-a-side to five-a-side football; the financial sustainability of grass pitches; and the development of sports technology.

National Policy

8 The Government, Sport England, local authorities and governing bodies all want to increase participation in most forms of sport and football and rugby are key “target sports” for young people. If they succeed, we will need to accommodate more training and more matches than at present. This means either providing many more pitches – which will require ever more land - or increasing the amount of use that individual pitches can sustain. It is naïve to believe that protecting low capacity playing fields that are being used at or close to capacity, many of which are of poor quality, have no or poor changing (see paragraph 15 below) and may be unusable following heavy rain or frost is a vital part of growing and then sustaining higher levels of participation.

9 This leads to the issue of environmental sustainability. The UK needs to reduce its dependency on motor vehicles and reduce the amount of travel that we all do. Inevitably our towns and cities have to be progressively more densely developed and we have to make the very best use of every scrap of readily accessible land. This will increase the importance of local greenspaces, particularly in relation to social and community activities; local amenity and biodiversity; the absorption of atmospheric pollution by trees and other vegetation; the mitigation of flooding, heavy rainfall and “heat island” effects in urban areas; the provision of safe, attractive routes for walking and cycling; and general “liveability”.

10 Pitches perform very poorly against these requirements. Large areas of flat, short mown grass have very little visual interest; they enhance the amenity of the handful of dwellings or other buildings around their perimeter, but the same area of land could enhance the

amenity of significantly more houses if broken up into small parcels or a linear green corridor; their biodiversity value is extremely low, especially when compared with their size; the lack of vegetation other than grass means that they absorb very little pollution; they offer very little shade; they are hardly ever used as routes from A to B, not least because pitches cannot have hard surfaced paths across them; they are large areas of land used by only small numbers of people; and they require very high levels of subsidy. Sport England's Planning Bulletin 14 refers to "wide expanses of grass pitches, which may be only used twice a week for sport and are also used by dog walkers, to the detriment of players".

PPG17

11 PPG17, *Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation* (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, now the Department for Communities and Local Government) is the key national policy guidance on open space, sport and recreation planning. Sport England asserts that PPG17 "focuses on protecting grass pitches". This is not correct. Its main focus is on open space provision, emphasised by the change in the title from *Sport and Recreation* when it was first issued in 1991. Within the document, one paragraph - paragraph 15 - relates specifically to playing fields. This states explicitly that planning authorities can allow the development of playing fields if "the proposed development is for an outdoor or indoor sport facility of sufficient benefit to outweigh the loss of the playing field", even if there is no pitches strategy in place. It is self-evident that an ATP that can be used for around 40 hours per week, in all weathers other than snow and hard frost, is of sufficient benefit to outweigh the loss of a grass pitch that can be used for 3-4 hours per week and may be unplayable for weeks at a time.

Climate Change

12 Sport England asseverates that "the assumption that climate change will lead to increasing water-logging of grass pitches ... is a sweeping generalisation and not one which is robustly demonstrated".

13 In *Climate Change - The UK Programme* (2000), a range of government departments stated unequivocally that:

The UK needs to adapt to the predicted impacts of climate change including sea level rise, droughts and more intense rainfall. Extreme weather events, such as severe flooding, will become more common.

14 The *Planning and Climate Change Supplement to PPS1* (2007) states that

The evidence that climate change is happening ... is strong and indisputable ...In the UK, we are likely to see more extreme weather events, including hotter and drier summers, flooding and rising sea levels ... There will be permanent changes in the natural environment

15 Droughts, more intense rainfall, extreme weather events, hotter and drier summers and flooding cannot fail to have a significant impact on the condition of many if not most grass pitches. Coupled with hotter and drier summers, increasing hosepipe bans may become more common in summer, preventing pitch owners from watering their pitches to encourage sufficient grass growth to help them recover from winter wear. It is inevitable that pitches will be unplayable more often and for longer and that their overall carrying capacity – the amount of use they can sustain without significant damage and deterioration - will reduce. Furthermore, the overall condition of the UK's pitch stock is already poor: in England, research for the Football Association (*Register of English Football Facilities, 2003*, available at www.theFA.com) found that 41% of football pitches need drainage improvements; 38% have no changing and 94% no female changing. Only 6% have floodlights. It has estimated that bringing England's football pitches up to a decent standard will cost around £2,000,000,000. This money is simply not available. Research for **sportscotland** found a need to reconstruct roughly 80% of all grass pitches (National Audit of Scotland's Sports Facilities - Summary Report, 2006).

16 The past two or three years have seen flooding in many parts of the country and many football and rugby pitches have been unplayable for longer than in the preceding decade. There have been no matches in some local football leagues for periods of 2-3 months in the past three winters. Anyone who watches professional football or rugby on the television cannot fail to have noticed that the pitches used – which generally have relatively overall low levels of use and full-time professional groundstaff - are increasingly muddy. There is also noticeably more criticism of the state of pitches in the sports pages of newspapers than in the recent past.

Growing Acceptance of Artificial Surfaces

World Governing Bodies

17 The world governing bodies for both association and rugby union football have approved the use of recently developed artificial surfaces for their sports up to and including international level.

English Governing Bodies

18 The Football Association's website (www.thefa.com) states in relation to artificial grass pitches that:

There continues to be significant interest in the use of artificial grass pitches for clubs in the National League System and below. Part of this interest has been driven by the successful installations in England at Woodley Sports FC, Unibond League Division One, and at Durham City FC, Northern League ... Following the introduction of artificial grass pitches into some FA competitions last season, the various FA Committees have again approved the use of such pitches in their respective competitions for season 2008/9:

- FA Trophy
- FA Vase
- FA Youth Cup (qualifying rounds only)
- FA Women's Premier League and Cup
- FA Sunday Cup
- FA County Youth Cup

19 The Football Association (FA) and Rugby Football Union (RFU) jointly published *Artificial Grass Pitches for Rugby and Association Football: Performance Standards and Design Guidelines for Community Use Pitches and Training Areas* in 2007. While the FA has decided that decisions relating to the acceptability of artificial surfaces for local matches should be left to local leagues, the RFU regards grass and artificial turf pitches as equally acceptable for matches. Indeed, once the RFU is satisfied that an ATP complies with the appropriate International Rugby Board regulation a team cannot refuse to use it. Its guidance note entitled *Rugby Union and Artificial Grass Pitches* issued by the RFU states:

"No distinction is made between Artificial Grass Pitches and natural turf in terms of ability to play competitive matches. No team or player will be required to "voluntarily consent" to play. If a player decides that he does not wish to play on an artificial surface it becomes a matter for his club and the club at which the artificial surface is situated. A team will no longer be able to claim "home advantage" as a reason not to play."

Sport England Planning Bulletin 14

20 Sport England has publicly highlighted the "almost inevitable" greater use of artificial surfaces for football and rugby. Its Planning Bulletin 14 *Intensive Sports Facilities Revisited* (published as long ago as 2003) states:

*Half of the Euro 2008 and World Cup matches in 2010 will be played on synthetic turf and it is **almost inevitable that club matches will eventually be played on such surfaces** (emphasis added). New generation pitches are now commonly used by American football teams for training and matches. In the UK they are used for indoor and outdoor training pitches by some of the biggest soccer clubs in Europe including Leeds United, Liverpool and Glasgow Rangers ...*

Looking further into the future, the availability of better quality synthetic turf pitches which will be used for competitive games at all levels, from local park sides to international level, may encourage providers to concentrate more on synthetic turf and less on natural grass.

Sport England Research

21 Sport England and **sportscotland** also published jointly funded research on the use of artificial turf pitches (referred to synthetic turf pitches, or STPs) in 2006. Its findings included:

“... users who currently only use the STP for training were asked whether they would also like to use it for matches, around three-quarters of those who responded said that they would. The proportion providing a positive response was particularly high amongst hockey players (90%) while 72% of football players said they would like to use STPs for matches, rising to 78% amongst 3G pitch users.

22 The same research asked users to rate the quality of various aspects of the ATP they had used before being surveyed, on a scale of 1 = very poor to 5 = very good. The average scores given by football players were:

	Sand based pitch	3G pitch
The size of pitch	4.58	4.67
The lighting	4.37	4.42
The location of facility	4.38	4.33
The quality of playing surface	3.97	4.51
Ease of booking	3.88	4.33
Changing facilities	3.96	4.46
Overall value for money	3.99	3.92
Facilities for food and drink	3.35	3.49

23 Accordingly football players gave the highest ratings to the size of the pitch and, for 3G pitches, the quality of the playing surface. Clearly, 3G pitches are increasingly acceptable to football players. It is unlikely that football players would give most grass pitches an average score of

4.51 out of 5 for the quality of the playing surface.

Staffordshire Governing Bodies and Clubs

24 In the interview we conducted in the early part of preparing the strategy with the Staffordshire Football Association's County Development Manager, he identified a need for full size 3G pitches as one of the main priorities for the future. It is also worth noting that the Football Association invested in the development of the ATP, related changing accommodation and a coaching centre at Alleyne's School. In addition, 9 of the 21 football club or league interviewees identified lack of floodlit pitches and 8 the quality of grass pitches as constraints on the development of football in the Borough.

25 The responses to the draft strategy from the Rugby Football Union and Stoke Rugby Club raised no objection to the greater use of ATPs for rugby. Indeed, the RFU response included both the joint Football Association/RFU specification for ATPs (see below) and the RFU guidelines on the use of ATPs for club matches. It also stated that the provision of at least one ATP for rugby should be a high priority in the strategy. The Stoke RUFC response stated that the Club wants to develop an ATP and has the land for it. The Staffordshire Football Association did not offer any comments on the draft strategy.

26 In the interview we undertook with the Secretary of the Stafford and District Sunday Football League in the early part of developing the strategy, he identified the problems holding back the development of football in the Borough as players getting older; the quality of changing facilities; the shortage of match officials; the lack of floodlit pitches; and match times not suiting many players. The only cost-effective way of doing these things will be to provide more high capacity floodlit ATPs with good quality changing. Providing floodlights on existing grass pitches increases their carrying capacity to only a very limited extent and as the Stafford Saturday Football League disbanded some time ago it is clear that the most suitable match times for some players will be midweek. The Tessa Jowell quotation above expresses the Government view that youngsters want access to artificial turf pitches

The Shift from 11-a-side to 5-a-side Football

27 The Staffordshire Football Association strategy - like a number of other county strategies - has addressing the decline in 11 v 11 football as one of its priorities.

28 *Levelling the Playing Field: A Guide to the Production of Playing Pitch Strategies* (Sport England, 2003) summarises trends in the pitch sports. It includes the following:

- **Key facts:** a 300-400% growth in informal five-a-side football (over the past decade): a footnote indicates that this is based on unpublished information from the Football Association. It also relates to the development of commercial 5-a-side centres.
- **Key trends:** More midweek fixtures, more non-grass pitches
- **Implications for pitches:** Players defecting to five-a-side, therefore additional floodlit synthetic turf pitches/MUGAs may be required

29 The Government's General Household Survey (GHS) asked questions on sports participation in 1987, 1990, 1993, 1996 and 2002. In these years it found the percentage of adults (ie those aged 16 and over) taking part in any form of football in the four weeks before interview was 10%, 10%, 9%, 10%, and 9%. Therefore overall adult football participation was more or less static between 1987 and 2002, but within this overall position the FA believes that participation in five-a-side football trebled or quadrupled. It is not possible to conclude from this that participation in 11-a-side declined, but clearly there is significantly more 5-a-sides being played now than a decade ago. A key factor has been the development of commercial outdoor 5-a-side soccer centres, all of which use artificial turf courts. If players seriously disliked these surfaces they would not use them. Full size ATPs are also used a significant part of the time for small-sided games.

30 **Sportscotland** undertakes an annual omnibus survey of sports participation in Scotland and reports "three year rolling average" levels of participation in order to even out single year results. The survey uses a sample size of 1000 adults and 250 children every second month. For the three year periods from 1994-6 to 2005-7 it found that the percentage of people over 16 taking part in any form of football at least once a month was 10%, 9%, 10%, 10%, 10%, 11%, 10%, 10%, 9%, 8%, 9%, 8%, 8% and 9%. It also found that the percentage of 8-15 years olds taking part in any form of football at least once per month in the same periods was 57%, 57%, 56%, 53%, 53%, 55%, 52% and 52%. Therefore the objective evidence is that participation in both adult and junior football has declined slightly since 1994-6. This is confirmed by the loss of teams and in some cases divisions from local leagues up and down the country. The most recent **sportscotland** survey also differentiated between participation in 11-a-side and 5-a-side football. It found that 6% of males aged 16 and over took part in 11-a-side football at least once a month in the year before interview and 13% in 5-a-side football. For females aged 16 and over the percentages were 1% and less than 0.5% respectively; amongst boys aged 8-15 26% and 26% respectively; and amongst girls aged 8-15 6% and 6%. Therefore, in Scotland 5-a-side football is significantly more popular than 11-a-side amongst adults but for 8-15 years the two versions of the game have identical

participation rates for boys and girls.

The Financial Sustainability of Grass Pitches

31 Sustainability can also be defined in terms of affordability and grass pitches require very high levels of subsidy. As part of research for the Scottish Sports Council, we monitored the use and maintenance of a sample of pitches in and around Dundee for a period of a year. We then asked a contractor to price all of the maintenance operations in that year, so that the maintenance costs of all pitches were based on the same labour, machinery and materials costs, and divided the total for each pitch by the number of hours of use. None of the grass football, hockey and rugby pitches were used for an annual total of more than 200 hours with the average being just over 100 hours, equivalent to about 2 hours per week. The mineral pitches were used for an annual average of 260 hours, or nearly 5 hours per week, and the one artificial pitch for an annual total of nearly 2,300 hours or an average of 44 hours per week. In terms of maintenance cost per hour of use, the grass football and hockey pitches ranged from £12 to £92; the mineral pitches from £44 to £125; and for the one artificial pitch it was £3. As we calculated all of these costs in 1990, maintenance costs today will obviously be much higher.

32 We also estimated the “whole life cost” per hour of use of the sample of pitches over 10 and 20 year periods so as to include not only maintenance costs but initial capital cost and the cost of periodic upgrading, such as the replacement of sand slits on grass pitches every ten years and replacement of the carpet on artificial pitches at similar intervals, but excluding land and pavilion costs. Depending on the period used for the analysis and whether or not interest on capital costs was included, the grass pitches had an average whole life cost of £97-165 per hour of use; the grass rugby pitches £181-314; the mineral pitches £207-362; and the artificial turf pitch £24-38. At the user charges which prevailed at the time, these whole life costs resulted in a subsidy of around £4.50-8.50 per player per match for grass football; £7-13 per player per match for rugby; £11-20 per player per match on mineral pitches; and a surplus of 12p per player per match on artificial turf pitches.

33 As a result of this research, we concluded that it would be cheaper for local authorities to provide artificial turf pitches without charge than continue to provide grass pitches and charge for their use, provided teams and leagues were willing to transfer to artificial surfaces and be flexible over match times. If they were, the total land and pavilion construction and maintenance costs faced by local authorities would be hugely less for artificial than grass pitches. However, when we did the research, in 1989-90, there were no artificial surfaces that could sensibly be

classed as good for either football or rugby. This has now changed and sooner or later local authorities, which own the majority of pitches in the UK and face increasing pressures on their grounds maintenance budgets, will conclude that the cost of grass pitches is unacceptably high.

The Impact of Sports Technology

34 The final set of reasons relate to the general development of sports technology. The first artificial turf was developed so American Football could be played indoors, specifically in the Houston Astrodome – hence the name “Astroturf”, which has since become almost a generic term, much as many of the wide range of different makes of vacuum cleaner are referred to simply as “Hoovers”. It is impossible to argue that the early artificial turf surfaces were anything other than pretty awful for association football and totally unsuitable for rugby.

35 However, sports technology is continually evolving and almost always “ahead of the game”. For example, think of the influence that large club heads, graphite shafts and new ball designs have had on golf; carbon fibre rackets and clay or acrylic surfaces on tennis; lightweight large head rackets, glass walls and courts on squash; lightweight balls that do not absorb water on football and rugby; composite materials on ski-ing; carbon fibre on driver safety in Formula 1 motor racing; artificial turf pitches on hockey; polymeric surfaces on athletics; “sharkskin” suits on swimming; glass fibre on canoeing and other water sports; high-tech clothing on countryside sports and mountaineering; “Hawkeye” on line calls in tennis; and the television-dependent “third umpire” on cricket, with Hawkeye and the “Snickometer” waiting in the wings. None of these technological advances have destroyed sport, but they have changed it and it is simply impossible to assert that any sport cannot and will not embrace new technology. And while sphairstike was played exclusively on grass, today grass tennis courts are few and far between and only one Grand Slam tournament – Wimbledon – continues to use it. Meantime, there is huge variation in the dimensions, condition and therefore playing characteristics of grass pitches. Hockey has gained immeasurably from its acceptance of artificial surfaces and even bowls is played on artificial surfaces in some areas. It is a brave pundit who insists that all “proper” football and rugby can be played only on grass.

36 Unlike grass pitches, ATPs are nearly always built to more or less the same dimensions; unlike many grass pitches, they are flat; unlike many grass pitches, goalmouths are not muddy hollows; and unlike grass pitches, their playing characteristics are reasonably consistent from one day to another and across the whole of the pitch.

National Provision Standards

37 Natural England and The Woodland Trust have expressed concern that their national provision standards are not used in the strategy. They are both very similar and referred to respectively as the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) and Woodland Access Standard (WASSt). They specify a number of minimum sizes of accessible natural greenspace or woodland that should be available within defined distances to all households.

38 In most places where councils have assessed their area against ANGSt its use has identified apparently massive shortfalls in provision. For example, Natural England's South East England ANGSt project applied ANGSt to the 67 areas covered by the local planning authorities in the south east region. In only 10 of these 67 areas did more than 20% of households meet all parts of the standard in all respects while in 18 no households whatsoever met any part of the standard. The Woodland Trust comments on the strategy indicate that on the basis of WASSt, the Borough should provide over 200 ha of additional woodland.

39 The strategy does not use either the ANGSt or WASSt for two main reasons:

- Paragraph 6 of PPG17 states “The Government believes that open space standards are best set locally. National standards cannot cater for local circumstances, such as differing demographic profiles and the extent of existing built development in an area”. Therefore any agency which argues for the use of national standards is going against the guidance in PPG17. Natural England maintains that the Companion Guide to PPG17 endorses ANGSt. It does not. It merely mentions it and comments that it can be “impossible to achieve”.
- Where there is a huge disparity between a national standard and local reality, the standard can only be regarded as highly questionable.

40 Sport England has also criticised the lack of use in the strategy of its Active Places Power and Facilities Planning Model tools, which are in effect forms of national standards. Active Places Power (APP) simply compares the amount of provision in different local authority areas: for example, Sport England notes that England has 0.03 ATPs per 1,000 population, the West Midlands 0.03 and Stafford 0.02. The Facilities Planning Model (FPM) is a more sophisticated tool that can be used to assess the demand for and supply of sports halls, swimming pools and indoor bowls centres.

41 The reasons for not using them in the strategy were:

- Comparative ratios on the quantity of provision per person offer no guidance on the adequacy of provision in England, the West Midlands or Stafford. In order to do this it would be necessary to analyse provision in detail not only in Stafford but also in the comparator areas in order to understand the differences. As Stafford is a significantly more prosperous area than much of the West Midlands, it is likely that there is a more than average quantity of some forms of provision – eg golf courses – and less than average of others.
- In relation to some facilities, such as ATPs, APP takes no account of size or quality but simply the number of facilities. It also takes no account of availability for community use and opening hours when comparing the quantity of provision in different areas, although these are key factors in terms of determining facility capacity and therefore the ability of facilities to accommodate demand.
- Active Places takes no account of cross-boundary use: for example, the northern part of the Borough attracts a significant number of golfers from Stoke-on-Trent.
- The database that underpins APP contains a significant number of errors. One example in Stafford is that it does not include the Gnosall pool. While it would obviously be possible to use accurate information from a PPG17 audit to recalculate some of the ratios for Stafford, in order to place reliance on the ratios for comparator areas it would be necessary first to check the database for these other areas. In addition, it has generally taken a long time for accurate information provided by councils to Sport England to feed through into amendments, although we understand this is now improving.
- The Office of National Statistics has identified two or three “comparator” council areas for most local authorities in England. For Stafford, these comparators are Bromsgrove, Congleton and the East Riding of Yorkshire. Of these, Bromsgrove and East Yorkshire are poor comparators in terms of sports provision as they are immediately adjacent to the cities of Birmingham and Hull. This means they contain some facilities used predominantly by city residents (such as golf courses) while their residents have access to some city facilities (such as athletics tracks), reducing the need for these types of provision within their area.
- Sport England charges councils for the use of the FPM but will not provide them with the output from it, only a report setting out the conclusions from the output. This means councils and their consultants cannot form their own views on it. It also charges for FPM runs and reports on them, which can be expensive for councils, especially if there is a need for a number of runs of the model.

- The FPM can be used only for sports halls, swimming pools and indoor bowls facilities. Of these, it would be inappropriate to use the indoor bowls model in Stafford as it is a crown green bowls area and the FPM parameters relate to the flat green version of the game. The Borough Council has recently built a new leisure centre with a sports hall and pool and is unlikely to consider investing in further indoor provision until (a) the County Council develops its proposals for new schools and the sports facilities they will require for PE purposes and the planned arrangements for joint use and (b) the disposition of new housing development in the Borough is known. In addition, as the Council's Leisure Services budget is under severe pressure we were not willing to recommend that it incur expenditure on FPM analysis that will be obsolete as soon as it determines its housing allocations.
- In Stafford, most sports halls are on school sites and information on throughputs is either not available or very limited, making it very difficult to compare FPM output with reality on the ground.

42 We understand that some Councils in the northern part of the West Midlands have commissioned FPM runs. As we wrote the Sport England publication on the FPM we are familiar with how it works and the interpretation of output. If Sport England will make available appropriate output covering Stafford we will be happy to produce a brief summary of the implications for the Borough Council.

National Agencies and Organisations

1.0 British Waterways

Christine Hemming

No	Comment	Response
1.1	British Waterways owns approximately 35 km of canals within Stafford Borough's area the Stafford and Worcestershire and the Trent and Mersey. Two waterway units which are Wales and Border Counties and West Midlands cover Stafford Borough's area.	No response required
1.2	As highlighted on page 7 of the draft strategy, PPG17 recognises water, including canals, as form of "blue" open space. PPG17 Also recognises the potential of waterways (ands all open space) as being able to perform multiple functions (see below).	No response required
1.3	British Waterways is a public corporation, sponsored by DEFRA, and is responsible for managing approximately 3.200 km of navigable waterways in the United Kingdom. Under Section 22 of the British Waterways Act 1995, British Waterways has environmental and recreation duties which include providing access for the public; however, it is worth noting that the majority of towing paths are permissive rights of way rather than designated rights of way.	No response required
1.4	British Waterways recognises the importance of creation, protection and enhancement of such network and the aims of such a policy. We would, however, comment that this "green" role of the canal corridors as part of a green network is one of a number of roles.	No response required
1.5	The canals are truly a unique multi-functional asset for the City. Those functions as set out by Central Government in <i>Waterways for Tomorrow</i> (DETR, 2000) are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A leisure, recreation and tourism resource • A source of water and an integral part of the land drainage system • A catalyst for economic and social regeneration of both urban and rural areas • A sustainable transport route • A freight transport facility • An important heritage and ecological resource 	No response required

- 1.6 It should therefore be recognised that the borough’s canals can make a major contribution to the wider regeneration and planning aims across the LDF area. The regeneration of canal side corridors can produce many benefits which could include: the creation of a more attractive and secure environment in which existing communities can live, work and play; the attraction of new residents, businesses and visitors (both land based and water based) thereby generating income for the area; attracting new housing and new housing types; encouraging good design; and assistance in attaining goals for more pedestrian friendly route ways.
- The Borough Council is well aware of these benefits
- 1.7 Although we recognise the importance of the mostly green route way that the canal offers, British Waterways is keen to ensure that this does not prejudice the potential for regeneration and development of the land adjacent to the canal itself, nor sterilise or limit activity along the corridor.
- This relates to development management rather than this strategy and the Council seeks the views of British Waterways in relation to canalside developments as a matter of course.
- 1.8 Central Government has given British Waterways a clear role of unlocking the social, economic and environmental potential of its inland waterways. The network makes a major contribution to the national economy as it attracts over 300 million visits per annum which equates to approximately £917M visitor spend per annum. Furthermore, Government emphasises the need “to maximise the opportunities” that inland waterways and canals offer for leisure and recreation, urban and rural regeneration; education and freight transport, at the same time as protecting and conserving “a vital part of our national heritage”. Indeed, Central Government’s aim as set out in *Waterways for Tomorrow* (DETR, 2000) is to unlock the social, economic and environmental potential of the inland waterways network.
- No response required
- 1.9 Against this context, we would emphasise that other “green infrastructure” features such as woodlands and parks differ in nature from inland waterways. Indeed, whilst being multi-functional they do not possess the range of functions identified above.
- No response required.
- 1.10 British Waterways supports your acknowledgement of the unique nature of the canals addressed through a specific label in terms of “blue open space” which assists in protecting developing and enhancing the infrastructure and optimising the benefits the canals can generate for all sectors of the
- No response required

community.

1.11 Introduction

British Waterways share the vision as expresses (sic) in the introduction and points to the strategic role of the canals in providing a safe and accessible network of high quality green spaces and sport and recreation facilities that fulfil that vision exactly. No response required

1.12 Cross Cutting Issues

Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

The Stafford canals form a water corridor which facilitates the dispersal and growth of plant and animal species including protected birds, bats, plants and wildlife. As recognised in *Waterways for Tomorrow* (DETR 2000 – paragraph 2.15) the waterways system is rich in historic buildings and examples of innovative civil engineering. It is also an important environmental and ecological resource providing vital wildlife corridors and habitats for several species listed as national priorities under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. No response required

1.13 However, British Waterways would resist any ecological enhancements that would impede navigation of unacceptably prevent integration between development sites and the navigation. Any specific ecological enhancements works within British Waterway’s land or water space would need our agreement as landowners. British Waterways would however resist any blanket policy for buffer zones on all waterside sites. See paragraph 4 in the first section of this appendix. These are matters for the Council’s development management function and not this strategy

1.14 Climate Change

Water supply, transfer, and drainage should be examined in relation to British Waterways role in supply and control of water within of the navigation (sic). This is a matter for development management and wider planning policy.

1.15 The waterways can facilitate the following sustainability measures in the design and construction of waterside developments: No response required

- Sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS) (fact sheet attached for more info)
- The maximisation of "grey water" instead of valuable fresh water resources; and
- The use of the canal water as a source of heating and cooling leisure buildings constructed on the side of the navigation

1.16 **Community Involvement**

British Waterways employs officers to increase the capacity and role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in the delivery of public services. British Waterways has a volunteer coordinator who enables people to contribute their free time to the waterway environment.

No response required

1.17 **The Urban Fringe**

British Waterways is supportive of the inclusion of canals in their paragraph and the opportunity to create linear routes to the parks along the waterways.

No response required

1.18 **Walking and Cycling**

British Waterways recognises that there must be specific provision for community needs in development frameworks, including access to green space and active travel to promote physical activity. It is considered that the towpaths have significant potential for achieving better access to green space and active travel (walking, jogging and cycling).

No response required

1.19 Ensuring Stafford District residents have access to the inland waterways, reservoirs and their towpaths is important for helping to improve residents' health and well-being which can:

No response required

- Provide an important water-based sport and recreation resource
- Contribute to the feelings of well being
- Form corridors/routes linking urban areas to the countryside
- Promote cheap accessibility to all members of society
- Add value for fishing, bird watching, painting and photography

1.20 British Waterways is pleased to see the development of Sustrans routes, and all continuous routes beside the canals within this paragraph.

No response required

1.21 **Regeneration**

Acting as an agent of or catalyst for economic, environmental and social regeneration in urban and rural areas including market towns. Waterways provide vehicles for tourism led and conservation led regeneration. In considering rural regeneration and tourism in relation to

No response required

waterways it should be noted that the opening up of access and use of the countryside, including green belt, for recreational purposes requires associated infrastructure to support activities for public enjoyment. Also, for waterways to be successful catalysts for sustainable rural regeneration and diversification, boaters need to cruise from urban areas through green belts and require mooring facilities en route.

- 1.22 The Cabinet Office document (December 1999) in *Rural Economies: A Performance and Innovation Unit Report* states that inland waterways possess all five of main components of “rural environment public goods” – biodiversity, natural resources, landscapes, cultural heritage, public access and enjoyment. In the Foreword, Jim Knight MP, Minister for Rural Affairs, Landscape and Biodiversity (DEFRA) states that waterways can provide employment and focus for tourism in rural areas. Small businesses in waterway settings, marinas and waterway-based tourism provide vital support for rural shops, post offices and pubs. The minister commends the report to LPAs, RDAs and navigation authorities to ensure that inland waterways play a more valuable role in rural regeneration. No response required

- 1.23 The Stafford authorities should also consider the role of waterways in rural regeneration and tourism in accordance with the IWAAC publication entitled *Just Add Water – How our Inland waterways can do more for rural regeneration*, a practical guide, September 2005 (part funded by DEFRA). No response required

1.24 **Recreational Opportunity**

The canal network can provide a wide range of water sports and formal informal recreational activities eg: No response required

- **Towing path:** cycling, walking, jogging, sitting, photography, bird watching and rambling. Long distance footpaths, linking urban and rural areas and heritage trails
- **Canal:** rowing, canoeing, angling, boating

1.25 **Planning Contributions**

However, to achieve sustainable waterway regeneration and development, it is crucial that the added value of the waterways themselves (and not just the waterside development) is See paragraph 4 in the first section of this appendix and response to 1.26 below

optimised. BW therefore believes that it is reasonable to expect a share of the development value uplift derived from the adjacent canal or navigable river to be reinvested back into that waterway.

- 1.26 This view is shared by the House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee in its report into British Waterways published on 31 July 2007. The Committee believes that “there is a strong case for providing BW with income gained from planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act – or from planning gain supplement, if introduced by Government – in respect of the increase in property prices realised from waterside developments”. British Waterways therefore believes that the Open Space strategy should continue to address these issues and seek to:
- Support the development, improvement, restoration and regeneration of inland waterways in order to deliver the economic, environmental and social benefits offered by waterways in accordance with Policy outlined above
 - Fully recognise that the burdens and liabilities that may be imposed by development and regeneration by third parties and that any measures to minimise or mitigate them are properly funded
 - Be flexible enough to recognise that the need for improvements or increased maintenance may be remote from development that require such measures to be implemented
 - Recognise waterways as a public asset and “environmental public good” and to view waterway infrastructure, facilities and environs including towing path integral part of the community infrastructure and the public realm infrastructure (for example 300 million people per annum visit BW’s waterways, 93% of whom use them for informal recreation, education and leisure purposes at no charge, thereby significantly contributing to social inclusion and the promotion of healthy living amongst many other things)
- New developments can generate a wide range of impacts that may require mitigation and the Borough Council will nearly always have to determine its priorities in the light of specific development proposals. Accordingly it would be inappropriate for the strategy to recommend any specific priorities for the use of developer contributions.
- 1.27 Furthermore, in *Waterways for Tomorrow* (DETR, 2000) the Government advocates that the development, improvement, restoration and regeneration of inland waterways needs to be supported through the planning system in order to deliver the economic, environmental and
- The Borough Council supports this fully in principle but resources are always finite and it is unable to support everything that may be desirable.

social benefits offered by waterways.

