

## **BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Report of:** Cllr Gordon Bambridge - Executive Member for Growth

**To:** Local Plan Working Group 03.02.17

**Author:** James Mann, Planning Policy Officer

**Subject:** Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities study

**Purpose:** The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the content of the Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities study.

**Recommendation(s):** It is recommended that Members consider the content of this report, and agree for Part 1 of the Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities study to form part of the Councils evidence base for the Local Plan which will be published on the website.

### **Background**

- 1.1 Breckland Council commissioned Neil Allen Associates (NAA) ltd. to produce the Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities study in August 2016. The requirement to assess Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational facilities is set out in Paragraphs 73 and 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and is in line with Sport England Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance (ANOG).
- 1.2 The report was commissioned to:
  - a) Review the current supply and demand for sports and recreation facilities in the district;
  - b) model the demand to assess the current and projected over/under supply of facilities using a recognised modelling technique that satisfies the requirements of Sport England e.g. Facilities Planning Model (FPM) and to;
  - c) provide conclusions and recommendations

### **Methodology**

- 1.3 The study followed the methodology outlined in the ANOG methodology adopted by Sport England. The first stage of the study examined the supply and demand within the district. Demand was assessed through profiles of demographics, current and likely future sports participation and latent demand, mapped and informed by consultation. Supply was assessed by understanding the quantity, quality, accessibility and capacity of provision, mapped and verified through site visits and consultation. Stage 2 of the report will then seek to 'build a picture' of the provision within the district based around location, quality, quantity and management.

### **Stage 1**

- 1.4 The purpose of this section of the study is to assess the extent to which the existing supply of sports facilities meets current level so demand generated by the resident population of Breckland in 2016; and to provide an evidence base that can be considered by the Council in the development of a future assessment for the provision of indoor community sports facilities. The evidence base will be applied in the development of the Breckland Local plan and planning policies.
- 1.5 The facilities types included in Stage 1 of the report included: Swimming pools; sports halls;

indoor bowling centres; indoor tennis centres; health and fitness (gyms); squash courts; and full size artificial grass pitches (AGPs).

- 1.6 The assessment for indoor bowling centres, indoor tennis centres, health and fitness (gyms) and squash courts is complete for 2016 and 2031.
- 1.7 The evidence base for swimming pools, sports halls and full size artificial grass pitches is completed for 2016. Stage 2 of the report will carry out FPM work on both pools and halls to 2031. However, this will not consider AGPs to 2031 as, based on the recommendation of Sport England, any work on AGPs would be more beneficial as part of a wider Playing Pitch Strategy.

## **Stage 1: key findings**

### **Swimming Pools**

- 1.8 The quality of the swimming pool offer is very good. The two pool sites (Breckland Leisure Centre and Waterworld and Dereham Leisure Centre) can provide the full range of swimming activities including learn to swim, public recreational swimming, lane and fitness swimming and swimming development through clubs. Over the period to 2031 there will be the need to maintain the quality of the swimming pools and modernise the venues.
- 1.9 In 2016 some 70% of the total demand for swimming from Breckland residents is being met. All of the unmet demand is from location and demand outside the catchment area of a pool; not because of lack of swimming pool capacity. The area of highest unmet demand outside the catchment area of a pool is in and around Swaffham and Watton.
- 1.10 The scale of unmet demand in 2016 because of the lack of access to a pool is insufficient to support provision of a swimming pool at either location (Swaffham or Watton).

### **Sports Halls**

- 1.11 The total supply of sports halls is 32 badminton courts but this reduces to 27 courts in the weekly peak period because of the variable availability of sports halls across the education venues. Total demand for sports halls by Breckland residents equates to 36 courts in 2016.
- 1.12 83% of the Breckland total demand for sports halls is being met in 2016 based on the drive time and walking catchment area of the sites. 78% of this met demand is met within Breckland itself.
- 1.13 It is proposed to maintain and protect the existing supply of sports halls. The sport hall stock is quite old, with an average age of 