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| 1.28 | As the canal environment and infrastructure can be significantly affected by waterside regeneration and development by third parties (who can seek to exploit the canal side settings to maximise development value uplift generated by the canal side location and use canals for drainage and flood alleviation purposes), BW consider it appropriate that developers should be obliged to contribute to the development, improvement, restoration and maintenance of canal, canal side public realm and the canal environment. | See paragraph 4 in the first section of this appendix and response to 1.26 above |
| 1.29 | British Waterways therefore requests that the first priority for s106 and/or Community Infrastructure Levy monies generated from canal side sites should be ring-fenced for new or improvements to waterway infrastructure as well as maintenance, in order to offset the extra facilities and burdens being placed upon us and the public purse in relation to ongoing maintenance and management costs. | See paragraph 4 in the first section of this appendix and response to 1.26 above |
| 1.30 | The canals should be mentioned as a specific beneficiary from section 106 agreements and community infrastructure levy. | There are many such potential beneficiaries and there is little point in listing them. See paragraph 4 in the first section of this appendix and response to 1.26 above. |

2.0 Rachael Bust, Coal Authority

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|-----|--|----------------------|
| 2.1 | Thank you for consulting The Coal Authority on the above. Having reviewed your document, I confirm that we have no specific comments to make on this document at this stage. We look forward to receiving your emerging planning policy related documents; preferably in an electronic format. For your information, we can receive documents via our generic email address planningconsultation@coal.gov.uk , on a CD/DVD, or a simple hyperlink which is emailed to our generic email address and links to the document on your website. Alternatively, please mark all paper consultation documents and correspondence for the Attention of the Planning and Local Authority Liaison Department. Should you require any assistance please contact a member of Planning and Local Authority Liaison at The Coal Authority through our main switchboard telephone number. | No response required |
|-----|--|----------------------|

3.0 Philip G Sharpe, Inland Waterways Association

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|-----|---|---|
| 3.1 | The Inland Waterways Association (IWA) is a national charity which advocates the conservation, use, maintenance, restoration and development of the inland waterways for public benefit. IWA has over 18,000 members whose interests include boating, walking, cycling, angling, built heritage, nature conservation, sustainable transport and the regeneration benefits of the canals and navigable rivers network. Within Stafford Borough the Lichfield Branch of IWA covers the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal and the Trent & Mersey Canal south of Sandon. (the canal north of Sandon, including Stone, comes under our Stoke-on-Trent Branch). | No response required |
| 3.2 | We note that the PPG17 definition of open space includes "areas of water such as canals ... which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity". However, we are disappointed that there appears to be only limited recognition in the report of the important contribution that the canals make to open space, sport and recreation facilities in the Borough. This includes the water space used for boating, canoeing and angling, the towpaths used for walking, jogging and cycling, and the whole canal corridor for bird watching, nature studies and general amenity space. | The full report highlights the significance of the Borough's canals both as linear routes for walkers and cyclists and in terms of recreation, particularly canoeing. However, this has been strengthened as a result of this comment. |
| 3.3 | Maintenance of the canals and towpaths is the responsibility of British Waterways but inadequate funding from Government limits their ability to do anything other than basic maintenance. Through and adjacent to urban areas the considerable extra local use of the waterway corridor merits an improved standard of upkeep which BW are only able to undertake with financial assistance from local authorities. The Council should establish a Canals Fund, with annual contributions from the council, from building developments and from third party grants where available, to enable the provision of improved towpath surfaces and their long-term maintenance, access improvements, regular rubbish and graffiti removal, prompt vandalism repairs, and general environmental enhancements for the benefit of their citizens and of tourism in the Borough. | While well aware of the importance of canals to the Borough, and keen to improve the canalside environment, the Council has constantly to determine its priorities and at present cannot give any undertakings relating to a Canals Fund. |
| 3.4 | The suggestion of creating a country park "somewhere on the River Trent/Trent and Mersey Canal or River Penk/Staffordshire and | No response required. |

Worcestershire Canal" is an interesting one that merits further study, although it is not clear just where this could be located as the river valleys are subject to frequent flooding, particularly the Penk and Sow.

- 3.5 Development of agricultural land alongside the canals into a recreation and conservation area could, if well designed, complement the amenity value of the canals and we agree that they could provide linear recreational routes to and through such a country park. IWA would be pleased to be involved in any further development of this idea. No response required.

4.0 Robert Duff, Conservation and Planning Adviser, Natural England

- 4.1 Natural England has been formed by bringing together English Nature (EN), the landscape, access and recreation elements of the Countryside Agency (CA) and the environmental land management functions of the Rural Development Service (RDS). No response required
- 4.2 Natural England works for people and nature, to enhance biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas; promoting access, recreation and public well-being, and contributing to the way natural resources are managed so that they can be enjoyed now and by future generations. No response required
- 4.3 The natural environment provides people with a range of benefits. Health and well being are two of the most important. Increasing levels of physical activity is a national priority for improving people's health and the natural environment provides many opportunities. Natural England wants to increase the interest and opportunities for countryside recreation and promote accessibility to the countryside to all. No response required
- 4.4 Overall we welcome the PPG 17 Assessment report which provides a sound and competent analysis of open space, sport and recreation issues in Stafford Borough and it will help inform the development of the LDF. We particularly welcome its focus of raising the quality of provision and identifying ways of securing the resources needed to achieve this goal. No response required
- 4.5 However a number of key issues have arisen in our review of the assessment. These are:
- A need to include a clear reference/link to the See response to comments

- wider green infrastructure approach to strategy and planning which the Borough is developing. See comments below
- The absence of maps detracts from the document. They are an effective and easy way of communicating key information, findings and the Assessment's proposals;
 - The consideration given to Cannock Chase AONB and SAC and related issues should be given amplified consideration/analysis.
- 4.6 For Stafford and Stone, specific analysis should be included with reference the West Midlands Regional Spatial Plan's Annex B and its target to achieve Government endorsed Natural England Accessible Nature Green Space Standards in towns. In particular Local Nature Reserve (LNR) provision both in terms of quantity and quality should be considered.
- 4.7 **Allotments**
- We support the statements regarding allotments however it should be noted that because of their character and long-established nature existing allotments may have a high biodiversity value. Any decisions on the re-location of sites should be informed by an assessment of their biodiversity value.
- 4.8 **Green Network and accessibility**
- We support the conclusions however with respect to the green network and natural greenspaces, we consider that the Government-endorsed Natural England standards for accessible natural greenspace standards (ANGST) included as a target in the Regional Spatial Strategy RSS 11 Annex B for towns and cities are appropriate and should be used and referenced in the assessment.
- 4.9 Adoption of the ANGST standards would allow for meaningful comparisons between areas and help identify any deficient areas. The standards are:
- A greenspace at least 2ha less than 300m from home
 - A Local Nature Reserve provision at a minimum of 1 ha per thousand population
 - At least one greenspace of 20 ha within 2km
- 4.16 to 4.19 below
- Maps:** the full strategy contains nearly 40 maps
- See response to comments 8.1 to 8.8 below
- See paragraphs 37-39 in the first part of this appendix
- This is a normal part of the process of coming to a balanced view on the merits of planning applications. However, the loss of an allotments site does not necessarily mean a consequential significant loss of biodiversity, especially if a site is redeveloped for housing.
- See paragraphs 37-39 in the first section of this appendix
- See paragraphs 37-39 in the first part of this appendix

- of home
- A 100ha site within 5km of home
- A 500ha site within 10 km of home.

- 4.10 We are also surprised that the assessment omits to consider the provision and quality of Local Nature Reserves in the Borough – these have a key role to play in providing local well managed natural greenspaces. The Council has had an impressive and well managed programme of LNR declaration over recent years. The challenges going forward are to continue extend the series of sites further and to ensure there are adequate resources directed towards ensuring that the biodiversity value of these key natural greenspace sites are maintained and enhanced for the benefit of local communities.
- Most of the LNRs are in the rural parts of the Borough, while PPG17 assessments concentrate mainly on urban greenspaces.
- 4.11 Local authority indicator LA 197 is very relevant here in that Stafford Borough has adopted a target to ensure that an increasing number of local wildlife sites are in good management and one way of achieving this is by ensuring that LNR's are appropriately managed.
- The strategy has been amended to give greater emphasis to this
- 4.12 **Urban Fringe**
- The potential recreational pressures on Cannock Chase AONB and the SAC/SSSI arising from the major new housing being planned in Stafford has significant implications for planning future open space provision. To mitigate for potential impacts there may be a need to provide alternative large countryside sites around Stafford to help meet expected local demand. Hence we welcome the proposal for a least one new country park to be established around Stafford however the decision on where it should be located should have close regard for the need to divert visitors from Cannock Chase AONB and SAC.
- This is a subject that requires detailed assessment through the LDF once the Borough's housing allocations are known
- 4.13 **Strategic Issues and Recommendations**
- We support the proposed vision for Stafford Borough included in the introduction
- No response required
- 4.14 **Cross Cutting Issues**
- We support the identified cross-cutting issues however we consider that green infrastructure should be added as a further cross-cutting issue. Whilst Natural England welcomes and supports the open space strategy, we consider that the open space, sport and recreation needs of the Borough should be set within a wider over-
- Green Infrastructure added to the lost of cross-cutting issues. The Council's LDF *Delivering the Plan for Stafford Borough – Issues and Options* report (February 2009) notes, in paragraph

arching context of ‘green infrastructure’ approach (now emerging as best practice) which takes account of the concept of multi-functional role of green space. In support of this we refer to:

- PPS 12
- The essential role of green infrastructure: eco-towns green infrastructure worksheet by DCLG, TCPA and Natural England,
- The Green Infrastructure Prospectus for the West Midlands Region by the West Midlands Regional Assembly

9.98, that “The Plan for Stafford Borough will be a crucial mechanism in delivering green infrastructure. A Green Infrastructure study for Stafford is currently taking place, with the results feeding into subsequent Plan stages. It is anticipated that a Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document will be produced in due course, which will build on principles set out in the Plan for Stafford Borough.”

4.15 PPS 12 defines green infrastructure as ‘a network of multi-functional greenspace, both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports the natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities. It goes on to state that local planning authority ‘core strategy should be supported by evidence of what physical, social and green infrastructure is needed to enable the amount of development proposed for the area , taking account of its type and distribution. This evidence should cover who will provide the infrastructure and when it will be provided. The core strategy should draw on and in parallel influence any strategies and investment plans of the local authority and other organisations’.

References to the importance of green infrastructure now added to the strategy.

4.16 Green Infrastructure Prospectus

The Green Infrastructure Prospectus for the West Midlands Region is a document prepared on behalf of the West Midlands Regional Assembly’s Environment Partnership. It aims to highlight the role of Green Infrastructure, encourage greater investment in it and ensure that it is proactively planned for in all developments in the Region. It also aims to show that Green Infrastructure should be appreciated as an essential element of delivering sustainable communities, underpinning growth and regeneration. The Prospectus sees new growth, proposed in the Region by the Regional Spatial Strategy and related documents, as an opportunity to provide exemplars of sustainable development; to enhance and extend Green Infrastructure so as to complement and balance the built environment, link wider environmental processes and deliver a high quality of life for all.

See response to comment 4.15

- 4.17 The Prospectus recognises that there is no comprehensive approach to the mapping or planning of Green Infrastructure in the Region. It urges that Green Infrastructure needs to be embedded in statutory spatial plans and strategy documents from regional to local level. It suggests methods of assessing Green Infrastructure and how connectivity of green areas can be encouraged. See response to comment 4.15
- 4.18 As a Growth Point, Stafford Borough will be expected to prepare a Green Infrastructure Strategy in due course and at present Natural England and the Borough are cooperating in a pilot GI concept master planning study of areas in Stafford. See response to comment 4.15
- 4.19 Rural greenspace/green infrastructure is not adequately referenced in our view in the current strategy. The main emphasis in PPG17 is on greenspace within or on the fringe of settlements
- 4.20 **Biodiversity**
We strongly share the view that the Council, in the light of the biodiversity duty, needs to embed the promotion of biodiversity and nature conservation more fully into the work of Leisure Services and in particular the grounds maintenance service. With a Biodiversity Officer in post the authority is well placed with the technical capacity to respond to this challenge. No response required
- 4.21 **Planning Policy**
Finally we concur with the section on planning policy. No response required

5.0 Maggie Taylor, Sport England

- 5.1 Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above document. Following a telephone call to Adam Hill it has been clarified that there are other documents behind this strategy which have not been made available on the website. I will take these into account when I receive them on a disc but to enable me to meet your consultation deadline I have set out below my comments based on the strategy above only. No response required
- 5.2 **The Context**
In addition to the information provided it is recommended that ref. is made to the following documents to ensure the context recognises national policy for sport and physical activity and the baseline/target figures for participation. The Government wants to see whether there will be the significant increases in participation the Government wants to see.

report does not clearly address the implications of increasing participation in active sport as promoted by national government:

- Playing to win: A New Era for Sport – DCMS 2008
- Grow, Sustain, Excel - Sport England Strategy 2008-11
- Active People Results

On the evidence of the past 3-4 decades – during which the Sports Councils were working continuously to promote participation in sport - they are unlikely.

There is not yet a West Midlands response to Grow, Sustain, Excel.

The only statistically significant change in West Midlands sports participation from Active People 1 to Active People 2 was among adults aged 55 and over and it is impossible to identify a trend from only two sets of survey results.

- The Regional Sports Facilities Framework (2007)

The Regional Sports Facility Framework says practically nothing about Stafford.

5.3 National Governing Body strategies – it is recognised that the existing sports strategies are to be superseded by Whole Sport Plans (which are in the process of being finalised) but there are some, for example Rugby and Athletics, which do have strategies available which should be referred to and taken into account.

5.4 The Methodology: it is not clear what methodology has been used to ensure the ‘opinions’ and recommendations are robustly based. There is no reference to the use of Active Places Database and its associated tools or use of any Facilities Planning Modelling for example. The Sports Facility Calculator is used for some sports it covers (indoor bowls) but not pools and is not used for what it is designed for – calculating demand arising from new housing development. It is not really designed for use as a demand/supply modelling tool as it relates to demand only, is non-spatial and takes no account of the distribution, quality, accessibility of existing facilities etc. Has the PPG17 companion guide been used as a basis for the needs assessment? This is not clear. Sport England would need to be much clearer as to the methodology to be satisfied that any developed strategy was robustly based.

The methodology is set out in the full report.

See paragraphs 40-42 in the first part of this appendix.

Yes, not least because we wrote it.

5.5 Summary ATPs

This section states that there is 0.16m² of ATPs per person borough wide. Is this high or low? Active Place Power would provide some benchmarks to help assess the adequacy of provision as well as consultation with clubs and NGBs. For example it shows that England has 0.03 ATPs per 1,000, West Midlands 0.03:1,000 and Stafford 0.02:1,000. This appears to objectively demonstrate that there are less ATPs available per person in Stafford than the West Midlands/England average which, along with club/NGB/LA input would support the provision of new ATPs (however this evidence base is not referred to).

See paragraphs 40-42 in the first section of this appendix

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| 5.6 | Recommendations for new STPs in the summary include one at Gnosall and Eccleshall to address accessibility issues, the football community (clubs or NGB?) have a perceived need for three 3rd generation pitches and the ATP objective suggest a minimum of 4 ATPs on Stafford secondary school sites/Beaconside. | No response required |
| 5.7 | The detailed recommendations set out on page 53 suggest a new ATP in the north and south of Stafford, ATPs at Gnosall and Eccleshall and all BSF secondary schools to include at least one ATP. This is slightly confusing and could potentially be a lot of ATPs with major capital investment and maintenance/management issues for the Borough which would need to be soundly underpinned by business plans and need assessments and supported by NGS/Schools etc. | See paragraphs 31-33 in the first part of this appendix. It should be cheaper for the Borough Council over the long term than continued reliance on grass pitches. |
| 5.8 | The principle of replacing grass pitches with artificial pitches is pushed in the assessment however at this stage the national governing bodies do not support the development of ATPs instead of grass pitches, more as complementary training facilities, and national government policy set out in PPG17 focuses on protecting grass pitches (which are likely to be lost to ATPs). | See paragraphs 6-36 in the first section of this appendix and also comment 7.4 below. |
| 5.9 | The assumption that climate change (pg 51) will lead to increasing water-logging of grass pitches and a shift from 11 a-side to 5 a-side football is a sweeping generalisation and not one which is robustly demonstrated. | See paragraphs 6-36 in the first section of this appendix. In addition, see the Sport England publication <i>Levelling the Playing Field</i> which identifies a trend in football of "Players defecting to five-a-side". |
| 5.10 | Suggestions that the Council should press the | See paragraphs 6-36 in the |

local leagues to move matches onto artificial pitches might be misplaced as it is the national governing bodies who would have to adopt such policies and practices and national policy does not support such a shift.

first section of this appendix.

- 5.11 The Regional Sports Facility Framework suggests there is a need for 'some limited' new STP provision but each should be market tested, that a mix of pitch types and sizes provided and that existing pitches should be retained and resurfaced to retain quality/availability. No response required

5.12 **Athletics Facilities (pg 16)**

It should be noted that Cannock Stadium closed in July 08 – what impact has this had on Rowley Park as I understand some of the users have been diverted to this track? How do the proposals link to Athletics NGB Facility Strategy – they do have a strategy for the Region and this should be referred to – it refers to Rowley as a 'Key Track' but is not listed as a 'Priority Location for new projects'.

The main report refers to this closure and notes that the Cannock and Staffordshire Club uses the Stafford track two nights a week. It also highlights the need to upgrade the ancillary accommodation at the Rowley Park track, but notes that the track itself is in excellent condition.

- 5.13 No evidence is provided of use of Active Places to see how athletics provision compares to other LAs or the region/England – the table below indicates provision is high compared to the regional/national facilities per 1000. England Ratio : 0.05 West Midlands Region Ratio 0.06 Stafford District Ratio: 0.07

See paragraphs 40-42 in the first section of this appendix. In addition, APP measures lanes per 1000 people. Tracks come in a limited range of standard sizes so comparisons of lanes per 1000 is a very crude measure which is likely to result in considerable variation in calculated benchmarks. Furthermore, the number of lanes in existing tracks relates primarily to the aspirations of their original providers in terms of the types of competition they wished to attract.

- 5.14 No ref. is made to the Regional Sports Facility Framework which focuses on a new track in Stoke and upgrading cinder tracks to synthetic.

The main report refers to the Stoke proposal. This means that there is a track in Stafford town which serves the southern half of the Borough, and there will be one in Stoke which will serve the northern half. Stafford has no cinder tracks.

5.15 Bowling Greens (pg 17)

How does 7,500 people per green compare to other LAs – is the high/low? Unfortunately Active Places does not cover bowling greens but other PPS will have assessed supply in the region which could be looked at as a comparator, particularly as aging population is an issue. How is the conclusion that the ‘level of bowls provision is probably about right’ arrived at? If the population is growing, the population is aging and participation is to be increased – should increasing the provision of bowling greens be considered? The final bullet implies closures are more likely. It is worth noting that the lack of use of greens might not be through lack of demand as such but can be influenced by how well the sites are managed and marketed and how easy they are to access etc.

See paragraphs 40-42 in the first section of this appendix. All bowls in Stafford, as in roughly the whole of the northern half of the West Midlands, is crown green so comparisons with the southern half, in which all greens are flat, would not be valid. Similarly, any comparison of Stafford with the West Midlands as a whole would be of dubious value.

In consultations we have undertaken as part of PPG17 assessments in all areas of England, and similar work in Scotland, we have found a general trend of declining bowls club membership. In some areas clubs have closed and bowling association secretaries have predicted further closures.

5.16 Golf Courses (pg 20)

Evidence again appears to rely on consultation responses only. Active Places Power shows that the number of holes per 1,000 people is Stafford is 0.97 compared to 0.68 in England and 0.61 in the West Midlands (and 1.20 in East Riding of Yorkshire). This perhaps demonstrates that provision of golf in the Borough is relatively high compared to the other benchmarks yet the conclusions open the door for consideration of more golf courses (whilst concluding there is probably enough to meet current and future demand).

See paragraphs 40-42 in the first section of this appendix. We telephoned all of the golf clubs in the Borough and all currently have spare capacity; in addition, Stafford Castle Club is planning an additional nine holes. However, the Borough is facing a significant increase in population and, as the main report notes, a number of local clubs have lost members recently. In better economic times they may return.

5.17 Grass Pitches (pg 20)

Pitch provision is outlined at the top of page 21 and where there are more pitches for cricket/football north/south of the district this is assumed to be due to ‘popularity’ for the sports.

The extent of club-owned pitch provision is largely an accident of history and the attitude of past landowners.

Is this only due to popularity or do factors such as the availability/quality of pitches and club structures/leagues encourage or constrain participation etc.?

- | | | |
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| 5.18 | The Sport England's methodology has been used which is supported however it is not clear overall where shortfalls and surpluses fall to be able to make sound decisions in the face of proposals which have pitch impacts. A table setting out pitch numbers for the current and projected population/participation would be useful to see how population change and participation targets will affect surpluses/shortfalls. | This information is provided in the full report, which runs to around 250 pages plus several hundred pages of appendices. It would have been unrealistic of the Council to have expected consultees to read this volume of material. |
| 5.19 | In relation to football the FA have provided some detailed information on participation which should be referred to in the assessment – Local Area Plans. The audit almost dismisses the importance of providing pitches which can be accessed on foot/bicycle as ‘not particularly important’ – caution is suggested here as clearly from an equity perspective and sustainable transport it is important for all residents to have access to pitches by sustainable means, particularly those without access to a car. | There is a clear distinction between pitches/playing fields used for kickabouts and casual participation, which should be within walking distance of where people live, and clubs which attract players because of the standard of play they offer. There cannot be a national league standard club in every neighbourhood. |
| 5.20 | In relation to cricket I am aware that Staffordshire Cricket Board have undertaken a facilities audit of all the cricket clubs – has this been used and referred to? If not, it should be. | We visited and audited all cricket pitches in the Borough. |
| 5.21 | I also note that the RFU have made some separate comments, as they had not been consulted on the PPG17 audit, which need to be taken into account. | See section 7 below. We conducted a face to face interview with two representatives of the Staffordshire RFU during preparation of the strategy. |
| 5.22 | Maps would be useful to demonstrate the distribution of pitches (and facilities in general) within catchments and it would be really valuable to ensure Active Places is updated in accordance with the audit information to make sure it is up to date and to enable the interrogative strategic planning tools to be used (an update is planned for Stafford on 31 March 09). | The full report includes a volume with almost 40 maps. |
| 5.23 | In relation to the conclusions for pitches it is difficult to be clear whether they relate to pitch provision taking into account participation and population changes or not. Sport England has concerns that the premise for taking pitch provision forward is to ‘persuade local leagues’ | See paragraphs 6-36 in the first section of this appendix, but particularly paragraphs 8-11. The football and rugby governing bodies are clearly moving |

to accept a move from grass pitches to artificial turf pitches. This paradigm shift is something which would need to be adopted by National Governing Bodies through their Whole Sports Plans rather than local leagues and at present the NGBs have not adopted a strategy which takes this approach forward and National Government planning policy in PPG17 is still focussed on protection of grass playing fields.

towards acceptance of artificial surfaces – see paragraphs 17-19 in the first part of this appendix. As local authorities provide very large subsidies for the pitch sports – see paragraphs 31-33 in the first part of this appendix - they must also have a significant say in the nature of provision.

5.24 Fitness Facilities (pg 31)

Again it would be useful to see the evidence base for current provision and how that relates to the national/regional provision (APP = England 5.67 facilities per 1,000, West Midlands 5.01 and Stafford 5.49) and the conclusion that ‘there appears to be demand’ for small fitness facilities? The RSFF recommends the provision of small sites linked to small local facilities as well as larger, often commercial provision, with the primary focus on the more deprived and most rural areas. How does this affect the Council’s strategy?

See paragraphs 40-42 in the first section of this appendix and the full report. The APP benchmarks (if they are accurate – the number of fitness machines in any area is constantly changing) depend to a significant extent on the amount of large scale commercial provision in an area. In the Borough, such provision is available only in Stafford town and almost all of the fitness provision is concentrated in the main settlements, with the result that access to fitness facilities in the rural parts of the Borough is poor. In these areas, only small scale facilities will be sensible.

5.25 Ice Rinks (pg 31)

APP may again be useful to provide some evidence base here and the Regional Sports Facility Framework (RSFF) also states for Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent that ‘sufficient demand for additional provision of a standard rink seems unlikely’ which would support the conclusions.

See paragraphs 40-42 in the first section of this appendix.

5.26 Indoor Bowls (pg 32)

The Sports Facility Calculator implies there is demand for indoor bowls in Stafford and Active Places shows the facilities per 1,000 figures as: England Ratio : 0.04 West Midlands Region Ratio: 0.02 Stafford District Ratio: 0.00 - demonstrating that Stafford has below the national and regional level of provision. The RSFF identifies a need for

See paragraphs 40-42 in the first section of this appendix. In addition:

- There is huge variation in the amount of indoor bowls provision in

2 new specialist centres in the CSP area, at least one to be in Stoke, and the longer-term development of additional centres to take account of the ageing population. Given the lack of provision, the need for provision identified through the SFC and RSFF perhaps the Council should re-consider whether an indoor bowls centre for flat/multi green bowling would be a valuable asset for increasing participation, particularly in the older age groups.

different areas of the country. so an “England average” is of questionable value.

- See 5.15 above in relation to crown/flat green bowls statistics for the West Midlands
- Participation in indoor bowls is in decline in many parts of the country; some clubs have closed and others are likely to do so in the next few years.

The only indoor crown green ever built in the UK (in the Wirral) closed owing to lack of support.

5.27 Indoor Sports Halls (pg 32)

Sport England has some concerns about the robustness of the methodology used to decide whether the supply and demand of sports halls is adequate. The SFC has been used but please see the Sport England website with regard to the correct uses of the SFC – there are limitations of this methodology in assessing supply and demand – a better tool is the Facility Planning Model which takes into account spatial elements, quality, size, hours of opening and accessibility for example. The sites does state: “Warning! Whilst the SFC can be used to estimate the swimming and sports hall needs for whole area populations, such as for a whole local authorities, there are dangers in how these figures are subsequently used at this level in matching it with current supply for strategic gap analysis. The SFC should not be used for strategic gap analysis; this approach is fundamentally flawed. The SFC has no spatial dimension. The figure that is produced is a total demand figure for the chosen population. It is important to note that the SFC does not take account of:

The assessment did not rely only on the SFC and in any case used it only as one way of estimating the swimming and sports hall needs for the whole Borough. See also paragraphs 40-42 in the first section of this appendix.

1. Facility location compared to demand
2. Capacity and availability of facilities – opening hours
3. Cross boundary movement of demand
4. Travel networks and topography
5. Attractiveness of facilities

5.28 For these reasons total demand figure generated See response to 5.27

by the SFC should not simply be compared with facilities within the same area.” Provision is stated as being at a ‘good level’ and a standard is quoted in terms of a facilities per 1,000 but all this states is what current provision is – is this the right level, how does it compare to other LAs/West Midlands benchmarks etc.?

- 5.29 Active Places Power sets out the following with regard to facilities per 1,000: England Ratio: 78.17 West Midlands Region Ratio: 75.96 Stafford District Ratio: 87.86. This tends to show that the level of provision is good but is it in the right place, is it open for the right number of hours and what about the quality? See paragraphs 40-42 in the first section of this appendix. APP ignores opening hours which is a major weakness in its ratios. Our audit of existing provision identified that the main issue relating to the Borough’s sports halls is their quality.
- 5.30 It is difficult to get a clear picture from the statements made in the second para. of this section on page 32. The proposal for a new sports hall at Gnosall should perhaps be tested through the FPM model to see what impact it would have on supply/demand. See paragraphs 40-42 in the first section of this appendix.
- 5.31 With regard to specialisms is it recommended that linkages with the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Sub-Regional Strategy are made as this is in the process of preparation. My understanding from the RSFF is that there is a need for a regional netball centre but that this is likely to be provided in Shropshire. Our consultations in Stafford identified a clear need for better quality netball provision
- 5.32 The need for County facilities should be led by the NGB. It is recommended that some FPM modelling is undertaken to robustly test the supply/demand scenarios in the Borough and test any proposals for closures/new facility provision to guide investment decisions. This should be informed by the BSF process but timescales might mean that decisions on BSF in Stafford are some years off so a decision would need to be made about what sports Hall provision changes are needed pre BSF and what information is needed in advance to inform the BSF process. See paragraphs 40-42 in the first section of this appendix. Any FPM runs for Stafford commissioned as part of the strategy preparation will be obsolete once the Borough’s proposed housing allocations are known.
- 5.33 **Indoor Swimming Pools (page 33)**
- The report states that there is a ‘small deficit’ in provision – how is this calculated? No reference is made to the methodology. It would appear that FPM modelling has not been used which is the best tool for this purpose but neither is Active Places Power mentioned which would be Details are in the full report. See also paragraphs 40-42 in the first section of this appendix. Any FPM runs for Stafford commissioned as part of the strategy

the next best tool. The facilities per 1000 on Active Places does appear to indicate that the level of provision at 15.23m² per 1,000 is lower than the regional/national figures (W Mids.16.68 and England 18.86m²). The proposal for more pool space is likely to be supported but the location of a new pool should really be properly modelled to ensure it adds to the pool provision matrix to the greatest benefit in relation to supply and demand. It is recommended that some FPM modelling is undertaken to test the options and ensure decisions are robust.

preparation will be obsolete once the Borough's proposed housing allocations are known. In addition, the Active Places database, which underpins the ratios provided by Sport England, fails to include the Gnosall pool.

- 5.34 Again, ref. to the forthcoming Staffordshire and SOT Sports Strategy would be valuable to ensure options take into account the strategic picture, e.g. neighbouring authority provision.

A strategy written several months ago cannot take account of another strategy that is not yet available. The assessment took account of major sports facilities such as sports halls, swimming pools and indoor tennis halls in adjoining council areas.

5.35 **Indoor Tennis Halls (pg 34)**

The RSFF states that the region should consider the development of around 13 new indoor courts up to 2021, with the priority being Stoke, which would appear to support the proposal for new facilities in the Borough. It is noted that the Staffordshire Lawn Tennis Association has ambitions for more courts – is this supported by their NGB facility plans? The Whole Sports Plans (once published) might also be informative.

The Staffordshire Lawn Tennis Association has been discussing the provision of a four-court tennis hall in Stafford town with the Borough Council for some time. Stafford Sports College recently sold land to the Fire Service and has announced its intention of using the capital receipt to develop a 3-court hall, provided it can get additional funding from the Lawn Tennis Association and Borough Council.

5.36 **Tennis and Multi-sport courts (pg 35)**

It is very hard from the summary text to work out whether there are adequate tennis courts in the Borough or not. I can understand that there is some cross over between tennis courts and MUGAs uses but unless the Council has a policy to provide these facilities as one I would just question the value of organising the strategy in this way.

We audited the condition of all of the tennis courts in the Borough and identified a need to improve the quality of provision as a precursor to boosting participation. Open access MUGAs tend to be used informally and many are used very little.

- 5.37 Opportunities through BSF might deliver improvements but it is hard from the conclusions

This information is in the main report

to be clear what type of facility (tennis only or MUGA) might be needed and where to address quality/availability etc.

5.38 Strategic Issues and Recommendations (pg 38)

As stated earlier the transfer of pitch sports onto artificial surfaces is not wholly supported as NGBs have not endorsed such an approach (pg 41). The assumptions about the impact of climate change appear to be a bit premature and we suggest this is a discussion which should take place nationally.

See paragraphs 6-36 in the first section of this appendix.

5.39 Regeneration (recommendations – pg 44)

In principle this is supported but what is the appropriate level? I do not see any standards provided to guide provision in accordance with PPG17. The provision of local standards in this document, the forthcoming Leisure Strategy or LDF DPD/SPD is vital to ensure the strategy/LDF is compliant with PPG17.

The main report clearly sets out provision standards

5.40 Quality versus quantity (pg 46)

Making greater use of planning obligations is supported in general but it needs to be clear that it is not appropriate for them to be used to address existing deficiencies (but to provide for new demand). Upgrading existing facilities might therefore not be a sound use of S106 monies unless it can clearly be demonstrated that qualitative improvements will increase the capacity of facilities to accommodate the new demand on top of existing demand.

Paragraph 33 of PPG17 states “Planning obligations should be used as a means to remedy local deficiencies in the quantity or quality of open space, sports and recreation provision.”

Paragraph B9 of DCLG Circular 5/2005, *Planning Obligations*, states “Planning obligations should not be used solely to resolve existing deficiencies in infrastructure provision ...”, “solely” clearly implies that they can be used to help address existing deficiencies, although this is a change in policy from the earlier Circular 1/97.

The Council will be publishing a Supplementary Planning Document setting out how it intends to use planning conditions and planning obligations in order to help deliver the strategy.

5.41 Outdoor Sports Facility Issues (pg 49/50)

Care is needed in relation to listing sites which should be disposed of for replacement. A clear matrix needs to be set out showing the surpluses/shortfalls of all pitch types, how sites to be lost will be replaced and how that affects overall supply and demand, distribution, accessibility etc. Is there land available to provide new multi-pitch sites to accommodate the number of closures? The principle should also be established that it is vital replacement sites are provided before any existing sites are lost to provide continuity of use. Will they be as accessible as existing site distribution? PPG17 makes it quite clear that any sites lost must be equivalent or better in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility therefore the options for disposal/replacement need to be able to demonstrate how this can be delivered. At the moment there are lots of sites which are listed as suitable for development with no clear strategy on how they will be replaced. This is a very risky approach and needs to be more thoroughly thought through before the strategy is finalised.

These are issues for the LDF once housing allocations are known. At this stage, the strategy identified sites that it may be possible to use for development. When housing allocations are built out this will increase the demand for pitches.

5.42 ATPs (pg 51)

See points above. Clearly ATPs have their role to play in pitch provision and the balance between those and grass pitches needs to be appropriate. Pg 54 suggests all BSF schools should have an ATP on their sites – this might not be appropriate as it will depend if there are already ATPs in the vicinity which would be undermined by new provision of a nearby school site. Indoor Sports (pg 56) – whilst BSF is a good opportunity to provide new sports facilities open to the community it must be remembered that BSF funding does not cover community use (e.g. it could fund an ATP for the school but not the lighting needed for the community, it could fund a sports hall but not the quality of changing facilities/lockers/reception needed to deliver community use etc.). In addition it does not normally fund swimming as swimming is not a curricular sport. For BSF to be of real value to community sports provision the Council and other external funders will need to join up funding/management etc. The recommendations provide for a standard provision menu of facilities on school sites but Partnerships for Schools are encouraging Councils to move away from the traditional sports facility provision and be more innovative – e.g. including climbing walls.

See paragraphs 6-36 in the first section of this appendix. Secondary schools should have ATPs for the delivery of PE and after-school programmes; the issue then is maximising community use of them and ensuring adequate long term maintenance, including carpet replacement. Moving football to ATPs is an important part of achieving this.

5.43 The Needs of new residents (pg 58)

The para. Re recommendations refers to using standards - I have not been able to identify these. Where are they? Should the assessment not have come up with standards for bowling greens, tennis and golf - why is this left to individual proposals to address?

See response to comment 5.39.

5.44 Target Sports (pg 60)

The 5 target sports have been selected based on their good existing structures. Will this deliver the best opportunities for increasing participation in sport? Pg 61 refers to the development of an indoor cricket centre in Stone - does this take into account the new centre at Sandon School, Stoke, Stafford Grammar School (which is used by Staffordshire Cricket) and Clayton Sports Centre in Newcastle? The Staffordshire Cricket Board has recently completed a facilities audit - are the recommendations in line with this?

It is far easier to develop participation by building on existing structure than developing new ones.

5.45 For netball a joint tennis/netball centre is proposed - another consideration is that BSF could provide a new sports hall on one of the school sites which is a specialist netball centre (the sports hall being slightly larger).

It is likely to be some time before Stafford benefits from BSF. Making a sports hall slightly larger than normal in order that it can accommodate a single netball court will do very little for the sport. Our consultation with local netball interests identified a need for a central venue with several courts, hence the suggested link-up with an indoor tennis facility.

5.46 The recommendations for Rugby should reflect the comments already made by the RFU.

They reflect the comments made by RFU representatives interviewed as part of the development of the strategy.

5.47 Consequential issues (pg 64)

If netball was taken out of sports halls and put into an indoor tennis centre how much actual programme time would this release and where? If netball was provided at one venue, rather than being spread around the borough, what impact would that have on accessibility? Could that affect participation? I am not convinced that this has been thoroughly thought through.

A central venue - which is in effect what is proposed - has to be at a single location. The Netball Association identified that the main problem it faces in Stafford is the lack of venues with 2 or more courts.

5.48 Providing for the Pitch Sports (pg 64)

As set out above Sport England has reservations about a move to predominantly ATPs because this approach is not supported by NGBs or national policy in PPG17. Rather than the LA being pressed to pioneer this approach perhaps there would be value in a discussion at CSP/Regional level with the CSP and pitch sport NGBs to discuss the options?

See paragraphs 6-36 in the first section of this appendix.

5.49 The use of Sports Halls (pg 65)

It needs to be clear just how much programme time will be released through tennis/netball being relocated. It will also take some time to provide such a new centre if indeed this is the preferred option. Specialist purpose sports halls can be valuable but it is better to design this in to new build halls, rather than try to adapt existing facilities, and perhaps the BSF programme offers the best opportunities to deliver this aspect.

There is practically no tennis in existing sports halls in the Borough as floor finishes are unsuitable for it, other than at the St Dominic's Priory School in Stone. Our interview with the All England Netball Association identified that the main constraints on netball development in the Borough relate to the quality and dimensions of existing halls. There is no suggestion in the draft strategy relating to the adaptation of existing halls for netball.

5.50 I hope the above is helpful. I appreciate the additional information may have addressed some of the issues raised above but this was not made available for consultation. I have also attached some reports/maps from Active Places Power which might be useful.

Thank you for the Active Places Power information.

6.0 Rose Freeman, The Theatres Trust

6.1 Thank you for the email of 30 October from Limehouse and letter from yourself of 29 October consulting The Theatres Trust on the PPG17 Assessment for Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategies. The Theatres Trust is The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres. The Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995, Article 10, Para (v) requires the Trust to be consulted on planning applications which include 'development involving any land on which there is a theatre.' It was established by The Theatres Trust Act 1976 'to promote the better protection of theatres'. This applies to all theatre buildings, old and new, in current use, in other uses, or disused. It also

No response required

includes buildings or structures that have been converted to theatre, circus buildings and performing art centres. Our main objective is to safeguard theatre use, or the potential for such use, but we also provide expert advice on design, conservation, property and planning matters to theatre operators, local authorities and official bodies. Due to the specific nature of the Trust's remit we are concerned with the protection and promotion of theatres and we find this consultation is not directly relevant to our work. We therefore have no specific comment to make that may be useful or pertinent but look forward to being consulted on further planning policy documents in due course.

7.0 Justin Milward, The Woodland Trust

7.1 Biodiversity

We strongly support the comments in the 'Strategic Issues and Recommendations' section relating to the 'biodiversity and nature conservation' cross-cutting issue that greenspace provision, management and maintenance are seen as '...a major opportunity to promote biodiversity and nature conservation because of their fundamental importance to the future quality of life in the Borough'. No response required.

7.2 Native broadleaf woodland in particular provides a range of social, economic and environmental benefits and woodland has been shown to contribute to 10 of the 20 quality of life indicators for the UK. It is a robust habitat that can contribute to biodiversity and landscape, as well as to recreational amenity, health & wellbeing and climate change mitigation. No response required.

7.3 Woodland can also play a key role in green infrastructure strategies, which seek to use existing and new greenspace to create structural and functional connectivity in a 'holistic' spatial framework to improve quality of life. In urban areas, the social benefits provided by woodland are particularly important and in particular its contribution to health and well being. No response required.

7.4 There is growing awareness of the linkage between healthy communities and the quality of the environment. Hospital recovery rates for example, show significantly faster recovery where patients had a view of trees and woodland from their hospital window (Ulrich, R.S. 1984, "View Through a Window May Influence Recovery Agreed.

from Surgery”, ‘Science Journal’ 224, pp.420-421). There are potentially significant cost savings for Primary Care Trusts in more widely recognising green exercise as clinically valid treatment for mental and physical illnesses. It has been estimated by the Department of Health (Dept Health, 2004. At least five a week: Evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health. A report from the Chief Medical Officer, London) that £500m per year and 6,000 lives could be saved by a 10% increase in adult physical activity. A report commissioned by Advantage West Midlands concluded that recreational activities in forests account for significant reductions in heart disease, stress and obesity. Trees also improve air quality and therefore help to fight respiratory diseases such as asthma and bronchitis. The benefits of walking and cycling in woodland beauty spots are estimated to save the National Health Service up to £4.5 Million in the West Midlands alone.

7.5 Access

We also support the comments about accessibility. We believe that access to green space such as woodland is an important factor in improving people’s quality of life and improving local amenity provision. Recognising this, the Woodland Trust has researched and developed a Woodland Access Standard for local authorities to aim for. This standard is endorsed by Natural England.

No response required

7.6 The Woodland Trust Woodland Access Standard recommends that:

See paragraphs 37-39 in the first section of this appendix

- No person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size
- That there should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round-trip) of people’s homes.

7.7 This translates into the Stafford Borough Council area as set out below, with a comparison against the County of Staffordshire and the West Midlands region as a whole. This indicates that Stafford Borough Council has a below average resource of accessible woodland. The data used is now available and, as it has been collected in GIS form, we are able to supply this information both in map and in numerical form.

See paragraphs 37-39 in the first section of this appendix

- 7.8 Accessibility to Woodland in Stafford Borough using the Woodland Trust Woodland Access Standard
- Stafford BC Stafford-shire County All West Midlands
- Accessible woods % population with access to 2ha+ wood within 500m
- Stafford Borough 2.19%
 - Staffordshire 10.77%
 - West Midlands 9.42%
- % population with access to 20ha+ wood within 4km
- Stafford Borough 37.29%
 - Staffordshire 66.23%
 - West Midlands 54.66%
- Inaccessible woods % extra population with access to 2ha+ wood within 500m if existing woods opened
- Stafford Borough 27.5%
 - Staffordshire 24.3%
 - West Midlands 23.19%
- % extra population with access to 20ha+ wood within 4km if existing woods opened
- Stafford Borough 45.62%
 - Staffordshire 30.48%
 - West Midlands 25.82%
- Woodland creation
- % population requiring new woodland creation for access to a 2ha+ wood within 500m
- Stafford Borough 70.75%
 - Staffordshire 64.89%
 - West Midlands 67.39%
- % population requiring new woodland creation for access to a 20ha+ wood within 4km
- Stafford Borough 17.08%
 - Staffordshire 3.29%
 - West Midlands 19.52%
- See paragraphs 37-39 in the first section of this appendix. In addition, the provision of over 200 ha of new woodland is a low priority for the Borough Council and will depend on land owners rather than the Council.

Minimum area of new woodland required for 2ha+ woods within 500m (ha):

- Stafford Borough 210 ha
- Staffordshire 1,084 ha
- West Midlands 4,834 ha

Minimum area of new woodland required for 20ha+ woods within 4km:

- Stafford Borough 60 ha
- Staffordshire 200 ha
- West Midlands 914 ha

7.9 The report publication illustrating the Woodland Access Standard (WASt), 'Space for People', is the first UK-wide assessment of any form of greenspace and, while the targets may seem challenging, they represent the result of detailed analysis. The 'Space for People' report can be found at www.woodland-trust.org.uk/publications. The Trust would be pleased to see the Woodland Access Standard adopted as a tool in the Council's Open Space strategy.

See paragraphs 37-39 in the first section of this appendix.

7.10 Climate Change

We are pleased to see the reference in the 'climate change' cross-cutting issue of the 'Strategic Issues and Recommendations' to increasing the number of trees in the Borough as a heat mitigation measure. It is important that woodland is seen as both a tool for mitigating the effects of climate change but also as a means of helping biodiversity adapt to climate change in the future. Mitigation efforts, while crucial in tempering the worst effects of accelerating climate change are now accepted as being insufficient to prevent climate change taking place. This means that adaptation strategies must be given a much more prominent role in planning policy. Nevertheless, open green space such as woodland can make a significant contribution towards mitigating the effects of climate change: woodland's role as a carbon sink for CO2 emissions is well known and it can also help absorb air pollution and improve water quality. In addition woodland can assist in control of flood run-off from unseasonably heavy rainfalls, provide shade in hot temperatures for urban environments and offer biodiversity refuges for species under pressure from the rise in temperatures. The University of Manchester has calculated that a mere 10% increase in the

No response required

amount of green space in built-up areas would reduce urban surface temperatures by as much as 4% (Public Health News, May 2007).

- 7.11 Wood fuel production and product substitution (eg timber frame house construction) are other ways that woodland can help reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions. However, the reality is that climate change is already with us and it is neither defeatist nor a distraction from the urgency of mitigation to fulfil our responsibility to enable both people and biodiversity to adapt. We should be taking a twin-track approach to this – making significant cuts in greenhouse gases and at the same time taking adaptive action for climate change we are already locked into. No response required
- 7.12 Adaptation is about developing resilient natural systems that can absorb and respond to change. Developing strategies to help the natural environment cope with these changes is not an alternative to mitigating the effect of increased CO2 emissions; indeed they should add to the urgency for action by recognising that change is already with us. In their current state, key habitats such as ancient woodland are simply not sustainable given their fragmented character and the immobile nature of many of their characteristic species, which are “locked in” by the surrounding environmentally hostile landscape. It is now widely accepted that the species compositions of semi-natural habitats will change considerably. No response required
- 7.13 The supplement to PPS1, ‘Planning and Climate Change’ (Dept for Communities and Local Government, 2007) states that “To deliver sustainable development, and in doing so a full and appropriate response on climate change, regional planning bodies and all planning authorities should prepare, and manage the delivery of, spatial strategies that:.... conserve and enhance biodiversity, recognising that the distribution of habitats and species will be affected by climate change”. The strategy emphasises the duty on the Council to promote biodiversity
- 7.14 **Community Involvement**
- Woodland and related activities can also be valuable in promoting social inclusion. Woodland activities, such as tree planting, walking and woodland crafts can provide a forum for people of all ages and cultural backgrounds to come together to learn about and improve their local environment. The Government’s Agreed; this is now emphasised in the amended strategy

“Strategy for England’s Trees Woods and Forests” publication highlights the role of woods as an important resource both for leisure activities and educational purposes (para 27) - “It has been estimated that 33 million people make over 2.5 billion visits each year to urban green spaces and that 46% of people in urban areas use green spaces more than once a week. Trees, woodlands and associated green space offer a variety of outdoor opportunities for young people to have fun and to learn”. The Woodland Trust runs an initiative called Community Woodland Network (<http://www.woodland-trust.org.uk/communitywoodlandnetwork>), which is an interactive network for community woodland groups to share information and resources about taking on and managing woodland. It is clear that community groups greatly benefit from the exchange of ideas and support with resources.

7.15 **Regeneration**

Urban woodland and other types of greenspace can also have a number of important economic benefits. Research by the Mersey Forest Brownfield Project (“Brownfield Remediation to Forestry”) has shown that tree planting can be an important mechanism of reclaiming and regenerating contaminated brownfield land. Planting fast-growing trees such as willows and poplars can markedly enhance the natural degradation of many pollutants in the soil, including petroleum residues, oil, industrial solvents and paint. The National Forest too published a report in 2007 - ‘An Exemplar of Sustainable Development’ - highlighting actions that contribute to sustainable development, including further woodland creation, measuring social inclusion and well being, and working with partners on developing the National Forest as a destination for sustainable tourism and extending wildlife habitats.

No response required

7.16 Research by CABE Space (publicly funded by ODPM to champion the quality of our buildings and spaces) has shown that local parks can increase property values by up to 7%. When people vote with their money it shows what kind of places they want to live in - neighbourhoods with green spaces where children can play safely, where they can easily walk or jog from home to a park for exercise and relaxation. And where there are people, there is a market for businesses to thrive. In regenerating or creating

This research is summarised in the section entitled “Trends” in the Chapter on the Green Network.

new residential areas, green space is a vital part of the infrastructure for those living there (Does Money Grow on Trees? CABE Space, 2005). The vast majority (83%) of the public believe the appearance of their local area is an important factor in deciding where to live and 91% of the public believes that parks and public spaces improve people's quality of life.

Governing Bodies of Sport

8.0 Ross Baxter, Funding and Facilities Manager (West Midlands), Rugby Football Union

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| 8.1 | I would be interested to know who Kit Campbell Associates contacted from the RFU in relation to this survey. | Tom Bartram (RFU Development Officer) and Simon Jones (Community Coach). We also spoke to the Stafford and Eccleshall Clubs and to Staffordshire University, although not to its rugby club. |
| 8.2 | Attached is an accurate picture of club participation numbers and facility needs within the Borough. I am concerned about the validity of some of the stats represented within the document. | Statistics relating to teams (especially minis and midis) and club membership are a moving feast and some of the details provided by the RFU do not match the details provided on club websites. In addition the RFU details make no mention of Gnosall RUFC. |
| 8.3 | Attached is the RFU National Facility Strategy | No response required |
| 8.4 | Attached is a guidance note on artificial turf pitches and Rugby Union. They are licensed for adult and junior league matches at all levels. The RFU would support the development of joint football/rugby pitch in Stafford Borough as a high priority. | Thank you. |
| 8.5 | The TGR calculation is currently recognised by Sport England as not representing facility needs of Rugby Union and is under review. Junior teams do play across senior pitches however the level of degrading to those pitches is significant especially if floodlit. This as a result decreases the quality of those pitches and the subsequent number of matches and training sessions that can be played upon them. The RFU would recommend separate mini/midi pitches as against playing across existing pitches. With this | We endorse the RFU's concerns relating to Sport England's use of team and pitch "equivalents" for mini-rugby and the impact that mini and midi play across adult pitches has on their condition. Accordingly the playing pitch calculations used for the strategy did not assume that mini and mid |

basis the need for junior pitches does exist within the borough given the number of teams. rugby will be played across adult pitches.

- 8.6 The provision of ancillary facilities such as changing rooms and clubhouses is a high priority within the Stafford BC area for the RFU. This is represented through the audit form previously represented. The consultation with RFU representatives also identified this as a local priority for rugby and highlighted in the strategy.

Regional and Sub-regional Bodies

9.0 Ruth Hýtch, Cannock Chase AONB Partnership

- 9.1 As you are aware, the AONB is a statutory designated area under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW). CROW places a duty on all public bodies to “have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty”. The Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan, prepared in accordance with CROW, sets out how the AONB will be conserved and enhanced. In addition, the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan sets out in it policies (NC3) that “the landscape quality of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting will be conserved and enhanced, and its nature conservation and recreational value protected and extended”. No response required
- 9.2 The AONB Partnership has also agreed a Planning Protocol which includes consideration of any applications that “are likely to have an adverse impact on either the character of the local landscape and/or nature conservation interests within the AONB or on its setting”. This Planning Protocol should also be considered as a relevant document within the context of your Local Development Framework. No response required
- 9.3 Whilst it is accepted that, within the definitions provided in the report, the AONB is excluded from the assessment and proposals, there could be an impact upon the AONB through the implementation of some of the recommendations. It is these impacts that are the focus of the Partnership’s comments. No response required
- 9.4 A large proportion of the AONB falls within the Borough and it offers amenity, biodiversity and nature conservation for residents to enjoy. Residents are already able to access it freely and this brings with it an important duty to manage those visitors and in some cases, find These issues should be considered as a matter of course as part of the normal development management process relating to developments that might

alternatives for them to access. The Partnership has already raised concerns about the increasing pressures on the AONB from new housing developments proposed in the Borough. impact on the AONB.

9.5 Environmental Play

The Cannock Chase AONB Partnership has already been involved in a number of educational projects that have allowed children and their families to visit the AONB and learn more about their surroundings. Although this is not strictly the “play environment” referred to in your report, this structured approach to visiting, enjoying and learning to respect the environment could be extended to offer some provision for access to the environment. However the impact of any increase in this activity should be carefully assessed and monitored. No response required

9.6 Planning hierarchy and opportunity

If this option to seek opportunities within specific areas, some of which fall within the AONB, the requirements of the AONB Management Plan should be taken into account. The opportunity for provision of new recreational facilities must be balanced against the impact this would have upon the AONB. In relation to this comment, I draw your attention to Policy 25 of our Management Plan: “Provision of new or the expansion of existing recreation activities will only be supported where they are sustainable and benefits to the AONB can be identified.” This issue should be considered as a matter of course as part of the normal development management process relating to developments that might impact on the AONB.

9.7 Planning Obligations/S106 monies

In the same context, there is the opportunity to seek planning obligations monies to benefit the AONB and help support projects that mitigate the increasing impact of visitors to the area. The Partnership requests that your authority should deem s106 monies available as appropriate for allocation to these AONB projects. See paragraph 4 in the first section of this appendix.

9.8 The Urban Fringe

Proposals to consider and develop a country park away from the AONB within the Borough are supported. This would be in accordance with Policy and Action 20B within our Management Plan to: “Consider the role of other areas, e.g. Chasewater and the Forest of Mercia, in providing alternative visitor destinations to the AONB.” No response required

10.0 Jonathon Haywood, Centro

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| 10.1 | A high quality public transport network can assist in people reaching leisure facilities within the Boroughs. Transport and in particular public transport should therefore be a key theme throughout this document in order to promote accessibility to leisure facilities. Centro recommends any new and existing sports, leisure and heritage assets throughout the borough should have good accessibility to the public transport network in order to help make them more accessible by sustainable modes. The Government's White Paper 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone' recognised the potential benefits of cycling as a flexible, relatively cheap and environmentally friendly way to travel with important health benefits for people of all ages. | This is a wider issue for the LDF rather than this strategy, which cannot influence public transport policy. |
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11.0 Mike Calverley, Stafford and South Staffordshire Primary Care Trust

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| 11.1 | How does this link with the Stafford Borough Council new Health Strategy and Stafford and Surrounds Practice Based Commissioning Choosing Health Programme. | Strategy amended in response to this comment |
| 11.2 | Ensure that the links are made with the local Health Fit programme which South Staffordshire PCT and Stafford Borough Council are signed up to deliver agreed targets. | Strategy amended in response to this comment |
| 11.3 | Ensure that provision/facilities is geared towards sustainable physical activity across the Borough to including walking, cycling, green gyms etc. | Strategy amended in response to this comment |
| 11.4 | Ensure provision of opportunities/facilities is geared towards young people and family based activity especially in relation to childhood obesity which will become a major health problem if measures are not taken now by all organisations | Strategy amended in response to this comment |
| 11.5 | There is no cross reference to 2012 and sport and recreation opportunities that could be harnessed locally. | Strategy amended in response to this comment |
| 11.6 | Consultation with the residents of Stafford Borough should take place to establish what facilities and opportunities are important to them. There should also be consultation with local clubs and organisations. | The process of preparing the strategy involved a wide range of local consultations. In addition, the consultation process on the draft strategy allowed local residents and clubs and other organisations to comment |

on it.

12.0 Clare Collins, Staffordshire PE and Sports Stakeholder Group

- 12.1 Councillor Robert Simpson has passed your letter regarding PPG17 Guidance to me. You will, I am sure, be aware that within the County a Staffordshire PE and Sports Stakeholder Group has been convened. It is chaired by the County Sports Partnership and includes representation from the Children and Lifelong Learning Directorate, District and Borough Councils, the PCT and Schools. The County Sports Partnership has commissioned Nortoft Ltd to develop a sub regional sports facilities framework. This will link to regional frameworks and district strategies and is due to publication in January 2009. No response required

13.0 J Fraser, Sustainable and Healthy Communities Team

13.1 General

Overall some sound references to biodiversity, and later climate change and cycling. The following need to be added or enhanced/detailed further: Climate Change Health – esp. health promotion/health inequalities. The capacity to address several agendas at one time eg interventions relating to health promotion can have environmental/climate change benefits. The Councils’ priority to ‘promote sustainable development’ is not mentioned and sustainable development overall (rather than single elements such as biodiversity) needs to be included. Strategy amended in response to this comment

13.2 Specific

P 5 amend to ‘...accessible green spaces, including accessible natural green space ...(As defined by Natural England) The term “accessible green spaces” includes the full typology of provision

13.3 P 6 update to ‘Sustainable Community Strategy’ Agreed

13.4 P 14 the National Policy Context’ should reference Open Space links to climate change – both mitigation and adaptation Agreed

13.5 P 22 Important reference to ‘environmental play – advise close liaison with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust Where appropriate, agreed

13.6 P 23 Golf Clubs

Golf Clubs have significant sustainable Agreed

development impacts – references to SD here are needed especially to climate change and biodiversity

13.7 P 25 Grass Pitches

The report states that ‘A high level of accessibility on foot or by bicycle is not particularly important for sports pitches’. However – in that case, in the future, it should be! Consider National Indicator 175 (NI 175) on Access to public services by cycling, walking and public transport. Improvements could include provision for secure cycle parking. Access by walking and cycling is included but no reference to access by public transport.

This confuses pitches for formal matches – which is what the strategy was referring to - with areas for casual kickabouts. Opportunities for casual kickabouts should be within walking distance of where people live and has been assessed in the strategy as part of the “Green Network”. However, in any formal match, half of the players are playing “away” and individuals join teams that offer the opportunity to play at an appropriate standard, or with friends, not the team nearest to where they live

13.8 P 25-29 E improvements to pitches of all kinds

A simple sustainable development checklist could be incorporated to encourage for example,
 Appropriate/relevant planting for biodiversity
 Cycle parking
 Energy efficient/solar lighting
 SUDS/drainage for any new impermeable surfaces
 Materials and products to incorporate recycled content (Waste Resources Action Programme have useful guidance)
 Seating for people with mobility issues/ref health inequalities/vulnerable people

Agreed – these are useful suggestions for the quality standards

13.9 P 32 Amenity Green Space Improvements. Good references to biodiversity. Could mention Local Nature Reserves specifically as Council has well known extensive LNR programme

LNRs are part of the natural greenspace typology, not the amenity greenspace one.

13.10 P 34 The Green Network Conclusions

Add reference to the value of open space as cycling and walking transport routes (NI 175 and health agenda again)

Agreed

13.11 P 40 Section on biodiversity/nature conservation good.

No response required

- 13.12 P 41 Strategic Issues and Recommendations:
- General Cross Cutting Issues: it is important to add a section on Health here Agreed
- Climate Change good - but need to extend recommendations to include Eg encouraging access to cycling and walking, opportunities for floodplain management of SBC owned land Agreed
- 13.13 P 42 Friends of Groups - 'plus several associated with Local Nature Reserves (e.g. Ferndown, Astonfields) Thank you
- 13.14 P 45 Creative Thinking section: could usefully add in here a section on how some agendas can support others eg Health interventions such as Green Exercise will benefit environmental objectives especially relating to climate change Agreed
- 13.15 P 51 References to cycling - should put into context of existing cycling programme/activity (work of Stafford Borough Cycling Working Group and liaison with SCC and Sustrans <http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/live/welcome.asp?id=3760> Then, there are no recommendations on cycling in this section. Agreed
- 13.16 P 51 Country Park at Crown Meadow and Westbridge Park has potential to extend N and S to incorporate adjacent LNR - Northern and Southern Meadow (mentioned later). Agreed
- 13.17 P 52 Victoria Park Paddling Pool
- Report notes that it is 'little used for much of the year' but from observation - it is swamped when a bit of sun comes out! No response required
- 13.18 P 53 Cycling Recommendations
- Communication and action on Cycling and Walking already takes place with both SCC and Sustrans via the Stafford Borough Cycling and Walking Working Groups. It would be important not to reinvent the wheel and to use existing successful partnerships. Agreed
- 13.19 P 72 Developer Contributions relating to open space have so far not been available for/allocated to biodiversity enhancements. Clarity that they can be would be helpful. This is certainly acceptable in terms of Circular 5/2005, but see paragraph 4 in the first section of this appendix.

Local Councillors

14.0 Councillor M Carey

- 14.1 Although I welcome the consultation I do not believe that the consultation document has looked into the future. The document is using existing recreation facilities and does not look at the future of new areas particularly in towns. It should not only be looking at purchasing small pieces of land but larger areas which can be developed for future use for athletics, football etc. as the economic climate improves. An example of this is the great parks in London. It is concentrating too much on what exists today and not what may be required in the future. A perfect example of this is the Washlands in Stone which will never ever be developed and is therefore not in danger of being lost. We should be looking at purchasing large areas for potential development in the future and which would protect them against building houses.
- The suggestion of buying land to create infrastructure before it is known where new housing is likely to go could be very expensive.

The Borough's Town and Parish Councils

15.0 Mrs Christine Hammond, Brocton Parish Council

- 15.1 Having received and considered the documents relating to the above, Brocton Parish Council, whilst fully understanding the necessity, for financial and management purposes, to site sport and recreation facilities in larger centres of population, feels it is important to consider that with the scarcity of good public transport services between rural areas and the main towns and villages in the Borough access to such facilities may not be readily available to people living in rural areas, especially children and more senior persons who for one reason or another may not have access to private transport. The potential to make full use of facilities in local schools and public halls, including at weekends and school holidays, is to be encouraged and particularly where this facility would provide better access for those in rural areas.
- No response required

16.0 Christine Heelis, Eccleshall Parish Council

- 16.1 Eccleshall Parish Council accepts that the proposals contained in the document appear to be sound and the Council supports the conclusions identified therein. In addition it was

resolved to make the following comments:

- The report correctly indicates that there are currently limited facilities in Eccleshall and the North West of the Borough is lacking in facilities.

No response required
- The Parish Council strongly agrees that indoor facilities are needed in Eccleshall together with artificial turf pitches and multi sports courts as a matter of urgency.

No response required
- The Bowls Club in Eccleshall has 100 members who regularly play indoor bowls and travel to other areas of the Borough in the summer for outdoor facilities. Provision to address this need is considered to be a priority and not in five years time.

The full report highlights Eccleshall as an area in which it may be desirable to provide a green
- Eccleshall has been identified as requiring additional provision for children.

The main report suggests additional provision in Eccleshall
- It would have been helpful if the report had identified facilities in public/private ownership. For example, whilst the report notes that Eccleshall has Tennis courts and a Football Club it fails to recognise that these are in private ownership. It is thought that of all the 109 golf holes in the Borough there are no municipal courses.

Clubs are not “private” but “voluntary” provision. In communities such as Eccleshall there is not sufficient demand to support both club and public sector provision.
- Funding provided by Section 106 agreements should be matched to appropriate schemes in the locality of the development and secure appropriate enhancements for the community.

Agreed, and the strategy endorses this approach.

Local Sports Clubs

17.0 Colin Gallow, Burton Manor Sports Association

- 17.1 Burton Manor Sports Association representation to Stafford Borough Council Assessment and Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy. Burton Manor Sports Association wishes to make representation with regard to land at Burton Manor, Stafford (sited immediately adjacent to the M6 motorway). The land is shown as proposed open space/amenity area on the plan. Burton Manor Sports Association is a non profit-making club run by the members, comprising of a collection of different sports societies offering facilities for tennis, squash,
- This information will be very useful to the Borough in discussions with the Club

badminton, crown green bowling, martial arts, table tennis, snooker etc on-site, all sharing a clubhouse and changing facilities. The club is situated within the grounds of Stafford Independent Grammar School at Burton Manor.

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| 17.2 | The clubhouse and some sporting facilities are owned by the club with other facilities (tennis and bowls) leased from the school. The lease on the land owned by the school is due to expire with the school not being prepared to renew due to their own expansion plans. The thriving club is therefore facing closure unless suitable alternative premises/facilities can be found. The club is a not-for-profit organisation run for and by its members providing much-needed sporting facilities for the whole local community. A strong family ethos exists where children are encouraged to take part in the thriving youth sections with the more elderly heavily committed to the bowling and other sections. | The main report comments on this issue |
| 17.3 | The club has very recently purchased land directly opposite the current site for the purpose of re-siting the club facilities. A club development committee has just been set up to develop a viable proposal and submit a planning application to Stafford Borough Council in the very near future. The proposed site for the replacement facilities is currently designated as proposed open space/amenity area. It is essential for the club to continue (and with it to provide sporting facilities for large number of people across a wide range of sports not widely catered for elsewhere within the area) and a new club built subject to detailed planning permission being obtained. | This information will be very useful to the Borough in discussions with the Club |
| 17.4 | The members of Burton Manor Sports Association therefore support the designation of this land as public open space and amenity area, providing the siting of a replacement independent Burton Manor Sports Association can be included as part of the amenity area designated. The land already purchased for the purpose of re-siting the club is considered unsuitable for housing due to noise and pollution levels immediately adjacent to the M6 motorway. The land, although previously agricultural, has not been cultivated or grazed for a considerable number of years and is effectively waste land in the town. | This information will be very useful to the Borough in discussions with the Club |
| 17.5 | The site proposed for the replacement club is only a proportion of the area designated for amenity use on the draft plan, thus providing | This information will be very useful to the Borough in discussions with the Club |

plenty of additional land for general public access and use. Additional demand for sporting facilities is anticipated locally with the additional planned population within Stafford Borough with new housing proposed adjoining the site and nearby. The club which is to work closely with the Borough Council with regard to the development to provide needed sports facilities with membership open to all members of the community.

18.0 Keith Halliday, Berkswich Football Club

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| 18.1 | Whilst the report is a reasonable observational summary of the Town's facilities I believe it completely misses the dependency on "localness" for the many activities which are based on area communities. Berkswich Junior FC has 12 teams based at Walton, Berkswich, Wildwood and Baswich. It has thrived for 21 years purely due to its focus on local families and their willingness to participate in coaching/refereeing qualifications. Our localness encourages health, well being and community through this family involvement plus just as importantly through older children attending training and home matches by foot and bicycle rather than car. Kit Campbell all too easily rights-off this significance and instead urges centralization measured in access by car driven minutes. We all, of course, want the best local facilities. | The main report uses area-based analysis throughout and seeks to maximise accessibility to most forms of provision on foot |
| 18.2 | An ATP or equivalent for training at Walton High School would serve the large local population south east of Radford Bank but this is not proposed by Kit Campbell, instead he would prefer to drive more traffic onto the already strangled road network towards Rising Brook and Beaconside. This does not bring "accessibility". | The main report recommends that the Council should work with the County Council to provide an ATP at each of the secondary schools, which obviously includes Walton High School. It also highlights the University site at Beaconside as a possible location. |

19.0 Will Spencer, Dynamo Telegraph FC

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| 19.1 | Stafford Borough Council (SBC) recently sent me a copy of the above document as part of its consultation exercise. I, as Secretary and Manager of Dynamo Telegraph FC would like to make the following observations and comments. The report indicates that the Football Association (FA) is promoting the use of artificial turf pitches (ATPs) for midweek football training. This is an understandable stance since the majority of all-weather facilities benefit from the presence of | An increasing number of professional clubs are developing ATPs at their training centres. See also paragraphs 6-36 in the first section of this appendix. |
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flood lights which allow teams to train in the evening. However this is not to say that these facilities can replicate playing on a full-size grass football pitch, which all professional football clubs utilise as part of their training regime.

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| 19.2 | The report appears to indicate that there is a lack of players wishing to participate in Sunday League football in Stafford. I do not believe this to be the case indeed I believe that there are perhaps not enough teams and not enough information circulated as to how to join an adult men's team. The recent increasing number of qualified match officials and the affordable running costs of a team using a local Borough Council owned pitch do not present any significant obstacle to creating new local football clubs. The decline in teams in Stafford in the past was due to the lack of officials available to referee matches and the local Sunday Football League not allowing new teams to join due in part to this scarcity of officials. | This is an issue for the Staffordshire FA to address rather than the strategy. However, the number of Borough teams playing in local leagues has declined in recent years. In addition, in an interview we conducted with Mr Spencer during preparation of the strategy, he identified that the problems facing his club included lack of new junior and male players, ageing players and lack of volunteers, as well as the scarcity of officials. |
| 19.3 | It is true that, having spoken to numerous Sunday League Managers, the local Borough Council owned pitches sometimes require more frequent maintenance, but this does not change the mindset that 11-aside adult football should be played on grass pitches. I also believe that it is untrue to say that most clubs demand improved changing facilities, floodlights and new goalposts. | See paragraphs 6-36 in the first section of this appendix. The football clubs that we consulted highlighted the need for better changing, floodlights and goalposts. The Staffordshire FA also highlighted the need for more floodlit pitches and better changing provision. In our interview with Mr Spencer during preparation of the strategy, he identified poor quality changing and goalposts as among the problems facing his club. |
| 19.4 | If additional clubs are sought, local marketing and advertising would, I'm sure, unearth a significant local demand for participation in 11-aside men's football. The phrase used in the report that the decline in participants is because: '...players discover that Sunday morning football in the cold and wet can be a less than thrilling prospect after a good Saturday night....' seems almost immature and for the most part quite untrue, absolutely moronic. | See paragraphs 24-26 in the first section of this appendix. See also response to point 19.2 above.

The comment came from a football league secretary, although we have paraphrased the blunt way in which it was expressed. |
| 19.5 | The report also states that there is a likelihood that increasing numbers of players will retire or start playing 5-aside only, I'm not sure what | See paragraphs 27-30 in the first section of this appendix. |

evidence there is for this statement but it seems presumptuous in the extreme. As players retire from adult football, younger players tend to start playing, as I understand it.

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| 19.6 | The cost of pitches may vary, but at approximately £160-300 for the season I do not believe this to be poor value, especially given the fact that Sunday League clubs are self-financing. | Pitches are extremely poor value for local authorities: see paragraphs 31-33 in the first part of this appendix. |
| 19.7 | It is also untrue that there is a significant conflict between mini football and adult football on Sunday mornings in terms of pitch availability this would appear to create very few problems in reality. The movement of mini football onto artificial pitches is surely contrary to 'grass roots' football where young players are urged to learn the game and have the opportunity to play organised games on 'real' pitches. | Report comments softened on this point.

The FA-supported and highly successful Alleyne's Soccer School uses an ATP for mini-soccer and coaching. |
| 19.8 | The report indicates that there is a move to push younger teams to 'get used' to playing on artificial pitches. This is understandable for training purposes, but I'm not sure how these young players will ever have the opportunity to develop into accomplished 11-a-side players who will ultimately be required to play on grass pitches. It is unacceptable that local teams should be 'persuaded' to move to artificial pitches in the future. | Skills development depends on players have access to flat pitches with high quality playing surfaces, such as at the Soccer School at the Alleyne's Sports Centre. Attracting players into the game and retaining them also depends on providing them with decent changing accommodation. |
| 19.9 | The option of replacing Sunday football with mid-week leagues playing 30 minutes each way is incredible and should never be considered as a replacement for weekend 90 minute matches. | This is a logical extension of the rapid growth in mid-week small-sided leagues at commercial 5-a-side football centres. See also paragraphs 27-30 in the first section of this appendix. |
| 19.10 | Competitive football should be played on grass, not moved to ATPs. | See paragraphs 6-36 in the first section of this appendix. |
| 19.11 | The concept of creating and playing on a football pitch which does not suffer as a result of poor weather conditions and that is relatively easy and economical to maintain is an attractive one. However if these third generation artificial pitches are quite so advanced why are they not being used in practise by professional football league clubs in this Country? I recall the Russia versus England European Championship qualifying match played on an artificial pitch in Russia and the negative reaction of the England players and staff to the playability of the pitch, | They are.

Many people also remember Beckham's failed penalty in Euro 2004 - blamed on the state of the penalty spot on |

the greater likelihood of injury and the fact that the pitch exhibited no real comparison to a grass pitch.

the natural grass pitch.

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| 19.12 | Clearly professional clubs support the use of ATPs for training purposes as they can be utilised in all weather, but the lack of ATPs in England in match use speaks for itself. | The point relating to use by professional clubs for training contradicts the previous one: "... why are they not being used in practise by professional football league clubs in this country?" |
| | | 3G pitches were developed only relatively recently and have had to overcome the prejudices against ATPs generated by earlier surfaces which were very poor for football. |
| 19.13 | Whilst I have nothing against the development of Community Clubs, the promotion of them at the expense of single pub-based teams is unacceptable. If the Borough Council wishes to increase involvement in football, especially 11-a-side football for adults they should seek to better maintain the existing pitches and encourage the local league/FA to better advertise/promote involvement and the creation of new teams. | Single team clubs are increasingly unsustainable and most do little or nothing to promote the game and bring on young players. |
| 19.14 | It is my belief that many individuals do not know how to create a new Sunday League football club in terms of administration, finance and affiliation. | No response required |
| 19.15 | Finally to state that it is inevitable that football will ultimately be played on ATPs alone only acts to confirm that this report is ill-informed, based on speculation and has little if any knowledge of the sports it concerns. | No comment |

20.0 Stephen Beck, Stoke on Trent RUFC

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| 20.1 | Please find set out below Stoke-on-Trent Rugby Club's response to the above document. However before I comment on specific areas in the document I would like to express my concern that it would appear the facilities offered by Stoke-on-Trent Rugby Club have not been taken into consideration by this document for example Stoke Rugby Club alone runs 12 junior sides plus a junior colts XV (u17) and certainly as far as we are concerned the main constraints to further development are lack of pitches not volunteers, a | The playing pitch model appendix to the strategy does take account of the facilities offered by the Club. Based on the club's website at the time when the strategy was written, it relates to 3 adult teams, 6 boys' teams and 6 mixed mini teams. |
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contrary view to that expressed in the document.

20.2 Comments

- Junior rugby is not just played by boys and up to the age of 11 teams is mixed. Stoke-on-Trent Rugby Club has a number of girls playing rugby. See response to 17.1
- Lack of pitches and drainage is an issue for this Club. No response required
- Stoke-on-Trent Rugby Club is keen to develop a floodlit artificial turf pitch and has the space to do it. No response required
- The Club welcomes the proposals in the document to focus resources on rugby. No response required
- The Club would like to see some commitment from the Borough to help it acquire additional facilities, particularly more land for pitches and the development of an artificial turf pitch. I hope you find these comments useful and please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information. No response required

Other Local Groups

21.0 Ray Oldacre, Rowley Park Action Group

Note: this set of comments were endorsed by an additional 10 signatories

- 21.1 We understand that one option considered by the Council's Consultant during preparation of the PPG17 assessment is the sale of Rowley Park for housing development. This was mooted as one way of generating funds which could then be used to improve sporting and recreational facilities elsewhere in the Borough. This mis-quotes the report. The report highlights the importance of Rowley Park to the local communities around it and suggests that the Council should consider selling only up to two thirds of it, using the proceeds partly to enhance the remainder of the site and partly to provide replacement sports facilities elsewhere.
- 21.2 We have discussed this proposal with the Rowley Councillors Farrington and Allan and they are fundamentally opposed to it. However, we would like it noted as a formal consultation response that any such proposal would be vigorously opposed by the Rowley Park Action Group. Furthermore, we are confident that we would receive overwhelming support for this position from the majority of the population of Stafford. No response required
- 21.3 We believe that Rowley Park is a wonderful are for the thousands of people who live within a ten No response required

minute walk of it, as well as for countless others who travel to use its amenities. We object strongly to the continued reference by Council officers, and in Council literature, to Rowley Park as a “sporting facility” and suspect the Council believes that if the phrase is repeated often enough then people will believe this to be the correct position. Whilst it is true that the park contains formal sporting equipment and areas, it is nevertheless a “park” and on that basis is routinely used by a large number of people for reasons unrelated to sport.

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| 21.4 | We also draw your attention to the basis on which the park was originally gifted to the people of Stafford – effectively as a tranquil areas of green space to be used for the enjoyment and benefit of all. We would also remind the Council of the outcome of the last attempt to sell of parts of the park for development and to the damaging political consequences that ensued. | No response required |
| 21.5 | We urge you to ensure that the option of selling Rowley Park for development, thereby depriving people of a much loved and highly valued area, is firmly dismissed from further consideration and that, in the future, the correct status of the park is accurately recognised. | No response required |

Individuals

22.0 John Blount

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| 22.1 | In considering how to maintain rural green space gained through S106 agreements no mention is made of Parish Councils. This tier of local government represents local communities, is a permanent body and has the capability to deal with the issues that might arise. Surely these are the bodies who are natural guardians of public spaces. | The main report notes that many of the greenspaces in the Borough are owned and maintained by the Town and Parish Councils. |
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23.0 John Coxon

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| 23.1 | Page 19: "although climate change probably means that much rugby will probably have to move to artificial surfaces eventually." What specific evidence is this comment based upon? This comment should be considered for removal! | See paragraphs 6-36 in the first section of this appendix.. |
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24.0 Keith Deavin

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| 24.1 | With regards to the extension of youth provision across the Borough, I fully support any extension | No response required |
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to facilities which may have an impact and reduce anti social behaviour as a consequence.

25.0 Sandra Dudley

- 25.1 Our sole interest is in the welfare and protection of badgers, it is impossible to comment on all sites being considered and we request that we be asked for our input on specific sites at the appropriate time. We expect the Authority to act appropriately to protected species with the relevant surveys and any resulting mitigation
- No response required; this is a normal part of development management.

26.0 Richard Gough

- 26.1 The assessment of facilities for Stafford Town is supported. This can be summarised as
- No response required
- There is no shortage of allotments, compared with other areas
 - There is no shortage of artificial turf pitches (ATPs)
 - There is no shortfall in Athletics tracks, although spectator facilities are limited
 - There is no shortage of bowling greens
 - There is a shortage of children's play areas
 - Golf course provision is satisfactory
 - There is a shortfall of around three cricket pitches
 - There is a shortfall in mini-soccer and junior football pitches
 - There is a shortfall in junior rugby pitches
 - There is a surplus of amenity greenspace
 - There is no shortage of fitness facilities
 - There is no shortage of sports halls
 - There is no shortage of indoor swimming pools
 - There is a shortage of indoor tennis courts
 - More tennis and multi sport courts are required
 - There is a shortage of teenage facilities in west Stafford.
- 26.2 It is noted that, in order to improve the quality of provision, the assessment recommends that:
- No response required
- Allotments provision in Stafford town is rationalised, with fewer larger sites. Priority should be given to finding more allotment sites around the periphery of Stafford town
 - Increased provision of ATPs be made, possibly at Stafford town secondary school sites
 - Bowling green provision in Stafford town

should be reduced and provision increased elsewhere

- The provision of larger, more exciting, children's play areas in Stafford town should be promoted
- The quality of existing cricket pitches should be improved
- More mini-soccer and junior football pitches should be provided
- A new ground should be found for Stafford Rugby Club as a priority
- More junior rugby pitches should be provided
- The need for more indoor swimming pools will increase with population growth. A new pool should be provided at Stafford
- Additional indoor tennis provision should be made at Stafford (Stafford Sports College is formulating such proposals)
- More tennis and multi sport courts should be provided
- More teenage facilities should be provided

26.3 In addition, the report recommends that the Council No response required

- Promote biodiversity and nature conservation
- Seek to reduce dependence upon grass pitches
- Promote sustainable drainage systems; - Increase tree planting
- Make better use of Section 106 contributions
- Consider other arrangements than traditional open space adoption for future maintenance
- Review and restructure greenspace provision
- Improve/extend cycle routes
- Consider proposing a new country park as part of any urban extension to Stafford town
- Improve existing and propose more formal parks.

26.4 These initiatives and recommendations are broadly supported. It is submitted that the forthcoming Local Development Framework (LDF) provides the opportunity to advance a policy framework which can both encourage and deliver some of these recommendations. In addition, the scale of development which the LDF may be required to accommodate will provide opportunities for development funded improvements to sports and recreation provision. The LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options draft report to the Planning and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on the 18th December, identified that sites were available south of Doxey Road

The strategy is a background document to and evidence base for the LDF.

and north-west of Castle Street (Sites SF11 and SF12) which could deliver some 2,100 dwellings.

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| 26.5 | It is submitted that the general area between the M6 Motorway, Doxey Road, the West Coast Main Line, and Newport Road, offers significant opportunities for the restructuring of land uses, together with new residential development, to deliver improved and enhanced sporting and recreation facilities. There are already a number of such facilities within this area. These include private sports facilities provided as part of the former Unicorn Works, the Stafford Rugby Club, the Stafford Castle Golf Club, and amenity greenspace. | This is an issue for consideration in the LDF. |
| 26.6 | It is recognised that the Stafford Castle Golf Club has planning consent to expand from a 9 hole course to an 18 hole course, which will offer long term protection to the setting of Stafford Castle. | No response required |
| 26.7 | It is further agreed that the Stafford Rugby Club should be relocated to a new site (the site at Blackberry Lane, off Doxey Road, seems the most suitable). Much of the older employment development in the area (Saint-Gobain Abrasives, UCM, and the former GEC Castleworks site) is to relocate. As a result, the opportunity will be created to provide a significant development area within which existing sports and recreation facilities could be relocated and rationalised and additional provision made to deliver some of the recommendations of the sports strategy. Taylor Wimpey UK Limited is promoting the residential development of the Land South of Doxey Road and is liaising with the landowners in the wider area. As such, the opportunity for a comprehensive scheme of sports and recreation provision restructuring and enhancement is deliverable, in conjunction with the residential development of the Land South of Doxey Road. | No response required |
| 26.8 | What is wrong with grass pitches? Yes they require some effort and cost to maintain. OK, Stafford is not blessed with numerous quality facilities but the logical outcome of Kit Campbell's recommendation is that they should be sold off and presumably turned into yet more constructional development yielding a once-off financial benefit to the councils and a forever lost green breathing space to the local communities. We will always need a combination of ATP/equiv and grass to maximise opportunities for the next generations. Our grass pitches are used by the school, and by local children playing games all year round. We already face debilitating financial | See paragraphs 6-36 in the first part of this appendix. The logical outcome of the strategy is to use some existing pitch sites for local parks and other greenspaces that will appeal to a much wider range of potential users than the current pitches which, in essence, are used by 20-30 individuals for kicking or throwing a ball around for a few hours each week. |

pressures from rental costs (increased from £500 to £2000 this year) but to centralize our sports activities would ultimately end our localness, reduce the number of participants, increase car journeys and lose vital open space. Is this denial of local access really what we all want for our children and their families? No.

27.0 Ian Moss

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| 27.1 | Firstly. Stafford Castle is a very important historical recreation area. I read in the paper this week that plans for caravans that are in view of the castle are to be thrown out. These caravans are a visual intrusion, but are nearly 1/2 a mile from the castle. On the proposed area for building, there are up to 2000 houses going right up to the castle boundary. These will have to be very well screened not to be seen from the Castle! | This is an issue for the Local Development Framework rather than the strategy |
| 27.2 | Secondly. More housing on the Burley field's area can be accommodated if kept down well below the line of the Castle. Also Most of the Castlefields estate does have good open space; this must be continued in any further planning! | This is an issue for the Local Development Framework rather than the strategy |
| 27.3 | Thirdly. The A518 can not cope with the proposed increase in traffic, especially if the housing that's planned for Derrington goes ahead? A western by pass must be put in first. With the council's record in the past of letting developers off the hook from putting provisions in after they get there development, I will certainly be fighting very hard to see work done to help residents in the area before housing is built. | This is an issue for the Local Development Framework rather than the strategy |

28.0 Martin Oxby

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| 28.1 | Additional teenage provision should be considered for Fulford. | The strategy suggests additional teenage provision in the main settlements as a first step, with the clear implication that further provision in the smaller settlement will also be appropriate. |
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29.0 Jeremy Pert

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 29.1 | It is a very thorough report of the current facilities within Stafford Borough, the lack of specific elements and their current state of repair, coupled to their likely maintenance / | |
|------|--|--|

replacement requirement in the foreseeable future which has been compiled by one of the UK's experts in this field. However, this approach feels enunciated to where we are today, rather than by identifying 'a best in class' or best practice standard. As such it feels as if there has been no vision of where we would like to see Stafford Borough going and for that to be radically different from where we are today – for example for Stafford Borough to be a centre of excellence for a sport for the next Olympics etc. or how countries like Australia can afford significant chunks of leisure and play parks and what the choices could be if we were to go down that route.

This is exactly the role of the Borough's Sustainable Communities Strategy

- 29.2 There is a reference to the linkage between leisure and long term health (and the undoubted impact on the local PCT), although nothing is really made of this and engaging with other stakeholders in the community to improve overall health and leisure take-up. As such there is no focus on where the health of the Borough is today and how we would like to see it improve through increased use of leisure and facilities. This approach would have the benefit of creating more cohesive areas for communities to work more closely together on a very local level, right the way through to a village and town level. This indicates that we need an integrated plan for how we would like to see communities develop over the next ten to twenty years, with leisure facilities and take-up just one element of things like highway infra-structure, social service provision, education provision and housing.
- See responses in Section 11.0 above
- 29.3 As how people interact together is of critical importance and could help the recreation of communities, rather than just groups of houses. So on the same basis there is lots of discussion on areas (eg football pitches, swimming pools, allotments, etc.) but not on how to get people to use more of them and increase take-up. And how to make community based leisure groups stronger.
- The strategy responds to PPG17 and is concerned primarily with spaces and facilities rather than sports development. The Council operates a number of programmes designed to promote participation such as Health Fit, Active Families and Holiday Activity Schemes.
- 29.4 There are plenty of easy tools like walks booklets, formal cycle trails / tracks, separate roadways, using redundant tracks like the closed train tracks, etc.
- Agreed
- 29.5 There must be some 'best practice' suggestions from other areas in the UK as Stafford Borough is not unique in the challenges it faces. This way of
- Agreed, although best practice doesn't always transfer from one context to

working, could then look at getting communities involved in not only using the facilities but also helping maintain them, or carry out inspection visits, etc. There is no discussion of how public / private partnerships could work to help either fund or maintain these areas / facilities, and how this area ranks in terms of priorities against other budget areas. Some of these options need not cost the earth to deliver, if alternative options are looked at, including the use of local part time labour to undertake what is done across the Borough today. Community management might be another option, requiring more commitment from local people, but could be valuable to deliver a more expansive agenda.

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| 29.6 | The suggestion to use existing facilities better is a sound one, including schools during holidays, weekends and evenings, and proper leisure facilities tied to the schools would be a sensible starting point reversing years of removing leisure facilities from schools. | another

No response required |
| 29.7 | The suggestion to plant more trees as a linked comment is a sensible one, and one which should be at the heart of many of the things we do to protect and improve the environment in which we live. Two specific areas I would like to pick up on in addition is: | No response required |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of football pitches for youth teams in Eccleshall is poor – several of the current teams have to either drive five miles out of Eccleshall to use other facilities or pitch share when the County Council owns significant vacant un-used land which would help ameliorate this problem. The joint working of all stakeholders to resolve this should be a priority as it deflects from actually supporting and delivering tangible improvements and starting children off in the ‘right direction’. | Main report recommends a half size ATP for Eccleshall |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no discussion in this paper on “Protected Open Spaces” and the policy adopted by the Borough on this, which seems to be inconsistently applied and to not be founded around a set of needs and requirements which have been clearly enunciated and are significant. If it applied anywhere it would presumably apply to open space, sport and recreation given that many of the Protected Open Spaces are publicly owned sites with play equipment or football pitches located on them. I think this policy needs significant review and reworking to | This will be considered as part of the LDF process |

make it clear, concise and relevant going forward.

30.0 R J Simcock

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 30.1 | Thank you for the letter dated 29th October 2008. I am an interested party, for land in my ownership to be included in the forward planning for development document, working closely with the authority and Mr Alex Yendole. My particular interest, being Yarnfield, Stone Staffordshire. I wish to contribute in a constructive manner as follows. | No response needed |
| 30.2 | During my time as Ward Councillor for Yarnfield, I became actively involved in sport for all in Yarnfield. In addition, working with St Mary's Church Swynnerton, Youth for Christ in the area, using the Springfield's First School facilities. During the organising process, I established that SBC have available a fair amount of equipment for sport, however hardly anyone suitably qualified to supervise. If this position remains the same today, may I suggest this matter be addressed in the final document. | While a useful point for the Borough Council to note and if appropriate act upon, this is probably too detailed an issue to be covered by the strategy. |
| 30.3 | I am of the opinion, the residents did not wish to see activities on the village green, for a variety of, what they believed, genuine reason. The former, BT Training College buildings and land, if not being used for Technical studies/Accommodation of students, has a condition where it must be returned to the Green Belt. From my Councillor days, involving many meetings over the years, that is my understanding in any event. That complex, does have playing fields and sports facilities already. I understand that the College facility is under utilised, cannot some of that land being returned to the Green Belt not be included in the final document also. | The strategy does not include any proposals for activities on the village green, which it classes as a valuable local greenspace. |
| 30.4 | The noise pollution and further expansion of the Rail and M6 Motorway, the former BT Training College (in addition to the planning condition) would be in my submission unsuitable for residential development, however, sports facilities would not be affected, even allowing for the Governments proposals for M6 Motorway widening and Rail network improvements. In my submission, an ideal location for Sport in Yarnfield, where those interested and or participating could either walk or cycle to the facility. | There are no current threats to the future of the Yarnfield facilities or proposals for residential development of the site. |

31.0 Guy Steel

- 31.1 Firstly the report seems to be suggesting the need for a controlled area (playgrounds etc) for children and not just open space for them to develop their own games etc. Having being around St Peters Gardens in Stafford which has a big grassed area, it would be a shame that an open area where children can be seen easily but left to get on and do their own thing without causing a nuisance.
- This is not correct. The strategy advocates fewer formal, enclosed play areas and more use of greenspaces for free play.
- 31.2 The further “add ons” to the development of the new housing is the lack of facilities in Stafford. The new sport centre for example is smaller than the previous and too small for the town at present population levels. There seems to be no thoughts on improving things like this.
- The strategy states that Stafford will require additional indoor provision if its population increases significantly as a result of housing development.
- 31.3 There are also transport problems as new properties would require better roads in and out of the town centre. These roads are already overcrowded at the moment. My final question is what are all these new people going to do for work?
- No response required – this is a wider issue

B: Stakeholder Interviews and Site Visits

Introduction

This appendix consists of notes from the following:

Governing Body Interviews

- Association Football
- Canoeing
- Lawn Tennis
- Netball
- Rowing
- Rugby Football
- Table Tennis

Facility Manager Interviews

- Alleyne's Sports Centre
- Riverside Leisure Centre/Stafford Leisure Centre
- Beaconside Sports Centre (Staffordshire University)

County Council Interviews

- Clive Jones, County Council Education Service
- Gina Wallace, County Council Education Service

Club Interviews

- Gary Denning, Cannock and Stafford Athletics Club
- Peter Burns, Stafford Harriers

Site Visits

- Alleyne's High School
- Beaconside Sports Centre
- Blessed William Howard RC High School
- Brooklands School
- Castlechurch Primary School
- Christ Church Middle School
- Gnosall St Lawrence Primary School
- King Edward VI High School
- MoD Stafford
- Sir Graham Balfour High School

- St Dominic's Priory
- Stafford Grammar School/Burton Manor Sports Association
- Stafford Sports College
- Walton High School
- Walton Priory Middle School Stone
- Weston Road High School, Stafford
- Yarlet School

Governing Body Interview Association Football

Interviewee

Andy Weston

- County Development Manager – works closely with Eamonn Farrell the Regional Facilities Manager
- Part of the role is facilities and investment
- Staff Management:
 - Gareth – Clubs and Education
 - Kevin – Girls and Women
 - Jules – Admin and Coach Education
 - Plus 2 coaches who specialise in Disability and Girls / Women’s Football

Principal locations in the Borough

- Rowley Park – Stafford
- Beaconside Sports Centre – Stafford – lacks coach education room
- Weston Road High School
- Stone Dominoes – a large club just outside Yarnfield
- Spring Bank
- Alleyne's Sports Centre

Facility Issues

There are some good venues (see next question) but four needs are currently unserved:

- a) a full sized 3rd Generation pitch, floodlit outdoors
- b) more multi-pitch sites. FA are looking at Riverway as one potential site but would like more as part of expansion of Stafford Town. They would like to separate mini soccer from the adult game to simplify child protection issues
- c) Would like a venue for Futsal. This is the indoor game played to markings rather than off walls or rebound boards. The goals are a little bigger and the ball a little smaller and heavier than traditional five a side.
 - Ideal site has at least two courts in the same hall.
 - Cheslyn Hay currently plays this on Monday evenings from 6pm – 8pm.
- d) Too few grass pitches with floodlights for cup finals and representative matches.

There are only four venues in the Borough with floodlights on natural turf: Stafford Rangers, Stone Dons, Meir KA and Eccleshall.

Quality of Facilities

- Playing surfaces are some of the better ones in the County.
- Rowley Park won Groundsman of the Year award
- Council owned pitches are pretty good.
- Changing facilities at Alleyne's and Rowley Park do not have many problems.
- Rowley Park has the senior pitch in the centre of the track, 5 mini soccer pitches and 2 junior (11 a side) pitches.

Elsewhere the lack of changing facilities and the quality of facilities in some places is an issue.

Good Facilities Outside the Borough

South Staffordshire – Cheslyn Hay Sports Centre for their Futsal Court

Wider than Local Programmes

- Coach education workshops
- Mini soccer initiatives
- Girls and women's development initiatives
- There is a league in the north of the County and one in the South and they tend to divide across Stafford Borough

Good Practice Examples

- Rowley Park – Groundsman of Year Award
- Charter Standard Holiday Courses – although the standard is not awarded to the facility

Strategy Implications

- A new National Facilities Strategy has just been approved and is likely to be adopted in September. From this Counties will develop facilities strategies for 2008 – 2012. Staffordshire includes Stoke and a lot of the Black Country
- The current County Strategy has twelve key aims, five of which have facility implications:
 - Addressing the decline of 11 v 11 football
 - Development of community clubs
 - Developing ownership of clubs
 - Maintenance plans for pitches
 - Development of small – sided football
- More Fixtures on 3G Pitches?
 - Theoretically yes. It is up to individual leagues whether they will sanction games on artificial turf.
 - Specific mentions – the 2003 – 06 Strategy made specific reference to Alleyne's and also to Stafford Town.
 - The former project was delivered.
 - The County Strategy this time round will be

more indicative rather than prescriptive.

Building Schools for the Future

- Are the right people going to be brought in to deliver these projects? Or will this result in teachers being asked to do even more?
- FA works very closely with Staffs LEA on internal funding bids. Starting to develop a relationship with the newly appointed Clive Jones. This partnership has a lot of potential.

Future Projects

- 3G pitches are what we need.
- Sir Graham Balfour School has expressed an interest in developing one.
- There is also a high profile club in the area looking for one as well.
- Stafford Borough could benefit from two or three 3G pitches. It is a pity that Alleyne's was not surfaced in 3G when reconstructed.
- The question is to what extent the leagues will be prepared to go over to playing on 3G rather than natural turf.
- Walton Priory Middle School

NGB Resources

- The Football Foundation has an open bidding process. This works best when combined with combined with local funding such as S106 monies such as at Stafford Town and Brockton
- We have also partnered with BIFA environmental funding.
- 3 Generation Developments are the key

County Priorities

- Liaison with Staffs LEA has been particularly good, and the FA has tried to be strategic in development of certain sites such as the Sports College at Rising Brook.
- Across the County, the FA is looking to create Football Development Centres which can deliver partly through primary education. These will create 2 or 3 mini soccer pitches and sporting playgrounds both to deliver the curriculum and also provide access at weekends and evenings for extra curricular development.
- Walton Priory Middle School could be a key site within the Borough for this kind of development.
- Castlechurch Primary has recently created a small 3G area but the FA has had no role in its development – BR note this echoes Gina Wallis's comment that the school has not integrated this development into sports development structures and initiatives.

Other Information

- Futsal is usually played indoors on an area 25 m- 42m, width 15m-25m played to markings and ideally with two pitches alongside one another. There should also be some galleries for spectators.
- There is an expectation that in order to attract Football Foundation funding, a project will operate a minimum

of 85 hours of Futsal per week and that at least 80% of the usage will be football.

- But Futsal is NOT a priority for Football Foundation funding at present.
- There is pressure from some of the larger rural settlements in Stafford Borough for additional development:
 - Eccleshall – particular pressure in relation to the relocation of the Primary School for a 60m x 40 m 3G pitch for mini-soccer.
 - Gnosall – the Sports and Social Club want to improve their pitches
 - Horsham
 - Derrington
 - Church Eaton
 - Haywoods – do they travel to Rugeley?

Governing Body Interview Canoeing

Interviewees

- Chris Hawkesworth – National Facilities Development Manager
- Ruth Holdway – Local coach and development liaison

General

- The sport consists of 9 disciplines. About 2.1 million people undertake the sport or whom about 1.5 million are adults and 600,000 are children. Numbers have been established because of the need for approved centres to keep records of who is on the water. The Active People Survey has also been useful but does not cover under 16s.
- Stafford Borough has a crucial role in the development of the sport nationally because much of the upper reaches of the Trent are within its boundaries.
- In terms of recreational and healthy living forms of the sport the canals are a vital resource. Membership of the BCU includes a license to go on any canal in the British Waterways network.
- Canoeists can also utilise any river which is more than 10 cm deep and wider than 3 metres – however there are access issues with private water and disability access.
- In terms of facility development along canals, BCU would like to see:
 - Car parks created or enlarged at strategic points along the canals – perhaps every 3 to 5 miles with access points onto the canal associated with each
 - Ways of transporting canoes around locks. Where a tow path is three or four feet above the water level at the tail of a lock, it can be impossible to take a canoe out of the water. There can also be problems with narrow boats blocking the space to get out near a lock. Creating an indentation in the wall can be expensive, but there can be ways of creating a wooden or concrete step just above water level which can access a “canoe portage

path". These platforms can also be used as disabled angler platforms and therefore can "hit several buttons with local authorities". The total cost can be around £10k

- Signage - water is often near people's back door, but they need to know where to access it. Signage reminds people that they might like to try canoeing and increases its street "cred". In terms of linking with sustainable transport, the BCU has promoted a scheme at Grantham with signage from the railway station to the canal. The sport has developed inflatables which fold down into a backpack and can be used for a day out without needing a car.

- Stafford and Stone has the ability to develop into several circular routes by combining river and canal. This has been achieved effectively at Sheffield.

Particular projects

- The BCU is keen to find sites with a high turnover of people so that the sport can gain more visibility. The Trentham Lake project is of vital importance, given the very large numbers of visitors to the Lake, Gardens and Retail Village.

- At the competitive end of the sport, Stafford and Stone Canoe Club is possibly the most important in the country for developing high performance paddlers - see PDF with short history of the club.

Venues for Canoeing in the Borough

- Trentham Lake - ideal for recreational canoeing - relatively sheltered. Water level quite stable. Currently about 26 recreational canoes and 18 racing. There are also recreational kayaks and racing K1s and K2s. There is 12 seater bell boating with opportunities for schools and disabled people to enjoy the water.

- Riverside Club is based at Stafford Swimming Pool

- Centre manager at Shugborough Outdoor Education Centre promotes canoeing on the River Trent

- Stafford & Stone Canoe Club is almost exclusively a competitive club with over 150 members of mainly juniors. The Outdoor Education Centre at Standon Bowers does some initial training in its small pool and then sometimes bring people to Stone.

Local Projects

- Club currently has a clubhouse on adjacent to the Trent, on ground between the River and Canal by Walton Bridge in Westbridge Park in Stone. This is Council owned land which has hindered the club in attracting grants.

- The Club would like to move across the river to a new site which they would own.

- See comments on this project and email with

attachments providing detail including plans. Initial cost was £800,000!

Comments on Stafford and Stone Canoe Club Project

- The Trentham Project consists of building a new boathouse at the south end of the lake. This is a shared project with Amateur Rowing Association.
- The current location provides high visibility for the sport by having a clubhouse near the main south entry to the Town from the A34. According to Chris Hawkesworth it is national policy to encourage high profile sites. Moving across the River, this advantage would be lost, since the clubhouse would disappear in the trees.
- See PDF of site. – The proposed site is heavily wooded – unsure whether any of the mature trees have TPOs – but development here would necessitate a good deal of cutting especially as room would have to be created for a car park
- The clubhouse would then be much less visible and probably far more prone to vandalism / break ins.
- A better solution would probably be to give the Club greater security of tenure on their current site and encourage them to work up the project where they are. The current car park would benefit from paving and proper pathways created to the River for disabled access as well as carrying canoes. Unsure whether the politicians would accept this car park as being reserved for club members. There is a pay car park just across the Park by the Sports Centre for members of the public
- There may be a case for fencing off a new clubhouse to increase security if this is an issue – but in my view they should be encouraged to stay on their current site.

Governing Body Interview Lawn Tennis

Interviewee

Jeremy Lemarchand

Principal locations in the Borough

Main facilities/clubs

- Stafford Sports College / Rising Brook HS (6 floodlit macadam)
- Walton Lawn Tennis Club (4 floodlit macadam)
- Stone Lawn Tennis & Squash Club (3 acrylic, 3 macadam all floodlit)

Secondary facilities/clubs

- Great Bridgeford LTC
- Eccleshall TC
- Church Eaton TC
- St Dominic's Priory Indoor Courts
- Alleyne's Sports Centre
- Stafford Grammar School/Burton Manor Sports Association

Delivery of priority programmes

- Staffordshire in Lawn Tennis terms includes most of the Black Country and nothing in Stafford Borough is achieving performance level players at anything like the quality from the BC
- The main locations in the BC are based around indoor courts:
 - Tipton Sports Academy (Sandwell Local Authority)
 - Stourbridge LTC (club on South Staffs Dudley border)
 - Wolverhampton LTC (club in west Wolverhampton)
- These three venues have over 20 players in the Top 100 for their age group in the country.
- In contrast Stone has 1 player in the Top 100 for age.
- The cultural mentality of coaches to achieve

performance is not available for the most part in Stafford Borough.

- Steve Proud at Stone is the nearest to a performance coach.
- There are a couple of younger guys at Rising Brook who are starting out
- John Trickey at Walton TC is a bit dated but runs a good local business and has sustained this over a number of years.

Wider than local programmes

- In the days when a County squad was run, St Dominic's indoor courts were used. However since this squad work was devolved back to the Clubs, usage of this Centre has changed. The County Coach has been replaced by an entrepreneurial coach role.

Good Practice Examples

- No, not in the Borough. The LTA will be introducing Clubmark which will replace the mini tennis accreditation system. This changeover will be a challenge for the Clubs.

Essential Facility Requirements

- A lot of events are run on 4 or more courts. Rising Brook/ Stafford Sp College, Stone LT & Squash Club and Walton LTC are the three main venues for these.
- The problem with these events is that to do an 8 or 16 draw requires these courts. If the tournament is held at weekends, social members react if they feel they are being denied court time. These tournaments work better at club venues with 8 or more courts not least because a large part of the draw then tends to come from the host local club.
- In terms of court surfaces, the LTA is no longer specifying what it would like to see to the Clubs.
- Porous acrylic is a new development which may encourage more clubs to go for a surface more suited to coaching. This has a rubber web over a macadam surface.
- There are no clay court venues in the County.
- Indoors, the LTA would want to see acrylic. Outdoors at a non club site, it is likely to be macadam.

Strategy priorities

- The main priority within the County is still to achieve a major indoor centre in Stoke
- Indoor courts are the main priority for Stafford Borough.
- The LTA would also like to see some clay courts somewhere in the Borough
- Draycott Sports Club, just across the boundary into Staffs Moorlands is just completing construction of two indoor courts

Facility Projects

- LTA (Alan Ferneyhough County Chair and Jeremy Lemarchand) met with Jim Arnold and Borough planners to discuss a possible development of indoor

courts at Rowley Park. LTA has some concerns about the position of the present four courts which would be left on the other side of the athletics track.

- LTA are also aware that Rising Brook Sports College would like to see indoor courts on their site, but there would be constraints in achieving more than 2 indoor courts on this site.
- The LTA would prefer to see a four indoor court centre for Stafford – the important question, if the facility is to receive LTA funding, is what are the priorities for filling the facility?

NGB Resources

- There is now one funding pot, so every project is applicant is competing against everyone else This disadvantages areas like Stafford because they have so few performance players and the project needs to be able to demonstrate what increase in this type of player it can deliver.
- Indoor awards can be up to £80,000 per court or up to 1/3 of the cost whichever is less. Sometimes if some of the award is loan or part grant / part loan more will be allowed. The LTA does not really fund ancillary facilities.
- The Club development aspects have been reorganised. Clubs are offered up to £1,000 to help with their development. These changes have been introduced more sensitively, so clubs have not really reacted against the changes in funding priorities.
- The Tennis Foundation now co-ordinates all schools and local authorities work, headed up by Sue Mappin. This has brought the various tennis charities under one roof.

Other relevant information

- Staffordshire University has untapped potential for developing coaches
- Stone LT and Squash Club had a proposal for indoor courts, brick built. This necessitated some modest land acquisition from either the railway or local farmer. JL thinks this has been revolved but the project does not seem to be progressing.
- Church Eaton is the only significant club with outdoor courts without lights. But discussions on this have gone quiet.

Club Membership in Stafford

The trend in aggregate club memberships in Stafford over the past six seasons has been:

- 2002 668
- 2003 660
- 2004 629
- 2005 606
- 2006 651
- 2007 641

In this time, one club – Burton Manor – has disbanded and



the Stone and Walton Clubs have consistently accounted for around two thirds of all club members.

Governing Body Interview Netball

Interviewee

- Carly Heney (based at Stafford BC offices)

Role:

- Development co-ordinator.
- Heavy junior focus
- Competition work is all juniors
- Delivering on clubmark – some of this is adult based
- Talented athlete pathways

Principal locations for the sport in the Borough

- Rising Brook Sports College Sports Hall
- Alleyne's Sports Centre
- Blessed William Howard adult league – not affiliated to English Netball

Facilities in Stafford

- All netball in the area is played indoors except for County Schools tournaments at Newcastle under Lyme.
- None of the sports halls has a proper wood-sprung floor, but Rising Brook has some spring in it and the floor at Alleyne's in Stone is new.
- The indoor courts in these sports halls have good run offs (BR note – several seem to have been built with tennis court dimensions – so the length and width are better than a standard four court hall).

Wider than local programmes

- Problem within the Borough is lack of venues with two or more indoor courts but these are available nearby in Stoke – Fenton Manor 3 netball courts and Northwood 2 indoor courts, plus Cannock to the south (2 indoor courts).
- Rising Brook Sports College has the County Academy for U16. This has girls from elsewhere in the County, particularly Lichfield plus occasionally girls resident in Derbyshire or Shropshire if their school is in Staffordshire. U16s meet fortnightly

Quality of facilities in the Borough

- Main concern is the surface at the venues. Plus run offs could be a bit better.
- Alleyne's and Rising Brook both serve a purpose
- Girls from U12 to U16 do not really use the changing facilities.
- The adult league at Blessed Wm Howard plays in a hall

with appalling run offs. This league has about 20 teams.

Good practice examples

- Sir Graham Balfour was used for a while but the surface there is not as suitable as Rising Brook Sports College and the costs are higher.
- Rising Brook Sports College is an example of good practice. There is no governing body accreditation for venues but it provides what is needed, is not too expensive, and has developed a good school – sport relationship.

Facility needs

- Cannock Leisure Centre runs the U14s squad with about 20 girls. Of these, 7 or 8 come from Stafford, quite a few from Rising Brook HS Sports College or Weston Road. Parents transport them. If they make it through to U16s this transfers to Rising Brook Sp Coll.
- In the Junior League, Stafford Junior Club has about 50 girls. Some of their games are at Northwood in Stoke and quite a few girls travel to Northwood to play.

Strategy implications

- It is a struggle to get a decent outdoor facility at low cost.
- Schools tournaments are usually held on 6 outdoor courts – double marking with tennis is acceptable. English Netball has more detail about facility requirements

Strategy documents

- English Netball is in the process of producing a facility strategy.
- As Carly came into post there was a recommendation to set up a new club in Stafford. Stafford Netball Club has now been established with 50 children and the intention of setting up an adult section.
- At present there are 2 coaches working the area – more are being trained.

Projects

- Some discussion with the badminton development officer to find out what they are looking for.
- The problem is that the adult league at Blessed William Howard is unaffiliated so it is hard to priorities their needs.

Implications of Building Schools for the Future

- No – suggest that broader questions of this nature might be addressed to Fran Botting – Facility Manager based at Swindon. franb@englandnetball.co.uk

NGB Resources

- Only through the Community Club Development Programme – Fran can explain this.

County priorities

- None

Other information

- Historically the County may have had fewer netball

players because of insufficient indoor facilities. There is a traditional bias of having more players from the north of the County.

- Part of the role of the development post is to develop more juniors from the centre and south of Staffordshire.

Governing Body Interview Rowing

Interviewee

Simon Dickie, Amateur Rowing Association

Trentham Lake Project

- May be a done deal by the time this Report goes in as they have applied for Sport England Lottery Funding to develop the new boathouse.
- The main problem is that the new boathouse is too small and lacks ancillary facilities to promote the sport.
- What they probably need is an additional room at one end which could double as a coach education room and at other times as an interpretation centre about rowing and canoeing to encourage people to try one of these sports. Such a room would of course need volunteer staffing at busy times, but would be far more likely to attract interest than the usual approach to the usual gable end of a storage facility.
- The access to the Lake at the south end is quite constricted, by a weir, with the pleasure cruiser coming into the landing. ARA seems unconcerned.

Governing Body Interview Rugby Union Football

Interviewees

- Tom Bartram , RFU Development Officer
- Simon Jones, Community Rugby Coach

Roles:

- Tom Bartram - Management & Development of Rugby Union within Staffordshire
- Simon Jones - Community Rugby Coach, Student Liaison Officer with HE and FE
- The County in RU terms covers Staffordshire Boroughs, Stoke, Walsall and Wolverhampton
- Sandwell and Dudley fall within North Midlands NOT Staffs

Principal locations in the Borough

- Stafford RFC, Newport Rd Stafford
- Eccleshall RFC, Baden Hall, Swynnerton Rd, Eccleshall
- Gnosall RFC, Gnosall Sports and Social Club
- Stoke RFC, Hartwell Lane, Barlaston, Stoke (within Stafford Borough).

Facilities issues

- Stafford RFC and Stoke RFC Minis and Juniors are both at saturation point
- Both of these sections have between 400 and 500 children who mainly train on a Sunday
- Eccleshall is a growing club
- There is a lack of floodlighting available to cope with sports provision in the evenings.
- The Minis and Juniors do not need lights with their current timings but lights would enable additional capacity to be provided during midweek evenings.

Quality of Facilities

- No evidence that quality is having a negative impact as such
- However these large minis and juniors sections cannot meet demand because of lack of space and changing facilities.
- Stafford RFC has about 6 changing facilities - insufficient.
- Queried whether floodlighting training areas (not

pitches) might enable spread of programme rather than building more changing facilities. Issue would then be quality of grass to sustain additional usage

- Simon Jones did not have a view on this.
- RFU run coach and volunteer award and non-award courses at Stafford Rugby Club. These include Level 1 coaching courses and other regional and county-wide courses and meetings.
- Stafford RFC is the “senior” and most established club in the Borough.

Wider than Local Programmes

Good Practice Examples

- Stafford RFC has achieved ‘Year 3’ of the Rugby Union Clubmark award (Seal of Approval) They run a friendly and thriving Mini and Junior Sections and have recently established a senior Women’s Team
- They put out 5 Men’s Teams and a Women’s Team on a Saturday
- Including volunteers, Minis and Juniors – the Club has 800 – 1000 members.

Strategy Implications See electronic copy

- At Regional Level (County) the RFU’s facilities document will include a detailed analysis and overview of all clubs playing facilities in Staffordshire. There will be some reference to the aforementioned clubs and their facilities.

Impact of BSF

- RFU hopes that this money will have an impact on increased participation. However the money is directed at schools not NGBs and their member clubs.

Projects

- If projects are emerging in outline form, the RFU offers a comprehensive support network. The RDO and Regional Facilities Manager will meet with the club to discuss the various funding avenues that they can explore. The RFU has its own funding channels for facility development: the RFF and the Government funded CCDP.

NGB Resources

- Not presently

Other information

- HE
 - Staffordshire University – Stafford campus at Beaconside
 - The RFU are looking to develop a rugby club on that campus
 - The RFU has a funding programme for university clubs
 - Stafford currently has one men’s side – no women’s.
 - Staffs Univ currently train at Stafford Rugby Club training on Wednesday afternoons on their own

Beaconside Campus and playing their fixtures through BUSA.

- Staffs RFC provide a senior coach for the University side and some Staffs Univ players play on Saturdays for Stafford RFC

- FE
 - Stafford College run one side which plays in the British Colleges Sport fixtures – mainly 16 to 18 year olds. They play on the Oval site off Riverway in Stafford. This is not as structured as the Higher Ed game. It is lecturer led rather than student led and depends on the lecturer. Many students are not on campus for much of the time – perhaps only one day per week. There are some limited links with Stafford RFC but these are not so formalised.

Governing Body Interview Table Tennis

Interviewees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris Newton Regional TT Officer • Paul Baker National Facilities Officer
Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Development Officer based in Stoke • National Facilities Officer
Principal locations for the sport in the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weston Village Hall – a community coaching and competitive venue which can take 6 practice tables or 2 / 3 competition tables • Riverside Leisure Centre – main hall used for coaching • St Leonards – own freestanding building • Burton Manor Sports Association – 1 match table or (just) 2 practice • Unsure what is happening in Stone – there appear to be about 10 teams at one venue used at other times by scouts / cubs
Adequacy of current facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burton Manor covers a lot of the competition
Quality of current facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riverside Sports Hall is quite dark & dingy – the lighting is inadequate • St Leonards is a 3 / 4 table facility – unsure of the quality. • Weston venue is fine • Burton Manor had a new floor to the mobile hut through Awards for All. The venue is cramped but it is the focus for the Stafford League.
Other nearby facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The League operates their coaching at Riverside LC. • A few players go on from there to high performance training at either Wood Green (Sandwell in Black Country) or Trentham High School in Stoke. • Although there is no obvious feed, the large club in the area is Uxbridge Table Tennis Club in Burton on Trent (this comment from National Level)
Wider than local programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not in Stafford Borough
Good practice examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weston is a Premier Club which has achieved Club Mark. It has been in existence for about 4 or 5 years

and has developed sports development links both up and down. For the last 3 years it has had a coach who works with it one day per week

Strategy documents

- The National Facilities Strategy dates back to 1996 and has now been overtaken by a focus on supporting clubs who achieve accreditation – Premier Clubs or Club Mark.
- The development of multi-table venues remains a focus of strategy planning.
- Paul Baker had recently inputted into the Facilities Strategy for West Midlands Region and resented being approached by email with a tight deadline.
- Paul Baker has reservations about the validity of strategies, particularly where those instigated by Sport England over-ride the aspirations of the sport. In particular he feels that FPM does not allow for aspiration.
- He is also concerned that opportunities for specialist sports facilities are receding as the focus shifts to Building Schools for the Future and Olympic related facilities.

Impact of Building Schools for the Future

- Chris Newton had been involved in a discussion on this subject with a group of sports about 6 – 8 months ago – but given the timeframe, this may not have been related to this initiative.
- At national level this is becoming an increasing focus of Paul Baker’s work.
- Chris Newton has not had any dialogue at County level

Particular Projects / Forward Planning

- Weston Rd High School has a link to the Weston Club and there are aspirations for a larger club in this area in the medium term. The main constraint currently is the need to involve more volunteers. Too much is being done by a few key people.

NGB Resources

- Development resources from the GB are focused on Premier Clubs
 - The West Midlands Region currently has 11 Premier Clubs of which 7 are in Staffordshire:
 - Stoke on Trent 2 – St Peters (School?) and Jubilee Rd in Trentham
 - East Staffs 2 – Uxbridge Community Centre in Burton and William Shrewsbury Primary School in Stretton
 - Newcastle 1 – Bradwell Community Education Centre
 - Lichfield 1 – King Edward V1 Leisure Centre
 - Great Wyrley Norton Land WS6 (may be Walsall or Cannock)

Management Interviews Alleyne's Sports Centre – Stone

Interviewee

Duncan Carey

Opening hours

- This is a dual use site. The sports hall and ATP are generally available from 1800 to 2200 on weekdays. The squash courts are open to the community from 1200.
- The swimming pool is available to the public before 0900 and after 1550 on Tuesdays and Thursdays but not until 1700 on M-W-F
- The opening hours are contentious because they have become a stumbling block to signing the dual use agreement. The school keep sending this back on small items of legality. But they are also proposing a cost split of 30:70

Trends in usage

- The partnership with the FA has resulted in a lot of football activity -the site is trying to gain Centre of Excellence accreditation for football development.
- A girls School of Excellence has 200 on a Saturday morning
- There is a mid Staffs mini league on Sunday mornings
- The pool has a programme of 550 youngsters in a lesson scheme which enrolls every 12 weeks. Stone Swimming Club (linked to Stafford Apex) complains that it cannot get enough pool time). It was affected by the 18 week closure of the pool.

Capacity utilisation

- Pool is the busiest – no spare time at all,
- Not enough programme slots

Note this is a different message from Riverside where John Martin recorded a fall in swimming. To what extent is this level of busyness a matter of perception? Alleyne's does not have a health and fitness suite (which is at Westbridge Park) and may therefore be less used to the highest density activities?

Mix of customers

- Sport and chill for 10 – 15 year olds – this coincided with a Halloween launch last year
- The pool has a wider range in terms of age and gender
- Disabled users are not really attracted – it would help to have an automatic door at the entrance.
- Since the sports hall has been refurbished new activities have been developed such as tae kwon do on Monday nights which attracts 80 children.
- Alleyne’s Squash Club has been a key part of the Centre. It won National Development Club of the Year in 2000, 2001 and 2003, the only club in England to have achieved this three times.
- Although Stone LT and Squash Club exists in the Town, the squash development mainly takes place at Alleyne’s and tennis development at Stone LT & Squash Club.
- *Note - Stone LT & S Club had taken two of its courts out of commission and converted one into a room for spinning machines and another had a table tennis table. So although it nominally has four courts (1 glassback) then Alleyne’s two courts – both glassback but with their own changing facilities – look more attractive.*
- The Centre does try to attract governing body accredited courses which is facilitated by the new training suite: FA Coaching Courses, goalkeeper’s courses, swimming Speedo Aquatic Courses – a School of Excellence for Aquatics.

Competitors

- In Stone itself there is very little. Stone Manor Hotel just has a plunge pool.
- Fenton Manor Centre in Stoke is the main public sector competitor
- Stoke also has a Greens, Esporta and a Total Fitness on the A34 going into Newcastle.
- Cheadle has a 30 m pool, football and squash
- Uttoxeter Swimming
- Riverside itself within the Borough
- *Interesting point here is a lot of mentions of facilities to the north, less so to the south. The Borough’s own facilities at Riverside mentioned also as an afterthought and no specific mention of Esporta*

Stafford unless this was intended in the reference to Esporta Stoke.

What do customers complain about?

- The Activo Membership links Alleyne's with the health and fitness market at Westbridge Park
- Used to complain about cold water in pool but since it has been computerised, the temperature is more consistent.
- Complaints about weak flow in wet side showers. Women's were upgraded to power showers first, resulting in customer demands for the same quality in the men's side which were fitted second.
- Compliments about the flower baskets and floral display at the front of the building.

Staff Wants

- New reception area

Priorities for the future

- Soccer sixes will be looking for 2 leagues of 12 on Monday evenings.
- Proposing to try gymnastics in the hall for 6/7 years olds from September - hoping to share equipment with education.

How long before a major refurbishment is needed

- A major refurbishment has just been completed which includes:
 - Refurbishment to the sports hall including heating lighting flooring and a new roof
 - £1.5M extension
 - New STP
 - Major refurbishment to the pool which includes roof, pool lining, filtration, balance tank renewed
- The two things which really need refurbishing are the old dryside changing facilities, which were the original school changing. The public tends to get changed in the wetside because the dryside is such poor quality. See also Q 11 below
- The pool also needs more disabled changing

Changes to mix of facilities

- Duncan did not appreciate this question. "Squash gets picked on when it comes to changing facilities. That is not relevant here given the popularity of squash"
- Marketing for new initiatives is done by Sam Ferguson at Stafford Civic Centre

Proposals for extension

- The Centre needs a proper reception area which could be achieved by an extension. The Centre has grown and this hub has not kept pace
- The entrance is cramped and at present customers end up queuing out of the door at busy times and there is no canopy.
- The reception desk is not disability or child friendly
- There is also shortage of office space and it is difficult to cash up in a secure environment
- Would like an open plan design.
- Given the fact that over £2 million has just been spent on the Centre, there is a reluctance to spend more at this site.

Unmet local needs?

- Diving – the centre used to have a pyramid for diving which was taken out.
- Canoeing and sub-aqua – the glass fibre lining is not suitable for these in the pool

Strengths and weaknesses of location

- Strength is the visual impact of the rural setting
- Weakness – travel time and cost of being on the edge of Town. The cost of a bus or taxi to the top of the hill site or parking problems if too many come by car – see 18 below.

Strengths and weaknesses of the centre

- Dual use is a weakness on this site because school staff are too inclined to take and do not give. One example of this is the grass pitch furthest from the Centre. This is marked out at 90m x 45m at the insistence of the PE staff. FA advice indicates that it would be a much better proportioned pitch if the length was reduced to 75m.
- There is one neighbour bungalow located by the south end of this pitch who regularly complains about balls flying into his property. Reducing the pitch could make a better proportioned pitch and ease the neighbour problem but PE staff will not give way.
- There are also problems of school pupils damaging the new changing rooms, for example by knocking out ceiling tiles. PE staff do not seem to be able to control this.

Catchment

- Most of the marketing information is collated centrally by Stafford Borough Council. Some survey work was done about 2 years ago. One surprising finding was a significant number of people drive past Fenton Manor

(in Stoke) and Cheadle to use this Centre, particularly from villages.

Widening participation

- Stone Jogging Club used to meet here. But they were taking up valuable parking space (see below) and hardly using the Centre. Using it like this is unrealistic unless additional parking is provided.

Other Issues

- Although the Centre has a decent sized car park, parking is starting to become a problem especially on weekends with some neighbours expressing concern about noise, pollution and traffic movements.
- The Centre is concerned that when events are held using all the mini soccer pitches, they may attract up to 150 additional cars.
- Centre is exploring the possibility of overflow car parking on Alleyne's School site but this will need marshalling as people are reluctant to walk 300 yards.
- Every four years the Centre has very busy links with Kibblestone Camp. This is 7,000 Youth Festival held about 1 mile away, each year coinciding with the Olympics.

Management Interviews Beaconside Sports Centre

Interviewee	Fiona Roberts – Centre Manager
Opening hours	<p>Originally 0900-2200. Surveys indicated a need for earlier opening so now open indoors from 0700 and outdoors from 0900.</p> <p>Close at 2200 except at weekends when it is 1900 on Saturday and 2100 on Sunday</p>
Trends in usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The centre did not have much competition at first. There are peaks of student usage but about 70% of the usage is community. Since Esporta opened in central north Stafford, numbers have levelled off in the fitness suite. • There is a very popular social badminton group • A GP referral scheme has been established.
Capacity utilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The health and fitness suite has the highest capacity • The STP is solidly booked in winter for a mixture of hockey and football. Stafford Ladies and Men’s Hockey Teams both play here and development work is undertaken through a partnership effort with Stafford Borough Council supported by students. • In terms of volume of usage, there tends to be more football than hockey.
Mix of customers	Most age groups are catered for from children’s play schemes up to senior citizens. The only age group not catered for specifically is Under 8s.
Main competitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Esporta for health and fitness • Borough is a competitor to some extent but more partnership working than competition • Interested to see how the new Bodycurves Ladies Fitness programme on the Technology Park will affect business
Customer complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The synthetic MUGA (centre called this the Small Astro) needs rebuilding – this generates most complaints.
Staff Wants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone wants the small astro rebuilding. • Every year the Centre tries to buy one or two pieces or

Priorities for the future

- equipment for the fitness suite to sustain interest
- The sauna was a staff idea – (note this was converted from buffer changing)
- The GP referral scheme was set up recently
- Play scheme has always been popular
- A junior gym session has been established following a lot of requests.
- Future – youngsters gym planned to run 3 days per week
- Would like to reinforce links with secondary schools. At present there are links with King Edward VI HS, Weston Rd (next door) Rising Brook, Blessed William Howard and occasionally Walton High School.

Major refurbishment

- Health and fitness equipment will be the first to need replacing. As the centre is fairly new, redecoration and carpeting are priorities for near future.

Mix of Facilities

- Buffer changing was taken out to create a sauna and also some sports performance accommodation.

Extensions

- Extension to health and fitness suite because of demand

Unmet Local Needs

- In the absence of a swimming pool, they would like a swim flow tank.
- The nearest climbing facility is Wolverhampton – Staffs University would like a bouldering wall here.
- Centre would like a swimming pool but the University will not countenance investment on this scale at this site – a lot of investment is under consideration for Stoke. So the mix would be pretty much what exists at present.

Strengths and weaknesses of location

- On a main bus route
- On the edge of Town so does not become quite so congested with traffic for access.
- By the roadside so the Centre is visible to passing traffic
- In pleasant grounds

Strengths and weaknesses of the centre

- Most of the strengths revolve around location and ambiance

Weaknesses are:

- Sports courses are run at Stoke so this site is lower priority for investment
- As far as the University is concerned sports facilities are not high on their list of priorities – although the VC is a supporter
- During its short life the Centre has been passed from

Facilities Management to become part of Residences, Accommodation and Catering and will soon become part of Hospitality and Leisure Services

Catchment

- No formal measurement. The catchment is predominantly Stafford Town plus some of the surrounding villages

Widening Participation

- One of the Stafford BC programmes Walking the Way to Health starts from the Centre but there is no other connection.

Other Points

Corporate groups are a significant part of business at the Centre. They include:

- Fire Service
- Police Service
- Probation Service
- Hospital Group
- MOD use the sports hall and grass practice area sometimes
- Lots of football clubs use the Centre

Management Interviews Riverside Leisure Centre & Stafford Leisure Centre

Interviewee	John Martin (also responsible for Westbridge Park and Alleyne's in Stone)
Opening hours	<p>Currently 0700-2200 Monday to Friday New Centre will open earlier at 0630 and closed 2130</p> <p>Weekends are now: Sat 0700-2000, Sun 0800 - 2000 Will be at new centre: Sat 0730-1800, Sun 0730 - 2100</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviewed in line with customer demand and changing lifestyles. Demand indicates desire to the Centre before work• Hours also in line with competitors in health and fitness market• New Centre will close earlier on Saturdays when demand has been low.• The Riverside Centre used to be open until 2300 until 4 years ago when it was decided to close the bar at the Centre. The 'no smoking' policy affected bar business. It was decided to convert this into a training room. The justification for staying open late in the evening then disappeared.• In the new centre there is vending provision plus a kitchen to prepare food for training events.• A conscious decision was made not to run a café. With Asda next door running a café it was felt that the Centre would not be able to compete on price.
Trends in usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The largest change has been the increase in the number of gym memberships from 485 to 1,750 in the last 4 or 5 years. This is based on a 50 station suite. This is still creeping up.• Westbridge Sports Centre in Stone also raised memberships to 1100 based largely upon waking sleepers.

- Swimming usage has been in decline from 390,000 about 4 years ago to 310,000 currently across the three pools.
- The business plan for the New Centre is based upon 2,250 h & f members but it may reach 3,000.

Capacity utilisation

- The gym is really packed
- Aerobics sessions are pretty full
- Swimming is on a downward spiral with main pool being used most
- Squash is fairly consistent – it is not really advertised – and may take off at the New Centre.
- The larger sports hall is booked with roller hockey, trampolining, gym circuits and 2 nights of badminton – these are mainly club uses so there is very little casual usage
- The smaller hall is 5 a side football – this facility will disappear in the new centre – efforts may be made to move it to Alleyne’s in Stone or Beaconside University Sports Centre in Stafford.

Mix of customers

- A huge range of customers from ante natal to tea dances for the elderly
- Cardiac rehab referrals & Inclusive Fitness Initiative gym equipment for people with disabilities. All staff are accredited to Level 2 IFI and some to Level 3.
- There is a disabled gala in the pool once per year and the same group hires the sports hall and other facilities periodically
- There are no obvious bookings by ethnic groups.

Main competitors

- In the health and fitness market, Esporta are major competitors. The Borough took out key advertisement hoardings by the Esporta venue to increase awareness of the Centre’s alternative appeal. They have tied up key dates on these sites for critical months Jan-Feb; Apr- May and Sept- Oct. Also some advertising at the railway station.
- Gymphobics are perceived as competitors in the light exercise market
- Some concerns about additional commercial competitors coming into Town – particular if it was mid-market such as Fitness First.

Customer complaints

- Age of the building
- Drains that block
- Lack of air conditioning
- Cold changing rooms in winter
- Showers too cold
- Alleyne’s in Stone has a cleanliness problem after the School leave facilities in a mess.

- Westbridge Park receives very few complaints.
- There were some problems whilst Alleyne's was closed for upgrading. People were trying to claim that their direct debit should be reduced. This was resisted as the primary facility Westbridge Park gym was unaffected.
- The direct debit has been taken back in house. It was costing £60 - £70,000 per annum for Belmont to do this. Now Leisure Staff do a lot of the direct debit work, saving money, although this can cause problems.

Staff Wants

- Get into the new Centre.

Priorities for the future

- Plans to introduce Techogym Easy-Line
- This is lighter gym equipment based on air resistance and can be used for anyone from 12 to 90 and will make it easier to compete with Gymophobics and the other light workout operations in Town.
- In the New Centre it will be a priority to keep up with new equipment which is emerging. The intention is to raise awareness of the new gym.
- Mortgage rate increases seem to have been hitting Westbridge Park somewhat but not affecting Riverside in Stafford.

Major refurbishments

- Alleyne's has just undergone major refurbishment (but see separate Alleyne's Interview for perception what still needs to be done there).
- No plans to do anything with changing or reception which is what Alleyne's Centre staff would like.
- Westbridge Park - refurbished 2 years ago. No plans to do anything in the near future. Indeed with 1100 - 1200 members it could be a problem if anything was attempted.

Mix of facilities

- No change required

Extensions

- None required

Unmet local needs

- There is no specialist indoor bowling centre in the Borough. This is done in the old archery / projectile hall at Riverside when it is not being used for children's play.
- It would have been helpful if the New Stafford Centre could have had a sports hall which was 2 metres longer and to have had more office space - but what is planned is good

Strengths and weaknesses of location

- The current Riverside Centre is nearer to the Town Centre which is a strength for attracting early-bird and lunchtime trade from Borough and County Council officers and other Town Centre.
- The New Stafford Leisure Centre is that little bit further away. Not sure about its accessibility yet. Hope it will work.

Strengths and weaknesses of the centre

- Strengths – loyal customer base especially in the gym. Everyone seems to know where the Centre is – a landmark
- Weaknesses – many people have had a bad experience at the Centre so in the last 4 years it has been rebranded.
- The current Riverside building has a larger footprint but is harder to run as it is a bit of a rabbit warren.

New Stafford Centre

- Strengths – shiny new building
- Easier to operate
- More in tune with what the customer wants
- Weaknesses – position on the edge of Town Centre
Access

Catchment

- Alliance and Technogym have done analyses based on drive time. Problem is that they came up with very different results for Westbridge Park – Technogym – said over 1000 members. Alliance say 2000 to 3000. Both of these calculations were based solely on drive time.

Widening Participation

- Riverside and Alleyne's – No
- At Westbridge, Ramblers meet at the car park outside the Centre rather than in the Centre.
- The health walks in Stafford start from the Civic Offices rather than from the Riverside Centre

County Council Interviews Education - 1

Interviewee

Clive Jones

- School Improvement Officer – PE and Active Lifestyles
- In post only 6 weeks at time of interview.
- Formerly with Devon County Council
- Staffordshire formerly had a traditional team of Advisers – this post and others are as a result of restructuring
- Role:
 - Challenge teaching practice in schools
 - Health and safety
 - Liaison with Primary Care Trusts
 - Liaison with Partnership Development Manager, School Sport Co-ordinators etc
- At time of interview Clive had visited the 8 Sports Colleges in the County of which only Rising Brook (Stafford Sports College) is in the Borough.

Relevant policy documents

- The key issue with BSF is the Future part of the name. It is not just about Building or Rebuilding Schools.
- What will schools look like in the future?
- Equity is a key issue in terms of provision for all Young People.
- Building Bulletin 98 should be regarded as a minimum.
- How many children can work and learn in a four badminton court sports hall?
- There are opportunities to make better use of aesthetic movement spaces.
- And it is necessary to be realistic about costs.
- But the bottom line is that the spaces designed for PE are too small.
- Changing facilities are usually a further weak link if designed to BB98 standards.
- Too many schools have 60 children changing in spaces designed for half that number.
- Clive cited a good practice example at Uffacombe School on the Somerset- Devon border which he had worked on.

Views on Specific Schools

Alleyne's HS Stone

Some of the following contribution came from Jim Arnold

- Alleyne's has a good range of facilities.
- However there are tensions between community use and school use of the facilities.
- The joint use agreement which is based on the sports hall and swimming pool expires in 2010. The School will not sign a new Joint Use Management Agreement. Whilst a good relationship exists with the Deputy Head and the Bursar, there are issues about revenue.
- Prior to the major refurbishment, the School was not proactive in addressing problems of the ageing facility. The sports hall had an old tarmac floor. This was refurbished at major cost.
- When the pool was closed at Alleyne's, the School seemed unconcerned at the problems this was causing.
- Others eg Middle Schools in Stone / Gnosall Primary School Pool

Eccleshall Primary

- This may be moving across the road – Jim Arnold's discussion with Sport England on loss of playing field issue.

Borough Council involvement

- The Staffs Advisors are meeting together for the first time in the first week in September.
- There has already been some initial input from Mark Thornewill Director of the CSP in June

Other important issues

- Having enough space for PE both indoors and outdoors. Without this it will be impossible to achieve a high quality PSA target for PE. The drive from BSF is around flexible spaces.
- MPQH is the national professional qualification for Headteachers. The BSF national programme officers are trying to get a message into this training programme to discourage use of school sports halls for examinations.
- It is ironic, that at a time when children are most stressed in the lead up to major examinations, they are denied access to one of the major ways of reducing stress, by having their activity space for healthy exercise taken away. There are heads who are managing to keep sports halls open and this should be encouraged.
- Journey to school – how do we encourage pupils to come by methods other than by car?

County Council Interviews Education Interview - 2

Interviewee

Gina Wallis

- Prime role is to support Schools to achieve PSA targets and to achieve a vision for 2012.
- The partnership with Stafford Borough Council works well the Jenny Price and Kath from sports development as key contacts.
- There is good co-ordination of community sports coaches and co-ordination of approaches to schools.
- Part time development officer and part time netball officer work well on school club links into more formal structures and also developing coaches.

Views on Specific Schools

Rising Brook HS / Stafford Sports College

- Small numbers on roll (about 500) mean that PE facilities are not too bad.
- There is enough space with the sports hall and the tennis courts to deliver.
- However if the School were to grow, the gym has been converted into a dance studio which could begin to cause problems.
- The School works well with the community which to a significant extent is down to the Director of Sport who is very good at looking at how the site can be used more effectively.
- The site has a lot of clubs - tennis, dance. Badminton, football on Saturday morning, sports hall athletics which is moving here from September. The sports hall which is five courts is booked for indoor tennis.

King Edward VI HS

- This School has got facilities but the quality is not conducive to school or community use. The changing rooms are unappealing. The facilities are tired and look unattractive.
- They are a direct competitor with Rising Brook for pupil recruitment.

Blessed William Howard Catholic School

- Quite a large school
- The playing fields are not too bad
- The sports hall is small and in dire need of refurbishment
- There is a strong badminton club
- They applied to Sport England's Community Investment Fund but there was insufficient momentum to move the project forward
- The Head who was supportive of sport and PE retired this summer.
- About 1100 on roll, but only 3 PE staff.

Weston Road HS

- Very strong minded head of PE
- Lots of land
- Underused resource
- Sports hall athletics used to take place here but is moving to Rising Brook as of September because of costs.
- Sports hall is "not a bad hall"
- The Head of PE is keen to get clubs going but financial restrictions mean that these are proving too expensive

Walton HS

- Headteacher retired at Christmas
- PE facilities at this secondary are the poorest by far.
- There is no sports hall and the gym is small.
- This has by far the largest number on roll (over 1300) and for this number the provision for PE is diabolical.
- The school identified land which they wanted to sell off to create capital for a sports hall but there may be a covenant issue on the use of this land which Gina believes is owned by local gentry not the local authority. So there is an issue as to whether the land can be built on.

Graham Balfour HS

- Lovely facilities
- Managed by a private firm
- Issues around access
- Restrictions on putting up notices / posters advertising courses and events
- Fairly well used
- New head of PE department since Easter
- Quite a young dynamic department
- The sports hall has a climbing wall and they use it.
- School is applying to Big Lottery Fund to bus young people to this site for certain activities

Alleyne's HS Stone

- Has the best of everything in terms of facilities
- And the worst PE department.
- The Head of Department has no real support from his other two members of staff who do not push for change and development.
- Some of the other staff at the school are more willing to become involved.
- **Walton Middle School** has very important links with Stafford and Stone Canoe Club. Three children who have now moved on to Alleyne's have a chance of making the British Team for Beijing or London 2012.
- The two middle schools in Stone are both very strong on PE. **Christchurch** has 3 hours of PE and Walton 2 hours per week. Both have keen heads of department. Walton Middle School does have some out of hours use for large parts of the year and there are good school club links. The Heads of the Middle Schools are released ½ day per week to meet and plan.
- **St Lawrence at Gnosall** does TOP Up swimming programme. There is a big youth club here and the Head is very supportive.
- **Castlechurch Primary School** has constructed a MUGA (3G) an project driven by Paul Plant. Whilst the School think he is doing a marvellous job, the coordination of this is not what it could be. As one of the largest primary schools, they could do more.

Engagement with the Borough over BSF

- Mark Thornevell, Director of the County Sports Partnership may have been at a meeting near the end of the summer term on this issue (similar message form Clive)
- Priorities should be to have more indoor sports / PE space and to make this flexible.
- Strategically the Schools should develop a sports specific framework at different schools

Other Issues

- Every school across the Stafford Partnership has mainly female PE teachers. This impacts on the delivery of PE and also on out of hours development. Some of the 8 or 9 part timers are reluctant to become involved in out of hours activities OR some of the PE staff have pastoral or senior management roles and lack time.
- Bussing of children is a major issue at all the secondaries except Rising Brook HS. This has an impact on out of hours activities.
- There are very few accredited sports clubs apart from football. It is not difficult to find children who want to join clubs but there is a lack of accredited clubs who

will take them. Too many clubs still want performance bound children only.

- Other sports with good or developing school club links include canoeing – see above re Stafford and Stone Canoe Club linked to Stone Middle Schools . Orienteering – Walton Chasers through Peter Christopher have good links.
- A current initiative is the Girls Active / Kelly Holmes Programme sponsored by Norwich Union and supported locally by B & Q who sponsor Kelly Holmes. The six secondary schools in Stafford are involved in this. This is proving to be a vehicle to have changing facilities improved.



Club Interviews Cannock and Stafford Athletics Club

Interviewee	Gary Denning, Chairman
Membership	Around 300; no trends as the membership has remained fairly static for some years
Use of Rowley Park	Monday and Wednesday evenings all year round
Views on Rowley Park	Good track and setting - no complaints, although ancillary facilities are slightly limited
Events at Rowley Park	Essentially Rowley Park is a training track. The Club has used it for some club meets, but mainly it uses Cannock for events. The ratio of training to events is probably around 50:1.
Changes Desirable	Better clubhouse facilities



Club Interviews Stafford Harriers

Interviewee	Peter Burns, Chairman
Membership	Approximately 250, on a slowly rising trend
Use of Rowley Park	Training only on Mondays and Wednesdays evenings (same days as Cannock and Stafford Athletics Club)
Views on Rowley Park	Excellent track
Events at Rowley Park	None
Changes Desirable	Better changing and indoor training facilities; social facilities with a bar to encourage members to remain after changing

Site Visit
Alleyne's High School

Type	State Secondary
Location	North east corner of Stone - on edge of rural area
Roll	1050 (aged 13-18)
Community programme	Slight - focused around the new dance studio
Summary Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on two sites 300 metres apart • The main school site has relatively limited sports provision. It does include a small theatre and a dance studio converted from a very ageing gym. This is a recent renovation with some decent changing rooms • The main opportunity for community use of this site might be the development of a resident cricket club, potentially a junior X1 attached to a senior club based elsewhere as the ground is quite small. • This field is not used for winter sports and so the wicket remains in reasonable condition. There is a reasonable pavilion on the south west boundary.
Community programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive wet and dry, indoor and outdoor programme run as full dual use site by the Borough • Alleyne's Sports Centre is on a separate site to the north west of the School.
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The north and west boundaries of this site are fields (except for one isolated dwelling at the SW corner). A large part of the rest of the southern boundary is allotments. • This site has experienced a massive investment into the refurbishment of the swimming pool, and sports hall and a huge new block of changing facilities funded partly by the Football Foundation including a coach education room. The synthetic turf pitch was re-orientated through 90 degrees and the grass pitches improved including the conversion of one junior soccer pitch to four mini soccer pitches.

- See interview with Centre Staff for details of problems with the School. This is sad given the quality of facilities on offer.
- Within the sports centre there are two main areas which would benefit from redevelopment. Most important is the reception area which is now much too small for the centre. This could be extended into the car part to make a much more effective approach into the building. The dry changing facilities are also in poor condition and need a major refurbishment – at present they are not opened for community use because of their condition.
- The outdoor tennis courts potentially have access to small separate changing facilities used by the squash club / squash court users. However given the fact that Stone LT and Squash Club has such good outdoor courts, there seems little merit in upgrading these.
- The Squash Club at Alleyne's is very strong and appears to be dwindling at the Stone LT & Squash Club site with 2 of their 4 courts being used for other activities
- It may be worth the Council evaluating whether there is a need for additional netball facilities in Stone and develop this as a netball centre – although a lot of netball in Staffordshire seems to be played solely indoors.
- The real issue with this site is likely to be a reluctance to invest further on a site which has already had a lot spent on it.
- The walking catchment for this site is poor given that it is at the top of a hill on the edge of town. It is likely that a high proportion of adult users will come by car
- Car parking is starting become a problem on the site. Notwithstanding the 300 metre distance, the most obvious solution would be to try and develop some partnership arrangements to permit parking on the school site at evenings / weekends / holidays for events. Discussions on this are apparently underway. It is important that they succeed.

Site Visit Beaconside Sports Centre

Type	Staffordshire University
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eastern edge of Town, adjacent to Weston Rd High School• This is effectively the sports centre for the east side of Town. Manager claims that 70% of usage is community. The site has good road access to develop programmes with people living off the A513 Ring Road which also includes the Staffordshire Technology Park 400 metres to the north.
Community programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moderate to high
Summary Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• See interview with Fiona Roberts who manages the Centre• Main obvious replacement would be for the existing small MUGA which is in synthetic grass.• They also plan to extend the health and fitness suite• Lots of corporate partners including Police, Fire Service, Hospital Group and MOD• Centre would like a swimming pool but the University's higher echelons have little interest in finding the resources for one.
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need to undertake an overall assessment of swimming across the Borough – potentially this could be done by Facilities Planning Modelling• Need to determine whether a new 25m pool at the University could serve as a replacement for the one at Walton (probably only a 4 lane) and whether some of the corporate partners plus the County (for curriculum swimming for primary schools) would be prepared to contribute to the capital cost. This could be a replacement for the ageing small pool at Walton High School.• If this were to become a genuine community facility, ensure that there is enough wetside changing to gain maximum benefit – on the dryside there is very little changing although the Centre management insist there is enough and they have de-commissioned buffer

changing into alternative uses.

Site Visit
Blessed William Howard CHS

Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voluntary Aided School
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• South West of Town Centre but closer than King Edward VI. Accessed off Newport Road then Rowley Avenue
Community programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Probably the state sector School most committed to sport after Stafford Sports College.• Appears to have surprising amount of community use given the quality of its facilities.• The main School reception has a decent approach and entrance.• However Community users do not come in this way. They are routed round via a hard surfaced area between the sports hall wall and a classroom to a door which does not stand out as an entrance.• The changing rooms were undergoing a refurbishment at the time of the PPG 17 visit which was more than a paint job but would still not bring them up to full community use standards.• The sports hall is dire. Floor dimensions are acceptable 33.7m x 18 but the roof is low (only 5.8 to portal frame which impinges on the badminton court.• The roof was leaking in four places during visit.• This was the sports hall that Foundation for Sport and the Arts had seen fit to provide funds for an upgrade – the strapline of the FSA’s first officer “Trying to provide a candle in the dark” does not work too well when you are trying to light a sports hall! Externally and internally this is a poor facility.• The gym although probably older was similar in standard but had a heating problem during the visit.• Outdoors there are two tennis courts to school dimensions (34m x 32.5) double marked for netball.• The playing fields do not drain well.• There are power lines at the south east corner of the site where it abuts the main railway line but these do not impinge significantly on the playing fields• There is piece of land about 120m x 110m (with a corner off) by these power lines at the south east corner. This may be railway property.• The sports hall is used for badminton on Mondays,

Cricket on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays mainly from October to Easter. There is a small amount of football in the hall on Tuesdays and County Netball on Wednesdays.

Comments

- Given the amount of sport, particularly cricket which appears to happen on this site, it is important that facilities of adequate quality are sustained to enable this to continue and grow
- Despite several efforts, we were unable to interview the County Cricket Development Officer. It would be helpful to clarify whether the cricket use is as substantial as we were told. If it is, the medium term future for this site might be a better quality sports hall which doubles as an indoor cricket centre. This would require some compromises by the School in relation to the sports hall specification and discussions with them would need to establish whether they would be satisfied with this. There is also some cricket at the independent Stafford Grammar School.
- If this were the case, it would probably be advisable to move the netball to another hall – perhaps King Edwards VI if it were re-vamped. However these development programmes often develop as a result of the interests of staff at the School and it will be important not to disrupt partnership arrangements.
- The Blessed William Howard site will be probably be better suited to a sports club / association access arrangements rather than try to install a Borough management presence.

Site Visit Brooklands School

Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Independent Nursery and Primary School for children 3 months to 11 years
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eccleshall Road 2Km from Town Centre
Community programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimal
Summary Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small School Hall 12,2m x 7.7m which has some use by Stafford Operatic Society, children's birthday parties and Examinations by the Music Board.• There are small / neat and tidy changing rooms but the route to these from the front of the building is obscure• Junior sized outdoor pitch with poor run offs – parallel to marsh – so probably does not drain too well• Junior cricket nets
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No major significance for community use• Might cause child protection issues if over-promoted

Site Visit: Castlechurch Primary School

Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State Primary
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the heart of the Highfields Estate, 450 metres south west of King Edward V1 Secondary School
Community programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slight
Summary Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modest School hall 14.5m x 12m usual stuff stored around the walls.• Toilets but no changing rooms• Outdoors there is a new 3G MUGA unlit and with a low fence about 1.2m which would not take impact.• An individual has driven this project through.• The Partnership Development Manager expressed concern that the School were not trying to integrate their efforts at out of school sport and community use.
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The partnership development issue is one for the Borough's Sports Development Unit and the School Sport Partnership to sort out rather than a PPG 17 issue.• This site could have some value encouraging mothers of nursery and primary school children towards more active lifestyles. However the most effective way of delivering programmes might be to develop King Edward V1 facilities for out-of-hours activities.

Site Visit
Christ Church MS – Stone

Type	Voluntary Aided Middle School
Location	Just down the hill from Alleyne’s on the NE side of Stone
Community programme	Slight – mainly focused around children of the School
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keen PE staff who appear to encourage pupils to engage in sport, a view endorsed by the Partnership Development Manager and Stafford Sports Development• The School has links to Stone Tennis Club and to Stone Cricket Club, Alleyne’s Swimming Club, Stoke Rugby Club, and Stoke Football Academy and is a site for Stafford BC holiday schemes• The facilities themselves are nothing to become excited about. The gym / hall is probably 1920s and barely one badminton court.• The outdoor courts are a little better• However, there would seem to be limited merit in trying to promote additional adult community use of this site when much better facilities are available just up the road at Alleyne’s Sports Centre

Site Visit Gnosall St Lawrence PS

Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Primary (but based on the site of the former secondary)
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lowfield Lane, just off the A518 Stafford to Newport Road
Community programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This was originally the secondary school for Gnosall and the surrounding hamlets. However in an earlier reorganisation the LEA decided that the secondary school was too small to be viable. They sold the primary school site and moved the primary pupils here. Secondary pupils now travel to Stafford.• The School buildings are therefore larger than would be expected from a primary School.• The school hall 17m x 14.9m x 4.8m high accessed off the main reception.• There is a dining area which is used as a social space and for children's birthday parties across the corridor from this.• Down the corridor is a swimming pool funded by the PTA in 1965 and covered in 1993 with a wooden enclosure. (16.7m x 7.2m) The pool has changing rooms which double for dryside and outdoor pitch use. The pool can also be accessed via a separate gate further along Lowfield Lane. The pool has no proper reception or viewing space for parents. Humidity is something of a problem.• The Pool is open from 4.30 to 7.00 pm and is mainly used for children's sessions Mon Wed Thurs and Fri. Pool party bookings are accepted on Sat afternoons• Adult sessions are Mon 7 – 9 pm and Friday 9pm – 10 pm• The hall is used for Martial Arts or Judo (caretaker was unsure) on Mon 8.00 – 9.30• Tue Yoga 8.00 to 9.30• Wed 7.00 – 9.00 guides• The Youth Service has a mobile just behind the pool which is offers sessions on Thursday and Friday evenings.• The indoor areas are closed on Sundays but the football

pitch is used both morning and afternoon.

- The caretaker had been there for decades and was very knowledgeable and positive.
- He had concerns about vandalism of the Youth Provision which had caused them to reduce their hours
- He also suggested that Gnosall had a significant number of commuters who did not arrive back in the Village until early evening meaning that adult users would usually not want anything before 7.30 but from Sunday to Thurs evenings they would also not want to finish too late because of commuting early the next morning. So 7.30 to 9.30 might be the realistic times for any additional adult sessions.
- Note this may have implications for Eccleshall too - if additional dryside provision is considered there - see above

Comments

- The buildings are in place and could probably sustain a modest increase in community use if this is what local people want.
- The key issues are likely to be marketing / promotion and staffing. What would locals want to encourage them to become more active?
- The school would benefit from separate changing rooms to use for dryside indoor and outdoor - although the funding of these might be problematic.
- The pool could benefit from some kind of viewing space. An architect could probably advise whether this could be accomplished in the gap between the changing rooms and the side wall of the wooden pool enclosure.

Site Visit King Edward VI HS

Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State secondary
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• South west of the Town Centre, not far from Blessed William Howard Catholic High School and Rowley Park. On edge of the Highfields Estate
Community programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slight
Summary Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sports hall is slightly smaller than Stafford Sports College (Rising Brook HS) at 35.5m x 17.6 with roof glazing (fortunately north facing)• The changing rooms are poor quality• The sports hall is a separate building adjacent to the bus park and could function as a unit for community use• The gymnasium is locked within the main body of the School• There are 10 outdoor tarmac tennis courts in three tiers, multi-marked and poor quality. These double up as the main hard play area• Playing fields to the north of school buildings.• School has aspirations for a full sized STP but the site does not lend itself to this. The best position would be north of the sports hall with a N-S orientation but this would leave one long side relatively close to housing in Eliot Way and Dryden Crescent. Although they have longer gardens, some of the properties on the south side of Newport Rd may object.
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This should be a key site for encouraging people from Highfields Estate to become more involved in dryside sport. The site would become critical if Stafford Sports College were to close as part of BSF reorganisation.• Suggest assessment of the sports hall to determine whether it is worth refurbishing or whether a rebuild would be better. The changing rooms would probably need a rebuild even if the hall is preserved.• Build additional changing to cater for more outdoor use plus proper reception / office for community use (not to be collared by the PE staff at the first opportunity!)

- Consider the potential for a 3G small area perhaps 60m x 35m or 70m x40m which could be subdivided into three for lettings to create part of a five a side league. This could be traditional five a side or Futsal.
- Try and find a way of staffing the sports hall to increase community use on a balanced programme. Ideally this would provide some degree of pay and play access – not just club / community association.
- Whether or not one includes a small fitness suite of say 20 stations largely depends upon what happens at Rowley Park (- see indoor tennis paper).
- All this probably largely depends on what happens under BSF unless

The Extra Fields

- During the audit, the Bursar mentioned in passing that the School had stopped laying out a grass running track because they had an off-road route to Rowley Park.
- During one of the other interviews, we were asked whether the School had shown us their “secret fields”.
- There appear to be three parcels of land which lie to the east of the School.
- The northern one is about 120m x60 metres.
- South of this at a higher level is a larger area about 200m x 75 with a top corner of an additional 35m x 30m
- It would be helpful to know who owns these sites because they would be prime for development.
- They could potentially be access via a new road from near the main gate of Rowley Park. Inside the park is a piece of land to the left (about 110m x 50m) which Jim Arnold said the Borough had tried to develop at one point but been refused permission. There are mature trees on the southern half of this land and it should be possible to thread an access road through these to access the other fields. (see Scan related to indoor tennis section)
 - The other option to access off Rowley Hall Drive might create more resistance from local residents.
 - Depending upon who owns these fields and the means of access to develop them, there may be opportunities to develop a capital receipt to make improvements either at King Edward VI School or at Rowley Park or both.

Site Visit MOD Stafford

- Type**
- Military Base with many families living outside the cordon
- Location**
- East Stafford off the A513 Beaconside
- Perceived intensity of community programme**
- Service personnel use existing facilities and so do their families. These are “inside the wire” and therefore unavailable to other users.
- Summary Points**
- The former swimming pool has been converted into health and fitness suite which has no effective ventilation.
 - Sports hall is undersized 26m x 15.9m x 5.5m high. Elderly and poor quality
 - Playing fields are a bad joke
 - Redgra running track half paved over as a parade ground
 - Personnel obviously have demand for running judging by people running alongside Beaconside Road.

 - MOD apparently unwilling to spend on this site
 - Rumours that the base may be expanded – but then the decision could go the other way !
 - Suggest that the University/Weston Road High School explore potential for more shared usage. Shared development off the base may offer the MOD better value for money than single provision on site.

Site Visit

Sir Graham Balfour High School

- Type**
- State High School built under PFI and managed by Pell Frischmann
- Location**
- North Avenue – the only School on the north side of Stafford,
 - To the east of the school lies Stafford Common
 - To the west is an area of new housing built on the site of the old school before rebuilding in 2001.
 - One of the anomalies of the new site is that it is curiously remote from a walking catchment. The gate into the new housing is locked in evening. This means that out of School hours, everyone must enter by the main gate and go 400 metres up the drive to the sports hall. This would not be an attractive approach on foot at night.
- Community programme**
- Moderate to high – there is management on site but the programme details provided do not suggest that usage is quite as heavy as, say the comparable dryside facilities at Alleyne’s which is Borough managed rather than PFI.
- Summary Points**
- When first constructed, the sports hall had a truly terrible problem with reverberation, so much so that staff were having problems teaching in it. This has now been ameliorated but it is still not good.
 - The health and fitness suite is not open to the public – it is too small to warrant staffing. It is also very cluttered with fitness equipment and extraneous bits of kit to the point that constitutes some hazard for school users.
 - The School has aspirations for a full sized STP and of all the Schools in the Borough which do not have one, this would probably be the best site – see recommendations.
 - The changing rooms are currently shared between indoor and outdoor (natural grass and tennis courts + sports hall and fitness suite). This is unsatisfactory from a community use standpoint, would appear to be causing cleaning issues and would be exacerbated if an STP were added without increasing changing facilities.
 - 4 Tennis / netball courts are unlit.
 - We have more programming information on this site

than the other Schools can offer – largely as a result of the Pell Frischmann management and the Steering Group on which the Borough is represented.

- The sports hall has over 200 bookings pa for football and 100 for badminton, netball is 65 (largely indoors it appears) and basketball 40.
- This is not a particularly inspired programme. If the School is to get an STP, one obvious need would be to boost non football use of the sports hall and move football outdoors.
- The Youth Service operates sessions for the north part of Town from Holmcroft which is adjacent to but separate from the School. The programme here is not so extensive as Walton High School – see below

Comments

- ASAP plant some cover along the west side of the tennis courts – something quick growing which will block the view from the new housing across the playing fields. In this way, if the School apply for PP for an STP they will already have a screen to limit neighbour objections. This would also be useful if they decided to light the tennis courts.
- Assess whether a full sized STP is needed on north side of Town. If it is, this is the site.
- Design / layout would be critical to work effectively
- Suggest removing and re-positioning the sports hall office / PE staff room and creating a new build between up to tennis courts which might include a long narrow fitness suite as well as a corridor
- Create additional changing block at end of existing changing rooms, obviating the need for current changing rooms being used for outdoor sports (therefore losing the south door)
- Ideally new changing should be sufficient to separate natural turf changing rooms (which will be largely school use) from STP and Tennis / Netball Court Use which could be both school and community.
- There is no point opening up the fitness suite with its current size; it is currently 9 stations and would need to be enlarged to at least 20 to make it worth opening up.
- STP should be constructed with the cage abutting the new changing facilities on the south end of the sports hall.
- To minimise neighbour objections, the pitch would have to be oriented correctly N-S. This may produce some concerns from Sport England about loss of grass pitches – two football and one junior rugby.
- It is imperative that the School does NOT use an STP as a hard play facility during break times. Use should be supervised extra curricular sport. This part of the playing field being nearest to the School did seem more litter prone than the rest of the field.
- The school seems to have no hard play other than the tennis courts, therefore the best solution would seem to

be to keep these as hard play and preserve the new STP for supervised school use. Therefore no point floodlighting them and upsetting the neighbours even more.

- The facility would benefit from a modest social space, even if it is a small vending area like Alleyne's Sports Centre. This could be a conversion of the present fitness suite.

Site Visit St Dominic's Priory

Type	Independent Catholic School
Location	Station Road Stone
Community programme	Moderate. Indoor tennis courts are fairly busy but with a non-developmental programme. Priory hall is not specifically a sports space but has some community use.
Summary Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outdoor facilities are almost non existent - comprise two degraded tennis courts• Indoor provision is at the north west end of the site and has its own separate entrance and car parking.• This comprises the Priory Hall 20m x 12m with stage used by Stone Acro Gymnastics Club and occasionally by Stoke City FC for boys (may be in indoor tennis hall)• Tucked behind this and squeezed into a tight site backing onto the canal are the two indoor tennis courts.• These were originally used by the LTA as part of their County Squad programme. However with the new tennis arrangements for performance devolved back to clubs and indoor venues, this site has largely dropped out of the governing body development programme• Community use of the indoor tennis centre has been devolved to a lady called Celia Clulow who rents out the courts to individuals for a block fee for 27 weeks. She usually has a small waiting list of 2 or 3 people interested in taking a time slot when someone decides not to renew in September each year. She does not seem to market this actively by relies on word of mouth.• People pay £19.50 for a 90 minutes slot in two instalments totalling 27 weeks.• Most of the players are club members at local tennis clubs: Great Bridgford, Walton on the Hill, Stone LTC, Ethinghill LTC (near Rugeley) and Endon TC.• Three slots per week are given over to Extreme Tennis which has links to higher level County Coaching (NB Jeremy Lemarchand from the LTA did not specifically mention this)

- There is also junior coaching on a Saturday from Basford Tennis Club
- Parents with children at the School can use the courts on Friday evenings from 6.00 to 9.00 pm
- Rehangng of the lights in this centre has compromised the clearance somewhat
- The School seems to have developed a niche with a fair amount of community use, albeit of limited developmental potential for adult users. In the assessment of indoor tennis (separate paper) there seems limited merit in trying to channel these arrangements in directions which the School may find it difficult to manage.

Comments

Site Visit Stafford GS & Burton Manor SA

Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Independent Day School
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alongside the M6 on the west (undeveloped) side 2.5 km south, south west of the Town Centre.
Community programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Light to moderate
Summary Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The main school buildings are a Victorian Manor designed by Pugin for the Whitgreave family. The site passed into the ownership of a Reinforced Concrete Company which used the site as an industrial sports ground for their workers. When the factory declined, the organisation withdrew to Shrewsbury. Sir John Hall (ex Newcastle United chairman) subsequently leased part of it to Burton Manor Sports Association on a peppercorn rent.• The School was being set up elsewhere in the late 1970s following the demise of grammar school education locally. The Sports Association was struggling with insufficient lettings income. In 1982 the School rented some rooms from the Sports Association. Eventually Sir John Hall invited the School to buy out his interest. Burton Manor Sports Association, who considered themselves the elder statesmen of the site, suddenly found that the newcomers had become their landlords. Some Association members have found this difficult to come to terms with, although some of the key contacts including the Bursar have developed a sound working relationship.• Mainstay of sports provision is the School's sports hall which is 33.2m x 18m but the length has an additional 6.9 metres taken up by a stage. Height is only 6.4m• Proper entrance lobby and decent changing rooms.• The School had constructed new changing rooms for outdoor use but these had not been fitted out at the time of the visit.• Outdoors there are two undersized grass hockey pitches straddling an undersized cricket field alongside the

- deafening noise of the M6
- Burton Manor Sports Assn talked of plans to move from their table tennis hut and judo / martial arts hut if the M6 is widened. However, in recent weeks this project has been postponed by the Government (yet again – it has been talked about for at least 15 years).
- The Borough has been in discussion with the Bowling Club section of the Sports Association about finding them a new home as the School may wish to develop the site of the bowling green.
- The School has also acquired two pieces of land to the west of its current site. The first of these was being laid out as a rugby pitch (to the west of the sports hall) during the visit – not it would appear to a decent standard – the slope looked significant.
- The other piece of land to the west / north west had a stream running through it. How they plan to convert this unpromising little valley, (which looked marshy towards the motorway end) into pitches was unclear.
- Community use consists of Archery Mondays, Indoor Bowls Tuesdays (Oct – Easter) and mainly cricket thereafter. Because we were unable to interview the Cricket DO it is unclear how this is co-ordinated with indoor cricket at Blessed William Howard. The County programme seems to be more Fridays and weekends with a group from Melford Hall using it for cricket Wednesdays and Thursdays

Comments

- The major housing developments proposed for Stafford suggest that this site might become of more significance. However, the roads which link this School site to Stafford lead into the south of the Town. There is no easy way of reaching the Burleyfields potential development area without either driving through the middle of Stafford or through the Highfields Estate (Westway is traffic calmed).
- The School is likely to continue to expand. The Borough is likely to have limited input into how this independent school meshes into the mosaic of provision. This will require careful negotiation.
- It is unlikely that the sports hall will gain much intensification of community usage. One slot may open up if the Bowling Club move elsewhere and decide that they no longer want their Tuesday indoor slot.
- Burton Manor Sports Association is a subject of some concern. This is a club which is in danger of folding or disintegrating into various sections.
- Their indoor badminton court is very poor quality and the squash courts only a little better. The two huts which house the table tennis and judo have seriously substandard dimensions – although both sections seem satisfied with them. The whole set up is not DDA compliant. The bowling green is deteriorating. The tennis section shrunk from 35 members in 2005 to 6 members in 2006 and then disaffiliated from the LTA.

- It would appear that some sections of the Club are looking to find their own salvation elsewhere but progress with this was unclear at the time of the visit.
- It would be helpful if the Borough could retain an interest in their future and support them in trying to sustain themselves in some sort of way.
- In the event that Stafford Sports College were to close, there could be a case for creating a Stafford South Sports Centre and incorporate some of the constituent sections of Burton Manor Sports Club there. This might offer a more natural home for the Club than allowing them to be scattered across the Town.

Site Visit Stafford Sports College

Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State School / Sports College
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South side of Stafford about 1.5 miles from the Town Centre. In Burton Manor area with the deprived Highfields Estate to the north across Rising Brook
Community programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate – but heavily focused around young people’s out of hours activities rather than an adult programme
Summary Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base for the School Sport Partnership Development Team and the LTA County Office. • Very long serving, committed and enthusiastic Director of Sport, (nearing retirement?) • School has an old but robust sports hall of tennis court size 36.6m x 18.3m. Main problem is natural roof lighting – could probably use a new roof deck. • Changing rooms attached to sports hall are not up to adult community use standards. The ones attached to the gym are a little better • The gym has been carved up to include a classroom / coach education room and a dance studio • Outdoors there are six new floodlit tarmac tennis courts built largely with NOF money • Another small hard court area given over to five a side but the fencing is inappropriately flimsy • The original tennis and netball courts are used as the hard play area and are deteriorating quickly • Not much grass left on the site. • Director of sport would like to develop the remainder of their Redgra area into more netball courts. • LTA County Manager and Director of Sport also interested in developing indoor tennis courts here (see separate review of indoor tennis) • Key issue is what happens to this School as part of BSF. For decades it has played a key role in the development of a number of children from quite deprived backgrounds from Rising Brook and Highfields Estates. But there are only 500 on roll. • If the School were to close the Borough and County would have a key decision as to what happens to the

site.

- There does not appear to be much Multi Functional Greenspace in the triangle between the railway line the M6 and Rising Brook Green Corridor (is this borne out by other parts of the audit?)
- A case could be made to develop part of this site as a local authority sports centre for the south end of Town if the School closes.
- However the County Council are likely to want to realise the maximum capital value of the asset.
- A public sports centre would need a feasibility study to determine whether this should be wet and dry, or just dry and whether it should include indoor tennis and possibly even indoor bowls
- If this were developed as a Stafford South Sports Centre it might make sense to find out whether some sections of Burton Manor Sports Association would like to move here. – see below under Stafford Grammar School where they are currently sited.

Site Visit Walton High School

Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State School with Youth Centre on site
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Far south east of the Town. 2.5 miles from Town Centre at Walton on the Hill.• The River Penk and Staffs & Worcs Canal creates a green valley between the main body of Stafford to the west and suburbs of Weeping Cross and Walton to the south east. The latter areas are affluent.
Community programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slight to Moderate - young people's holiday courses mainly using the playing fields. Also Dolphins swim club is run by a former teacher. Most of the out of hours activity focuses on Young People in the Youth Wing. This is effectively the HQ for the Youth Service in the Town and the Youth Service operates programmes on 6 nights per week.
Summary Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The area may be affluent but the School appears to have been starved of investment over decades.• PE provision is extraordinarily poor for a school of this size.• There is a somewhat elderly swimming pool which is 16.7m x 7.4m• The indoor dry provision consists of one 21m x 12m gym dating from 1967• Outdoors there are six tennis courts, double marked with 4 netball courts, unlit and indifferent surface as they clearly double up as hard play.• The Youth Service provision comprises a small double height hall with offices and meeting rooms off it.• There are moderately extensive playing fields to the south of the School. The School has tried to sell off some of these, to fund a sports hall, without success.• There is a back gate into the School off Old Croft Road which could potentially make a separate entrance if the School were to gain community sports facilities as part of BSF.• The School is clearly obsessed about their lack of a sports hall (understandably given their numbers) and the first question we were asked by 3 people when conducting the PPG 17 audit was "Have you come about the sports hall?"

- The downside of community use for this site is that the school is located somewhat towards the eastern edge of development.
- Furthermore, it is likely because of the affluence of the area that car ownership is high and therefore the lack of quality local facilities is probably little noticed by the community.
- It may be worth analysing the age sex profile of Weeping Cross and Walton on the Hill. Looking at the house types, it is possible that this may be ageing. If this is the case there will be two countervailing forces – less demand as people age but perhaps more desire for local provision. However the type of improved local provision may not sit easily with what the School needs.
- Given the popularity of the School it seems highly likely that it will survive any reorganisations linked to BSF.
- The School will have an almost overwhelming case for some major remodelling if not a complete rebuilt. Part of this entitlement will be for a minimum of a four badminton court sports hall under BB98 plus some generous ancillary space. It would be a waste if this was not brought into some form of community use.
- If the School is redeveloped as a PFI Scheme like Graham Balfour, it is likely that opportunities will arise for similar quantities of community use, although the actual programme needed may be different.

Comments

- The fate of the swimming pool could be a key issue for the Borough. Their public swimming provision is not generous, notwithstanding the current investment in the Riverside LC replacement.
- Swimming pools are not a priority for BSF and there is therefore a danger that this facility will be lost.
- The Borough may wish to consider how this could be replaced, if not at Walton, then elsewhere on this side of Town. A partnership with the University may be an option.

Site Visit
Walton Priory MS - Stone

Type	Maintained County 9 - 13
Location	On the west side of Stone. A triangular shaped site with a separate building for a First School at the apex and some playing fields and allotments to the east
Community programme	Slight - mainly focussed around children of the School
Summary Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Another school enthusiastic about sport which has fairly extensive grassed areas. There is an unfenced hard play area of about 75m x 35m. Nothing really outdoors worth pushing hard for adult community use• The buildings date from 1974 with flat roofs. There is a modest hall about 14.3m x 11.7m which opens into a small dance aerobics room 14m x 10m but the latter with some pillars.• Off this are some undistinguished changing rooms• This corner of the school could, with some modest investment, probably be screened off to allow some community club use if there is sufficient need on this side of Stone• The most likely potential users could be dance / aerobics or possibly a martial arts or judo group.• The site also has a good tobogganing slope

Site Visit Weston Road High School

Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State High School
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Far east of the Town beyond the University's Beaconside site.• Weston Road suffers the disadvantage of having no immediate walking catchment for its facilities. The nearest residents are university students who have their own facilities. The nearest permanent residents start more than 600 metres to the west
Community programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slight. Some partnership working with the University which could be fostered.
Summary Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quite a spacious site with substantial playing fields• The facilities are probably tolerable for another 10 years of school use.• The indoor sports facilities and tennis courts are in one nice tight unit at the west end of the site.• However they have deteriorated to such an extent and have such a dated appearance that they are unlikely to be attractive to the community• A major refurbishment may not be a realistic option but better maintenance would extend their school life somewhat• The sports hall is very dark with poor quality lighting and a tattered Sports Council poster at least 20 years old boasting "Sport for All"• There is a separate gymnasium with 8 changing rooms, showing their age.• Outdoors the 8 unlit tennis courts and multi marked and bizarrely have two taken out by basketball posts (see photo) implanted inside the court area.• The playing fields are quite extensive and seem to drain reasonably well except for the south boundary (far side away from the School).
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is difficult to know what impact BSF might have on this site.• In order to function from a community use standpoint, the Centre needs a proper reception at the west

(university) end of the School. The obvious place to put this would be by the pedestrian entrance between the tennis courts and the sports hall – except for the fact that the location means that there are unlikely to be many pedestrian community users. There is a small amount of car parking near the main school reception but the main car park is at the east end of the site. The car park could be extended towards the tennis courts to create a reception area with twin entrances.

- However, the community justification for intensifying use here is weak because of the location.
- If the County decides to invest here, there are two nearby partners who might decide that improving facilities on the School site is a more cost effective solution than building more of their own.
- Staffordshire University has expansion plans – see below. And one 4 badminton court sports hall is not generous provision for thousands of young people aged 18- 22. The University's sports hall is 300 metres from Weston Rd Sports Hall and the student residences a further 100 metres away.
- A second potential partner might be the MOD. Stafford base has unbelievably poor sports facilities. There is talk of a major increase in numbers for the base. It is possible that they might be interested in some kind of deal with offered good community access to Service families if the Weston Road facilities were up to scratch.
- However the families' accommodation for the Base is 1 to 2 miles away and provision here would be outside the security cordon.

Site Visit Yarlet School

Type	Independent Nursery Pre-Prep and Preparatory School Aged 2 – 13
Location	Next to A34 half way between Stafford and Stone
Community programme	Slight – but realistic given the nature of the School
Summary Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Outdoor fields are quite extensive but of limited community use interest. Cricket field in particular slopes significantly and the pavilion is one large bare interior.▪ There is a car park next to the cricket field, so if the pavilion and pitches were of a higher standard there might be some prospect of limited community use – but the reason for upgrading the facilities would have to come from the School▪ Other court provision includes three small sized poor quality tennis courts and a small STP which has no fence or lights. These are a couple of hundred yards from the main buildings. There is no real need for additional access to STP provision here as Stone Hockey Club has a full sized pitch less than ½ a mile to the north.▪ The school has an outdoor pool on the south (uphill) side of the site. The Chair of Governors owns a house nearby and would be keen to take over this pool if the School decide to build an indoor pool▪ Their proposal (which may be some way off) for an indoor pool is to squeeze it into a corner behind the existing 2 badminton court sports hall.▪ Depending upon the size of the pool, there may be merit in encouraging community use. The best use would probably be the junior section of a swimming club. However it seems unlikely that the School could run to a 25m pool, so the interest for competitive swimming is likely to be limited▪ The sports hall has no changing facilities. The main community users are a fencing club.▪ The School are reasonably open to ideas for community use but also conscious that they have boarders on site.

This means that the School need their facilities for parts of the evening, not just during the day. There are also child protection issues with such young children on site, although compared to some other Prep Schools they seemed to take quite a balanced view of this.

- The School is not particularly near any substantial settlement within walking distance. It is clearly very accessible by car.

Comments

- If the School does decide to develop an indoor pool, the Borough should remain alert to the potential to develop community use partnership opportunities from this.
- If suitable changing facilities are constructed as part of this development, it may enable a modest increase of community use of the hall – although with 2 courts and high level and ground level glazing, the options for this remain modest.



C: Provision Standards

Introduction

This appendix summarises the accessibility, quantity and quality provision standards the Council requires developers to follow and that it will use when assessing application for planning permission.

The quality standards set out below are no less important but the extent to which development proposals conform to them is more a matter of judgement in the light of specific planning applications. However, they set out the Council's requirements as a guide for developers on the quality of provision the Council will expect them either to provide or fund. The Council will take them into account when appraising planning applications that incorporate open space or sport and recreation provision. In this context, quality standards are a **requirement**, although they must obviously be applied in a way which is reasonable given the specific circumstances of a proposed development.

This forms of open space, sport and recreation provision for which the Council has adopted provision standards are:

Multi-functional Greenspaces (MFGS)

- Amenity greenspaces
- Churchyards and cemeteries
- Natural greenspaces
- Parks and gardens

Other public spaces

- Green corridors
- Civic spaces

Activity Spaces

- Allotments
- Formal play provision
- Multi-sport courts
- Youth Facilities

Outdoor Sports Facilities

- Artificial turf pitches
- Bowling greens
- Grass cricket, football and rugby pitches
- Tennis Courts

General Requirements

Indoor facilities

- Indoor sports halls and swimming pools

The following requirements for design objectives, design principles, accessibility and management and maintenance are common to all spaces and therefore set out at the start of the standards rather than repeated for each different form of provision. There are also some additional requirements under these headings for specific types of space which are set out in the appropriate sections below.

Design Objectives

Design quality is fundamental to ensuring that spaces are fit for purpose, attractive to potential users and easy to maintain. All greenspaces should therefore be designed by experienced landscape architects working to the following design objectives:

- **Character:** each space should have its own specific identify which responds to the character of the area in which it is set and makes good use of the existing topography and landscape or built features and habitats
- **Continuity and enclosure:** there should be a clear distinction between public and private spaces
- **Quality of the public realm:** spaces should be attractive, safe, uncluttered and designed in such a way as to be attractive and usable by everyone. There should also be views into and out of spaces, for example to appropriate landmarks.
- **Ease of movement:** it should be easy to get to and move through spaces and individual public spaces should be connected with one another as much as possible. In residential areas, people should generally have priority over vehicles.
- **Legibility and clear routes:** the routes through spaces should be clear, with landmarks or directional signs at appropriate locations
- **Adaptability:** spaces should be able to change over time to meet evolving local needs
- **Diversity:** spaces should offer variety and choice to potential users
- **Sustainability:** greenspaces should support environmental sustainability, for example by providing habitats, helping to shelter buildings to minimise the cooling effects of wind, minimising the impact of atmospheric pollution or heavy rainfall and providing shade. As much as possible, greenspaces should be linked to water courses so as to create wildlife corridors (which can include private gardens or other non-public spaces) and attractive walking/cycling routes. Where appropriate, new developments should include sustainable urban drainage systems.

- **Personal safety:** all spaces must appear safe and therefore not include areas where someone could be trapped or potential attackers could hide. Ideally, spaces in residential areas should be within sight of nearby roads or paths and residents in nearby properties. In addition there must be appropriate safety measures adjacent to areas of water which might be dangerous (eg notices regarding depths, life buoys) and adequate lighting for paths that may be used at night.
- **Appropriate facilities:** most spaces should have at least seats and appropriately signed litter and “pooper” bins. Bins must be bird, squirrel and rat proof and located at points where they can easily be accessed from the road system.

General Design Principles

- The design of all greenspaces should promote biodiversity and nature conservation
- New housing development should follow “home zone” principles in that they should be designed as predominantly pedestrian environments into which vehicles can be admitted. This requires much more innovative solutions than simple traffic calming measures such as sleeping policemen.
- The whole of the outdoor environment should be safe but visually stimulating for both children and adults and offer opportunities for them to play in imaginative ways, both close to home and in any nearby wooded or other greenspaces which can be accessed without crossing a major road. The green network and related play provision must not be allocated to “left-over areas” or parts of sites unsuitable for building but designed in from the start and link to likely pedestrian desire lines.
- Areas in which children are likely to play should be unique and designed to offer a varied, interesting and physically challenging environment, accessible to everyone, which offers opportunities for running, jumping, climbing, balancing, building or creating, social interaction and sitting quietly.
- The design of play provision should derive from and reinforce the character and levels of the site and incorporate any natural features there may be on it such as rock outcrops or water courses. This will also help to encourage and facilitate use by children of all ages.
- Play provision should be designed generally to encourage children to explore their home environment and so incorporate hiding and “secret” places and links to nearby parts of the green network, especially woodland and other natural areas.
- Greenspaces should stimulate the senses of sight, sound, touch and smell and offer opportunities for children to manipulate materials. Accordingly they

should incorporate variations in level and a range of materials of different kinds, textures and colours, such as timber, sand, rocks, dead trees and other natural materials and incorporate trees, shrubs and grass.

- Boundary fencing, gates, posts etc should be fit for purpose
- Surfaces should be fit for purpose (including markings as appropriate)
- Management regimes should suit particular landscape/habitat types eg differential mowing may be suitable to promote wildlife interests; not less than 1 m close mown edges to paths
- All paths should be kept clear of overhanging branches which cyclists or other users might hit
- All built and other facilities should be in clean, safe and usable condition

Mandatory Requirements

The following requirements are mandatory and not open to negotiation:

- All allotment sites, parks and gardens, grass and artificial pitch sites and built facilities (equipped play areas, multi-sport courts, youth facilities, bowling greens, tennis courts and indoor sports facilities) must provide an appropriate level of secure cycle parking
- Cycle paths must comply with the appropriate Staffordshire County Council requirements for paths of adoptable standard and should either be permeable or impermeable with surface water drainage linked to a Sustainable Urban Drainage Scheme
- All paths must be accessible to people with disabilities
- All lighting must minimise upward light spill and light pollution and use energy efficient luminaries or solar lighting
- All street furniture and fixed play equipment must be selected from the Council's list of preferred furniture or equipment items
- All signs must comply with the Council's guidelines on signage
- Trees and shrubs must be selected and specified to provide year-round colour and interest
- Specifications should require the use of recycled material and/or the incorporation of recycled content wherever possible

Accessibility

Accessibility has two key components: making it easy for potential users to get to spaces and making it easy to use them. Accordingly it is concerned with all potential users and not just those who are disabled in some way.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and PPG17 both

promote the design of inclusive public spaces and environments that everyone can use. Since October 2004 service providers have been required to take reasonable steps to ensure that people with disabilities are able to use premises and spaces without unnecessary constraints. There is no clear definition of “reasonable” in this context, but it seems that there is no requirement to make all spaces accessible to people with disabilities all of the time. A useful policy is that greenspaces should be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialised design.

In greenspaces, the key requirements are:

- Spaces should be linked to local pedestrian and cycle path systems wherever possible, including rights of way, bridlepaths and quiet lanes
- Spaces and publicly accessible buildings or facilities within them should be fully accessible to people with disabilities
- On-site spaces should not generally be on the perimeter of sites but the focus of the development; in residential areas, no dwellings should “turn their back” on adjacent greenspaces.
- Adequate car parking (if required) should be either on site or close to the entrances
- Spaces should be traversed by a network of surfaced paths, where appropriate, which are suitable for wheelchairs and baby buggies; maximum slope not more than 1:12 and then only for short distances; otherwise not more than 1:24. Paths must also be wide enough for two wheelchairs to pass and broadly follow desire lines to link the entrances to the space with points of interest either within the space or close to it (note: on some sites, such as playing fields and sports pitches, it will be necessary not to compromise the main use of the site). In some locations, it may be necessary to provide tactile clues to alert people with limited vision to trip hazards or changes in level.
- Clear and uncomplicated written information, signage and way-marking, with good colour contrast and simple lettering in an appropriate point size. Written information should include directions to points of interest or local community facilities (eg schools, shops, sports facilities) with approximate walking times and signs requiring dogs to be kept under control and fouling disposed of to “pooper” bins
- Easy to use latches and gates, if required
- Seats, ideally with a timber seat surface so they can be used in cold weather

Wherever possible, greenspace designers should consult local disabled groups over the design of spaces and facilities.

Management and Maintenance

A superbly designed but badly managed or maintained space is probably of less value to a local community than a poorly designed but superbly managed and maintained one. The key management and maintenance requirements are that:

- Litter should be seen clearly to be under control with litter bins emptied regularly and no dangerous litter such as broken glass
- There should be at most only limited evidence of vandalism or graffiti coupled with rapid and effective removal
- There should be very little or no evidence of dog fouling, with “pooper bins” available at various points, plus notices relating to the avoidance of dog fouling. Pooper bins must also be clearly identifiable and separate from litter bins – for example, a different colour and clearly marked.
- There should be no or very little evidence of flytipping and rapid, effective removal of tipped material
- All paths should be kept clear of debris and chewing gum; with surfaces in good condition and repaired or marked as necessary
- All facilities should be in clean, safe and usable condition
- Path or other lighting should be adequately maintained and working
- Grounds maintenance standards should be consistently high and demonstrate clearly that spaces are well maintained
- Grassed areas to have a low preponderance of broad leaved weeds; they must be cut to an even length and if clippings are left in place after cutting they must be short so as not to have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the area
- Horticultural areas and flower/shrub beds weed free and ideally mulched
- Flowering plants dead headed and pruned as necessary
- Woodland areas maintained in accordance with an approved management plan

MFGS: Amenity Greenspace

Definition

- Informal greenspaces in and around housing areas and village greens

Accessibility Standard

- Walking 5 minutes/300 m

Quantity Standard

There are no specific quantity standards for amenity

greenspace; instead, they are subsumed into general standards for multi-functional greenspace, covering amenity greenspaces, natural greenspaces and parks and gardens, of:

- Rural areas of the Borough X sq m per person
- Urban areas of the Borough Y sq m per person

Note: quantity standards still to be established

For the purposes of this standard, the Council defines the urban areas of the Borough as Stafford, Stone, Eccleshall, Gnosall, Haughton, Hixon, Great Haywood, Tittensor, Barlaston, Meir Heath and Rough Close. It will determine the most appropriate mix of amenity greenspace, natural greenspace and parks and gardens in the context of specific development proposals.

Minimum Size

- 1,000 sq m (0.1 hectare)

General Characteristics

- Part of a network of greenspaces within residential or other areas which link to major walking and cycling routes and bus stops
- Located away from sources of potential danger to unaccompanied children such as roads
- Designed to create a sense of place and provide a setting for adjoining buildings
- Clear definition between public and semi-private areas for residents and private spaces (eg domestic gardens)
- Views out of or across the space, ideally to local landmarks
- Designed and constructed in such a way as to ensure that the space does not become waterlogged after normal levels of rainfall this may require field drains or field drains plus soil amelioration

Planting and biodiversity

- Good balance of mown grassed areas, in varying widths or sizes (large enough for informal recreation such as kickabouts or mini-soccer where appropriate) and mixed indigenous and ornamental species and ages of trees or shrubs, but with a predominantly open character
- Range of habitat types (eg woodland, ponds, grasslands, hedgerows)
- Buffer or shelter planting as necessary

Facilities and Features

- Should incorporate informal provision for children and

young people (eg spaces for a “kickabout”, quiet places to meet with informal seating and natural play features such as boulders, logs and hollows)

- Adequate litter bins
- May incorporate public art or heritage features (eg statues)
- Seats, in both sunny and shaded areas
- Adequate safety measures adjacent to potentially dangerous areas of water (eg rivers, canals)
- Path lighting where appropriate

MFGS: Natural Greenspace

Definition

- Publicly accessible natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces - including woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (eg downlands, commons and meadows) wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open land and rock areas (eg cliffs, quarries and pits)

Accessibility Standard

- Walking 15 minutes/900 m

Quantity Standard

There are no specific quantity standards for natural greenspace; instead, they are subsumed into general standards for multi-functional greenspace, covering amenity greenspaces, natural greenspaces and parks and gardens, of:

- Rural areas of the Borough X sq m per person
- Urban areas of the Borough Y sq m per person

Note: quantity standards still to be established

For the purposes of this standard, the Council defines the urban areas of the Borough as Stafford, Stone, Eccleshall, Gnosall, Haughton, Hixon, Great Haywood, Tittensor, Barlaston, Meir Heath and Rough Close. It will determine the most appropriate mix of amenity greenspace, natural greenspace and parks and gardens in the context of specific development proposals.

Minimum Size

- 1,000 sq m (0.1 ha)

General Characteristics

- Naturalistic appearance which incorporates an appropriate range of wildlife habitats

Accessibility

- Entrances or access points and internal paths linked to rights of way, bridlepaths, quiet lanes and cycling routes and water courses to create wildlife corridors and a network of greenspaces

Planting and Biodiversity

- Good mix of native species and habitats, depending on site characteristics
- Wildlife protection areas
- Clearings or gaps in tree crowns to allow light penetration to woodland floor, where appropriate
- Well developed shrub, field and ground layers and wide, species rich edge, where appropriate

Facilities and Features

- Clear and coherent signage to and throughout the site as appropriate
- Built heritage structures and natural features conserved
- Interpretation of flora and fauna as appropriate
- Litter bins and seats at key points
- Signs requiring dogs to be kept under control and fouling disposed of to “pooper” bins
- Adequate safety measures adjacent to areas of water (will depend on size, depth and current, if any)
- “Way marked” routes, where appropriate

Management and Maintenance

- Managed primarily for wildlife and nature conservation

MFGS: Parks and Gardens

Definition

- Urban and country parks and formal gardens

Accessibility Standard

- Walking 15 minutes/900 m
- Cycling 15 minutes/2250 m
- Driving 15 minutes/5625 m

As parks and gardens should be within walking distance of most potential users, the primary accessibility standard relates to walking. The cycling and driving accessibility standards will apply in the rural areas of the Borough where it would not be sensible to have a park or garden within walking distance of all residents.

Quantity Standard

There are no specific quantity standards for parks and

gardens; instead, they are subsumed into general standards for multi-functional greenspace, covering amenity greenspaces, natural greenspaces and parks and gardens, of:

- Rural areas of the Borough X sq m per person
- Urban areas of the Borough Y sq m per person

For the purposes of this standard, the Council defines the urban areas of the Borough as Stafford, Stone, Eccleshall, Gnosall, Haughton, Hixon, Great Haywood, Tittensor, Barlaston, Meir Heath and Rough Close. It will determine the most appropriate mix of amenity greenspace, natural greenspace and parks and gardens in the context of specific development proposals.

Minimum Size

- 5,000 sq m (0.5 hectare)

General Characteristics

- Well defined boundaries or perimeter, preferably enclosed with railings or walls
- A welcoming entrance with well presented information on the park and clear points of interest to draw visitors in
- Range of natural and man-made structures of heritage features such as ponds, statues, buildings and ornamental railings
- Reasonable privacy for the residents of nearby dwellings

Planting and Biodiversity

- Diverse species of both flowering and non-flowering trees, of various ages, including native species; also shrubs and plants providing a range of habitats
- Hedgerows, where present, reasonably dense, thick and bushy so as to provide habitats
- Some areas of dense planting, difficult for people to penetrate and in areas where they will not provide hiding places, but providing habitats for small animals and birds

Facilities and Features

- Facilities and features such as water features, public art, bandstands, play facilities, sports facilities and cafes which will attract users
- Good views into, across and out of the park so that each visitor is providing a form of informal surveillance for other users
- Informative interpretation signs or other material

relating to natural features (eg geology, land form); heritage features (eg statues, historic/listed buildings, bandstands); wildlife (eg details of the main birds and animals to be seen in the park); landscaping (eg information on trees and other planting and especially horticulture areas)

Other Public Spaces: Green Corridors

Definition

- Pedestrian and cycling routes through urban areas, including river and canal banks and cycleways, which are separated from motor traffic and link residential areas to town or village centres and community facilities such as schools, play areas, community centres and sports facilities.

Accessibility Standard

- No standard required

Quantity Standard

- No standard; green corridors will be created on an opportunistic basis which makes as much use of other forms of greenspace as possible

Minimum Size

- There is no minimum size, but corridors should generally be not less than 500 m (0.5 km) long

General Characteristics

- Clear signposted accesses to the network
- Cycling routes to be at least 3 m wide and constructed to adoptable standard as specified by Staffordshire County Council
- Other surfaced paths to be at least 2 m wide
- Welcoming and apparently safe with no signs of possible danger such as litter, graffiti or damaged vegetation
- Adequate litter bin and “pooper” bin provision, with bins located at points where they can easily be accessed for emptying from the road system
- Freedom from flooding so that paths are not susceptible to water damage or become icy in winter

Accessibility

- All paths to be suitable for wheelchair users throughout their length with both visual and tactile clues to alert users to changes in direction
- Appropriate safety features adjacent to areas of water (eg life buoys, warning notices)
- Appropriate safety measures adjacent to or at

- crossings of rail lines or busy roads
- Good sightlines along the route so that users can see potential danger well ahead

Planting and Biodiversity

- Good balance and variety of plants and shrubs, including both flowering and non-flowering species to provide year-round colour and interest
- Range of habitat types

Facilities and Features

- Signposting to places of interest or destinations (eg shops, leisure facilities, schools)
- Adequate street lighting where appropriate

Other Public Spaces: Civic Spaces

Definition

- Town centre squares, pedestrian streets and other hard surfaced areas designed primarily for pedestrians

Accessibility Standard

- No standard required

Quantity Standard

- No standard; civic spaces will result from the design of town centre areas

Minimum Size

- No minimum size

General Characteristics

- Attractive spaces with a mix of hard and soft landscaping, in which pedestrians have priority over vehicles
- Design and detailing appropriate to the local context, with reasonable consistency in the choice of street furniture and signage, but used in such a way as to give each space a unique character with high quality materials appropriate to the local context
- Surrounding buildings front on to the space and contribute to its vitality both during the day and the evening
- Minimum of overhead wires and other intrusive elements

Accessibility

- Readily accessible by public transport from a wide area

Planting and Biodiversity

- Depends on the nature and location of the space but planting should consist primarily of ornamental species and be designed to enhance the space, provide shade and provide a setting for important buildings

Facilities and Features

- Effective street lighting (including the floodlighting of key adjoining civic and other buildings and decorative lighting)
- Informative and easily understood directional and other signs grouped where appropriate but without unnecessary visual “clutter”, especially in Conservation Areas.
- Pavement cafes and similar facilities to add vibrancy in good weather
- Good mix of retail outlets (if appropriate)
- Active frontages to buildings
- Fountains and public art desirable
- Seats and litter bins
- Attractive and consistent floorscape/paving

Activity Spaces: Allotments and Community Gardens

Definition

- Both statutory and all other allotment sites.

Accessibility Standard

- Walking 10 minutes/600 m
- Cycling 10 minutes/1500 m
- Driving 10 minutes/3,750 m

As allotments should be within walking distance of most potential users, the primary accessibility standard relates to walking. The cycling and driving accessibility standards will apply in the rural areas of the Borough where it would not be sensible to have at least one allotment site within walking distance of all residents.

Quantity Standard

- 1.6 sq m per person

Minimum Size

- 0.25 ha (2,500 sq m)

Note: the traditional size of allotment plots is 10 rods. One rod is 272.25 sq feet so a 10-rod plot has an area of just under 253 sq m. On many allotment sites, however, 10-rod plots have been subdivided to smaller plots. The minimum size of 0.2 ha equates approximately to eight 10-rod or sixteen 5-rod plots.

General Characteristics

- Screen planting to provide some privacy while also allowing views into and out of the site
- Clear separation between adjacent allotments
- Signage at or outside the main site entrance giving details of ownership and how to apply for an allotment; also emergency telephone numbers
- Securely fenced with lockable gates

Planting and Biodiversity

- Good mix of species in planting around and within the site
- Dense, bushy hedgerows (where present)

Facilities and features

- No allotment more than 50 m from a mains water point
- Standard lockable shed for each plot
- Toilet facilities on all sites with 20 or more plots (can be a composting toilet if mains drainage not readily available)
- At least one on-site or on-street parking space to every 4 plots

Management and Maintenance

- All facilities in clean, safe and usable condition

Activity Spaces: Formal Play Provision

Definition

- Soft and hard surfaced areas offering play opportunities for everyone regardless of ability.

Accessibility Standard

- Walking 8 minutes/450 m (local facilities)
15 minutes/1200 m (strategic facilities)

Quantity Standard

- 0.4 sq m per person

Minimum size

- 400 sq m (local facilities)
- 1,500 sq m (strategic facilities)

General Characteristics

- Sited minimum of 30 m away from the nearest dwelling and to include buffer planting to screen site without compromising passive surveillance
- Separated from major vehicle movement and accessible

- from pedestrian routes and cycle ways
- Surfaced path to access site
- Safety surfacing for all equipment to comply with the relevant standard to EN1177, free from surface water ponding and designed to limit the need for maintenance.
- Safety surfacing around equipment for toddlers to be wet pour or similar approved. Bark, timber chips and tiled finishes will not be acceptable.
- All equipment must comply with the relevant standard to EN1176
- Dog free area fenced minimum 1 m high with minimum of two outward opening self closing pedestrian gates and 1 maintenance gate to enclose areas of grass and surfaced areas sufficient to allow informal play and ball games
- Optimum use of changes in level, textural and colour variety in materials used to stimulate senses

Facilities and Features

- Not less than 5 types of equipment to provide a variety of challenges and experiences designed for a range of ages
- A range of equipment to be accessible to disabled users
- Seating provision close to equipment in sun and shade
- Litter bins at entrances
- More adventurous play to be sited separately
- Signage stating name and telephone number of agency responsible for maintaining site

Planting and Biodiversity

- Good mix of “child-friendly” (ie not sharp, spiky or poisonous) plant and tree species in the vicinity
- Generous use of planting to enhance amenity, stimulate the senses of sight, sound, touch and smell throughout the seasons and include autumnal colour
- Shade to some areas
- Shelter in exposed conditions

Management and Maintenance

- Safety surfacing in good condition
- Play equipment (including natural “equipment” such as fallen trees) in safe and usable condition
- Seats for children or parents/carers in safe and usable condition

Activity Spaces: Multi-sport Courts

Definition

- Hard or synthetic surfaced courts intended for football, basketball, netball and roller/in-line skating; can have

either controlled or open access, although the latter is more common

Accessibility Standard

- Walking 15 minutes/900 m
- Cycling 15 minutes/2250 m
- Driving 15 minutes/5625 m

As multi-courts should be within walking distance of most potential users, the primary accessibility standard relates to walking. The cycling and driving accessibility standards will apply in the rural areas of the Borough where it would not be sensible to have at least one multi-court within walking distance of all residents.

Quantity Standard

- 0.35 sq m per person

Note: this provision standard covers both tennis and multi-sport courts

Minimum Size

- 36.5 x 18.25 m (court only)

General Characteristics

- Reasonably sheltered from the wind
- A free-draining or impervious surface laid to appropriate falls in order to shed water to soakaways

Planting and Biodiversity

- Amenity planting composed mainly of native species to improve appearance, provide shelter and reduce light pollution (where floodlit), reduce noise transfer and promote biodiversity

Facilities and Features

- Basketball hoops, if present, securely fixed with no sharp edges
- Recessed 5-a-side goals (goals should be recessed for safety reasons)
- Surrounded by a rebound surface 1.2 m high if intended for 5-a-side soccer use (note, however, that this is not desirable if the court is close to dwellings because of the noise generated by balls hitting the rebound surface)
- Ideally enclosed by netting which will prevent balls escaping from the court(s) area
- Ideally floodlit to give at least 75 lux
- Signage indicating ownership and who to inform of any maintenance requirements

Activity Spaces: Youth Facilities

Management and Maintenance

- Court surface in good condition
- Line markings, where present, in good condition
- Floodlights, where present, fully operational

Definition

- Provision for young people and designed to allow them to “hang out” and practise various sports or movement skills such as basketball, inline skating or skateboarding. Most teenage facilities include a mix of skateboard ramps, outdoor basketball hoops, shelters and other more informal areas. Ideally, they should be located close to a multi-court (see above).

Accessibility Standard

- Walking 15 minutes/900 m
- Cycling 15 minutes/2250 m

As youth facilities should be within walking distance of most potential users, the primary accessibility standard relates to walking. The cycling accessibility standard will apply in those rural areas of the Borough where it would not be sensible to have at least one youth facility within walking distance of all residents.

Quantity Standard

- 0.15 sq m per person

Minimum Size

- 1,000 sq m (0.1 hectare) excluding buffer zone

General Characteristics

- Located close, but not immediately adjacent, to a well used pedestrian route but not less than 50 m from the nearest dwelling
- Area of at least 1,000 sq m, with facilities for teenagers (see definition above)
- Surrounded by a buffer zone, possibly with appropriate planting, between the play area and nearest dwelling boundary of at least 30 metres on all sides.
- Suitable safety surfacing beneath and around play equipment
- Accessible to children or adults with disabilities
- Effective drainage of all surfaces

Planting and Biodiversity

- Tough, but not prickly landscaping in the immediate

vicinity of the area

Facilities and Features

- Mix of facilities such as skateboard/BMX ramps, basketball goals, teenage shelters
- Casual seating
- Low level lighting with both light and dark areas as appropriate
- Adequate provision of litter bins

Management and Maintenance

- Surfaces and structures in good condition and repaired as necessary
- Free from litter and dangerous materials eg broken glass

Outdoor Sports Facilities: Artificial Turf Pitches

Definition

- Artificial turf pitches for football, hockey and rugby/rugby training

Accessibility Standard

- Driving 15 minutes/5,625 m

While it will be desirable for many users of ATPs to walk or cycle to them, they serve a wide area and therefore a driving distance threshold is appropriate.

Quantity Standard

- 0.53 sq m per person

Minimum Size

- 1 pitch with changing accommodation and parking

General Characteristics

- As for grass sports pitches (see below)

Accessibility

As for grass sports pitches (see below), plus:

- Hard surfaced path between changing pavilion and entrance(s) to artificial turf pitch(es)

Planting and Biodiversity

As for grass sports pitches (see below), plus:

- No broad leaved trees within 10 m or any pitch perimeter line marking

Facilities and Features

Changing pavilions

- As for grass sports pitches (see below)

Pitches, practice areas and other facilities

As for grass sports pitches (see below), plus:

- Artificial surfaces to comply with relevant governing body requirements and BS 7044: Artificial Sports Surfaces
- All artificial turf pitches (and any safety surround areas) to be fully enclosed within lockable chain link, weldmesh or other see-through fence capable of withstanding ball impacts at least 3.0 m high along the sides of the pitch and 5 m high at the ends of the pitch
- Third generation artificial turf pitches for football to comply with the International Artificial Turf Standard published by the Federation Internationale de Football

Management and Maintenance

As for grass sports pitches (see below)

Definition

- Crown greens meeting appropriate governing body standards

Accessibility Standard

- Walking 15 minutes/900m
- Driving 15 minutes/5625 m

As bowling greens should be within walking distance of most potential users, the primary accessibility standard relates to walking. The driving accessibility standards will apply in the rural areas of the Borough where it would not be sensible to have at least one green within walking distance of all residents.

Quantity Standard

- 0.18 sq m per person

Minimum Size

- 25 m square on constrained sites, although 37 m square is the preferred size, plus surround ditches, a pathway at least 2 m wide all round the green and a

Outdoor Sports Facilities: Bowling Greens

pavilion. However, the green does not have to be square if site dimensions make this impossible to achieve. This requires a site of not less than approximately 41 x 47 m, ie approximately 1,900 sq m (0.19 hectare).

General Characteristics

- Green, banks and ditches to meet relevant governing body standards

Accessibility

- Hard surfaced path all round the green

Planting and Biodiversity

- Shelter planting/screening to provide summer time shelter from wind, privacy for bowlers and support biodiversity
- No broad-leaved trees overhanging the green

Facilities and Features

- Greens to have at least one crown not less than 250 mm high
- Changing pavilion with at least male and female changing rooms and social area

Management and Maintenance

- Grass sward kept short and clear of weeds

Definition

- Pitches for football (all codes), cricket, hockey, rugby (all codes)

Accessibility Standard

- Walking 15 minutes/900 m
- Driving 15 minutes/5625 m

As pitches should be within walking distance of most potential casual users, the primary accessibility standard relates to walking. However, the driving standard will apply in the rural areas of the Borough where it would not be sensible to have at least one pitch within walking distance of all residents.

Quantity Standard

- 13.3 sq m per person (composite standard for cricket, football and rugby)

Outdoor Sports Facilities: Grass Sports Pitches

Minimum Size

- Three pitches with changing accommodation and parking in Stafford town, Stone, Eccleshall, Gnosall; one pitch in all other areas

General Characteristics

- External lighting in car parking areas
- External lighting on pavilions with Passive Infra-Red (PIR) detectors
- Signs indicating that dogs must be kept on a lead and any fouling picked up and disposed of responsibly
- Shade trees in car parking areas
- Adequately separated from adjoining residential properties
- Adequate measures in place to control light spill from floodlighting to adjoining properties and related land

Accessibility

- Hard surfaced paths following desire lines from parking areas to changing facilities
- Path system appropriate to the circulation needs of users of the site, with wide, hard surfaces in heavily trafficked areas (for example, at the exit from changing rooms)

Planting and Biodiversity

- Strong structure planting around the perimeter of the site using native species (designed as buffer planting to reduce wind on pitches and noise or light spill as appropriate to the site and adjoining properties or roads and also to promote biodiversity)
- Internal structure planting where appropriate
- Amenity or naturalistic landscaping in the vicinity of buildings and car parking

Facilities and Features

Changing pavilions

- Changing rooms (with the number of rooms appropriate to the number of pitches or other facilities on site) consisting of changing spaces, showers and drying area, plus separate changing for match officials where appropriate
- Capable of simultaneous male and female team and/or officials' use, where appropriate
- First aid room (essential only for pitch sports and athletics)
- Space for refreshments with kitchen
- No rooflights in flat roofs on single storey buildings
- Adequate secure maintenance equipment storage

- Lockable security shutters on all pavilion doors and windows
- Passive surveillance from nearby properties

Pitches, practice areas and other facilities

- Pitch orientation generally between 35 degrees west and 20 degrees east of N-S wherever possible
- Playing facilities meeting relevant governing body requirements in terms of length, width, even-ness of surface, boundary distances (cricket) and side clearances or safety margins
- Floodlighting to relevant governing body requirements for the standard of play
- No end to end slope on pitches greater than 1:40 (1:80 preferable); no side to side slope greater than 1:40 (1:60 preferable)
- Well drained pitch surfaces
- Winter sports grass pitches to have pipe drains plus sand slits where necessary (note: sand slits to be renewed every 10 years)

Management and Maintenance

- Grass lengths appropriate to sport with full grass cover on grass pitches
- Posts and goals safe and free from rust or sharp edges, with hooks for nets where appropriate
- Line markings straight and easily seen
- Surface repairs carried out quickly and effectively
- Surround netting and entrance gates to artificially surfaced areas in good condition
- Floodlights in full working order
- Information on site ownership and the facilities available at the site entrance
- Contact details for emergencies at any pavilion

Outdoor Sports Facilities: Tennis Courts

Definition

- Tennis courts, usually with a hard or synthetic surface, and with or without floodlighting

Accessibility Standard

- Walking 15 minutes/900m
- Driving 15 minutes/5625 m

As tennis courts should be within walking distance of most potential users, the primary accessibility standard relates to walking. The cycling and driving accessibility standards will apply in the rural areas of the Borough where it would not be sensible to have at least one court within walking distance of all residents.

Quantity Standard

- 0.35 sq m per person

Note: this provision standard covers both tennis and multi-sport courts

Minimum size

- 36.5 x 18.25 m (court and safety margins) plus surround

General Characteristics

- Reasonably sheltered from the wind
- A free-draining or impervious surface laid to appropriate falls to shed water to soakaways
- Surrounded by netting which prevents balls escaping from the court(s) area
- Oriented within 30 degrees of north-south

Planting and Biodiversity

- Amenity planting composed mainly of native species to improve appearance, provide shelter, reduce noise transfer and promote biodiversity

Facilities and Features

- Posts and tennis nets
- Clearly marked courts with adequate safety surrounds
- Floodlighting (if present) to meet governing body requirements

Management and Maintenance

- Court(s) surface, posts and nets, surround netting and floodlighting (if present) in good condition

Indoor Sports Halls and Swimming Pools

Definition

- Large scale indoor sports facilities operated by the public, commercial or voluntary sectors

Accessibility Standard

- Driving 15 minutes/5625 m

While it will be desirable for many users of indoor sports facilities to walk or cycle to them, they serve a wide area and therefore a driving distance threshold is appropriate.

Quantity Standard

- Sports halls, other indoor “dry” sports facilities and

related ancillary accommodation: 0.1 sq m of building per person

- Indoor swimming pools and related ancillary accommodation: 0.06 sq m of pool building per person

Minimum Size

- Sports halls: 4 badminton court hall plus changing
- Pools: 25 m x 4 lanes (8.5 m total width) plus changing

General Characteristics

- External lighting, with movement or passive infra-red (PIR) detectors
- Entrance clearly identifiable from the car park
- No landscaping in which potential attackers could hide

Accessibility

- Accessible by public transport: nearest bus stop within 250 m of entrance/access points
- Adequate parking for the range of facilities available, with a tarmac surface in good repair and at least two designated disabled spaces close to the main entrance
- Cycle parking

Planting and Biodiversity

- Attractive landscaping to the site and building, incorporating native species where possible

Facilities and Features

Internal Support Areas

- Reception desk immediately inside main entrance and clearly visible
- Disabled toilets
- Baby changing facility in male and female changing areas or toilets
- General accessibility for people with disabilities – see separate checklist
- Décor and finishes in good condition
- Clear route from reception to changing and activity areas

Activity Areas

- Meeting appropriate governing body or Sport England standards
- Adequate storage, accessed from activity areas
- Mat storage, where required, physically separate and vented to outside air
- Décor and finishes in good condition

Changing Areas

- Separate male and female changing (although mixed sex villages desirable for pools)
- Adequate locker provision
- Adequate shower and toilet provision
- Décor and finishes in good condition

Management and Maintenance

- Professionally managed

Useful Information

- CABE Space (undated), A Guide to Producing Park and Green Space Management Plans
- CABE Space (undated), Green Flag Award Winners (various years)
- Children's Play Council (2002), More than Swings and Roundabouts: Planning for outdoor play
- DETR/CABE (2000), By Design - Urban design in the planning system: towards better practice
- DTLR (2002), Improving Urban Parks, Play Areas and Open Spaces (report on research undertaken by the University of Sheffield for the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce)
- English Nature (1995), Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities (Research Report 153)
- English Nature (2002), Providing Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities
- Kit Campbell and Geraint John (ed, 1995), Handbook of Sports and Recreation Building Design, Volumes 1, 2 and 3
- National Playing Fields Association (2001), The Six Acre Standard
- Sport England (various dates), Lottery Guidance Notes
- Sport England (various dates), Planning Bulletins



E: The Audit Process

Introduction

This appendix summarises the audit process, how the audit forms work and how to update the audit in the future. It covers:

- The Purposes of the Audit
- Audit forms
- The scoring system
- Reference information
- Updating the audit results

Purposes of the Audit

Essentially the audit serves five main purposes:

- It identifies what provision exists where and ascribes a particular typology to each space or facility
- It identifies the quality and value of different greenspaces or forms of sport and recreation provision as an essential step in identifying the most appropriate initial policy approach to each space or facility
- It identifies the features or characteristics of spaces most in need of enhancement
- It helps to determine priorities for capital expenditure by identifying the worst and best spaces or facilities in an area
- It helps to identify the current quantity of each form of provision as an essential step in identifying quantitative provision standards

The audit provides a comprehensive “snapshot” of provision across the Borough. This means it cannot be used:

- To provide detailed information for use in planning appeals or call-in inquiries affecting greenspace provision; instead, it is necessary for witnesses giving evidence at them to make their own judgement of the quality or value of spaces or facilities close to the time of the appeal or inquiry
- To provide detailed information for future management and maintenance or enhancement, although the audit results can offer a *guide* as to the changes needed to enhance a site’s quality or value

Quality and Value

The definition of “quality” and value” is:

- **Quality** relates to the range of features or facilities on the site (eg trees, shrubs or seats) and their condition on a spectrum from “fit for purpose” to “needs major capital investment”.
- **Value** is nothing to do with monetary value but refers to the value of a site to people and bio-diversity; to its cultural and heritage value; and to its strategic value - for example, by providing a sense of open-ness in a densely developed area.

The Suite of Audit Forms

Ideally, audits should be as objective as possible and therefore the *Companion Guide to PPG17* suggests the use of standardised forms to ensure that those undertaking them review the same characteristics or factors on each site. We give the audit forms we used in a separate Appendix to this report. They cover:

- Allotments and community gardens
- Bowling greens
- Children’s equipped play areas
- Facilities for teenagers, covering basketball hoops, ball courts, skateboard areas and shelters
- Indoor sports facilities
- Multi-functional greenspaces, covering amenity greenspaces, parks and gardens, churchyards and cemeteries, natural greenspaces and some outdoor sports facilities (see below)
- Outdoor sports facilities, with separate forms for artificial turf pitches, grass cricket, football, hockey and rugby pitches and tennis and multi-sport courts (also known as multi-use games areas)

Many pitch sport sites serve an amenity purpose or are “open access” allowing them to be used informally for kickabouts, jogging, walking or simply sitting on the grass in addition to their primary use as formal sports facilities. Accordingly, we have audited these spaces as both multi-functional greenspaces and outdoor sports facilities.

During the audit process, our on-site surveyors assess anything up to about 300 features or characteristics of sites and award a score to them, grouped into a limited number of categories. Each form is a Microsoft Excel worksheet and incorporates formulae which automatically calculate summary scores for each of the groups of features as well as overall quality and value scores, all expressed as percentages.

The Scoring System

When auditing sites, we seek to audit them not against some “perfect” model, but as they are at the time of the

audit, in the context in which they are set and for the purpose for which they are intended. It would not be sensible, for example, to require every small space in a residential area to have all the characteristics of a major town centre park; equally, it would be wrong to mark down tennis courts for not having floodlights if they are located in a position where lights would result in serious loss of amenity for nearby residents. The audit forms therefore list all of the desirable attributes for different types of space or facility, but the scoring system and embedded formulae ignore any which may be irrelevant when calculating summary scores.

On-site Scores

We use a simple scoring system to record the audit results. For the quality audit, it is:

- 4 = The feature or characteristic is fit for purpose in its present form and does not require short term changes to design or maintenance
- 3 = The feature or characteristic requires improved maintenance in order to be either of high quality or fit for purpose
- 2 = The feature or characteristic requires limited capital investment in order to be either of high quality or fit for purpose, and the enhancement required is of a form that grounds maintenance contractors would not normally undertake as part of day to day maintenance
- 1 = The feature or characteristic requires significant enhancement and therefore capital investment in order to be either of high quality or fit for purpose
- 0 = The feature or characteristic should be present but is not
- x = The features or characteristic is not present but irrelevant to the nature or use of the space

The reason for not having a middle score is to avoid the temptation to mark most features as “average”. Using “x” for features not present and not required, rather than a numerical score, avoids distorting the summary scores.

In terms of value, the scoring system is:

4	High value
3	Reasonable value
2	Some value
1	Very little value
0	No value
x	Irrelevant

We use the inverse of this system for negative features which detract from spaces, such as excessive exposure to wind, high levels of noise or overhead transmission lines.

Summary Scores

There are two sets of **quality scores**:

- **Summary scores for groups of features or characteristics.** For multi-functional greenspaces, they relate directly to Green Flag Award criteria (A welcoming place, a health, safe and secure space; a well maintained, clean space; conservation and heritage; community involvement; marketing and management). The audit form worksheets calculate these from the various individual scores for the various features in each category. The summary score for “a welcoming place” for example, is derived from a range of up to 47 scores under headings such as signage, physical access, inclusiveness and design and specification.
- **An overall quality score:** this is the average of the quality scores for all of the groups of features or characteristics. There are two such overall scores: one ignores any negative features which detract from the space and the other adjusts the overall quality score to take account of them. The adjusted score therefore reflects the space as it was at the time of audit while the unadjusted score identifies what the overall score would be if the negative features were removed.

The audit forms also calculate a number of **value scores** for each site in a similar manner, under broad heads such as context value, heritage value and amenity value. They also derive an overall value score, but, unlike the overall quality score, this is not just the average of the group scores. Instead, the worksheet derives the overall value score from:

- The range of facilities on the site (the more facilities or features, the more valuable the space will be to local communities)
- Whether the site has a nature conservation or other formal heritage designation (a site with a formal designation has an inherently higher value than one without)
- The average of the value scores established through the audit
- The degree of public access (sites with free public access are assumed to be the most valuable to local communities and those with no public access the least)

For multi-functional greenspaces, the on-site scores account for just under two thirds of the overall value score and the range of facilities and formal designations for the balance. The overall value scores for outdoor sports facilities are slightly different: they take account of the “carrying capacity”, based on nature of playing surfaces,

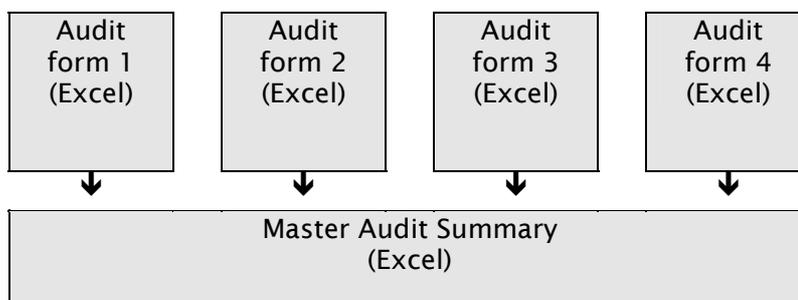
with all-weather or artificial surfaces and floodlighting having the highest scores, and whether there is floodlighting.

Reference Information

It is not possible to identify all of the relevant information relating to a site by undertaking an on-site audit. For example, it is not possible to tell whether a site is in a conservation area or has a nature conservation designation and, if so, what that designation is. Accordingly it is necessary to add this information to the audit forms as a desk exercise after entering all the other audit information.

Linking the Audit Forms Together

A pile of several hundred detailed audit forms is pretty indigestible and difficult to analyse in any sensible manner. We therefore compile the various audit forms in each typology into a Microsoft Excel workbook and link each individual form to a master summary sheet to provide both a concise listing of the summary scores and a database for mapping purposes. The diagram below summarises the relationship between individual forms and the summary worksheet:



We also use the master worksheet to calculate the average values of the various summary quality and value scores for all of the spaces or facilities. In addition, we designate each space or facility as being of high or low quality and value, initially using the average of the overall quality and value scores as the cut-off point between high and low. However, we have designed the summary worksheet in such a way that it is possible to set the cut-off points to any required values. This makes it possible, for example, to identify those spaces that are effectively of Green Flag standard. The summary worksheet also calculates the number of high quality spaces; high value spaces; and spaces which are both high quality and high value.

For obvious reasons, the Council should normally seek to protect all those spaces or facilities which are of real value; it should also seek to ensure that they meet the relevant quality standard. If they do not there is an obvious need to enhance them, although this is not always affordable. The diagram below, taken from our *Companion Guide to PPG17*, summarises the basic policy approach:

High value	These spaces should be protected, because they are of high value, and enhanced in order to improve their quality and move them into the high value/high quality category	These spaces or facilities should be protected through the planning system as they are both high value and high quality.
Low value	These spaces may be important if they are the only ones in an area, but unless it is possible to improve both their quality and value it may be better to use them for some other purpose. PPG17 requires that using the space to remove or reduce a local deficiency in some other form of greenspace should be the first policy option; but if this is not necessary, or impractical, it may be acceptable to develop the land for some other purpose.	These spaces are of high quality but not particularly valuable in terms of meeting people's needs or bio-diversity and have little cultural or heritage value. Therefore the priority is to find ways of improving their value, while retaining their high quality. If this is not possible, it may be acceptable to use them for some other purpose. Using the space to remove or reduce a local deficiency in some other form of greenspace should be the first policy option; but if this is not necessary, or impractical, it may be acceptable to develop the land for some other purpose.

Low quality

High quality

We stress that using the summary quality and value scores in this way gives only an **initial** policy conclusion because it ignores the context in which each site is set. For example, a small green space in a housing area may be little more than a patch of earth with a few tufts of grass, but if it is the only space in which young people can take part in a kickabout in their home area, it is of high value, even although it is of poor quality. Conversely, a space or facility of superb quality may be of little value if it is inaccessible or no-one knows it is there.

Updating the Audit Results

Greenspaces do not remain the same for a long period and so it is important to update the audit information from time to time. We **recommend** that the Council do this review on a more or less continuous basis with a target of repeating around 20% of the audit each year. This will give complete coverage roughly every five years. Ideally the updating of the audit should be done by individuals who are visiting the Borough's greenspaces or sport and recreation facilities in the normal course of their daily work as this will avoid the need to incur any expense.

When the Council re-audits a specific space or facility, it should enter the results onto the appropriate audit form. The scores will then link automatically into the master spreadsheets which will automatically recalculate all the average scores. Monitoring the results of these calculations will provide a simple way for the Council to identify whether the overall quality and value of greenspaces in its area is slowly improving, declining or remaining static and the number and area of spaces it can reasonably report to the Department for Communities and

Local Government as being of Green Flag standard.

It is also possible to add additional greenspaces or facilities into the appropriate workbook in a way which will build them into the various summary calculations made on the summary worksheet. The process for doing this is:

- Insert a new worksheet: Excel will automatically give this a sheet number
- Copy the audit form on any of the existing sheets and paste it into the new worksheet
- Enter the appropriate scores or other information
- Go to the Summary worksheet and scroll down to the last row containing audit results; for the purposes of illustration, suppose this is row 56
- Copy this row and paste into the worksheet immediately below the copied row; this will be in row 57
- Note the name of the copied sheet – Sheet56
- Highlight the new row (row 57)
- Click on Edit-Replace
- In the “Find what” box, enter the name of the copied sheet, eg Sheet56
- In the “Replace with” box, enter the name of the new worksheet eg Sheet 57
- Click on Replace all

This will link the new audit sheet to the summary worksheet and also result in the recalculation of all average scores.



Appendices E-K

Introduction

Appendices E-K are contained in a large Microsoft Excel workbook and so given in a separate volume. The information below briefly summarises its contents.

E: Survey of Town and Parish Councils

We circulated a questionnaire to all of the Borough's town and parish councils in order to seek their views on the adequacy of provision in their areas in terms of both quality and quantity. We also asked them to identify their priorities for any additional provision that may be required and the outcomes they would like the strategy to deliver.

The results are in the following sheets of the workbook:

- E1 Town and Parish Council Contacts
- E2 Quantity and Quality
- E3 Priorities for More Provision
- E4 Priorities for Better Provision
- E5 Outcomes Wanted from the Strategy
- E6 Other Views

F: Supply-demand Model

This appendix consists of a number of models that we used to estimate the potential need for fitness facilities, swimming pools and sports halls in each of the six planning areas.

The results are on the following sheets of the workbook:

- F1 Census Data
- F2 Indoor Facilities Listing
- F3 Fitness Facilities Supply-demand Model
- F4 Swimming Pools Supply-demand Model
- F5 Sports Halls Supply-demand Model

G: Audit results

Our audit of existing provision encompassed several hundred sites and the full audit results run to several thousand pages. This appendix contains a summary of the various audit results as follows:

- G1 Allotments
- G2 Artificial Turf Pitches
- G3 Bowling Greens
- G4 Cricket Pitches

- G5 Equipped Play Areas
- G6 Football Pitches
- G7 Golf Courses
- G8 Multi-functional Greenspace
- G9 Multi-courts
- G10 Rugby Pitches
- G11 Teenage/Youth Provision
- G12 Tennis Courts

H: Accessibility Assessment

Accessibility can be measured in two ways: the distance that people may have to travel (normally from home) in order to use a space or facility and whether it is designed and managed inclusively so that everyone is able to use it when they get there. The accessibility assessment covers the first of these forms of accessibility and gives details of the percentage of properties in the Borough that are within the appropriate walking, cycling and driving distance thresholds of different forms of provision. It does not include public transport because services are extremely limited in the rural parts of the Borough.

The results are in the following sheets of the workbook:

- H1 Walking accessibility
- H2 Cycling accessibility
- H3 Driving Accessibility

I: Playing Pitch Model

Appendix I uses the Sport England Playing Pitch Model to model the current team-based demand for and supply of cricket, football, hockey and rugby pitches and derive a provision standard.

The results are in the following sheets of the workbook:

- I1 Base data
- I2 Cricket teams
- I3 Cricket pitches
- I4 Adult Football Teams
- I5 Junior Football Teams
- I6 Mini-soccer Teams
- I7 Football Pitches
- I8 Hockey Teams
- I9 Hockey Pitches
- I10 Rugby Teams
- I11 Rugby Pitches
- I12 Planning Area Details
- I13 Team Generation Rates
- I14 Playing Pitch Model - Current
- I15 Quantity Standard

J: Quantity Assessment

Appendix J applies the various quantity standard derived in the main report to each of the planning areas of the Borough to identify quantitative surpluses and deficiencies in provision. The results are in the following sheets of the workbook:

- J1 Quantity Assessment - Allotments
- J2 Quantity Assessment - Artificial Turf Pitches
- J3 Quantity Assessment - Bowling Greens
- J4 Quantity Assessment - Play Areas
- J5 Quantity Assessment - Multi-functional Greenspaces
- J6 Quantity Assessment - Multi-courts
- J7 Quantity Assessment - Teenagers
- J8 Quantity Assessment - Tennis courts

K: Survey of Pitch Sport Clubs

The need for pitches arises primarily from the matches in which local teams play. We obtained details of teams in local leagues from various websites and other sources, and supplemented this with a telephone interviews survey of twenty clubs to establish their views on provision for their sports, the constraints facing their clubs and their sport in general.

The results are in the following sheets of the workbook:

Cricket Club

- K1 Church Eaton Cricket Club
- K2 Little Stoke Cricket Club
- K3 Moddershall Cricket Club

Hockey Clubs

- K4 Stafford Hockey club

Football Clubs

- K5 AFC Doxey
- K6 Dynamo Telegraph Football Club
- K7 Eccleshall Football Club
- K8 Highlands Social Football Club
- K9 Horns 2003 Football Club
- K1 Nags Head Football Club
- K11 Stafford Celtic Football Club
- K12 Stafford Rangers Juniors Football Club
- K13 Stafford and District Sunday Football League
- K14 Stone Dominoes Football Club
- K15 TOPPs 2000 Football Club
- K16 Riverway Football Club
- K17 Yarnfield College Football Club

Rugby Clubs

- K18 Eccleshall Rugby Union Football Club
- K19 Gnosall Rugby Union Football Club
- K20 Stafford Rugby Union Football Club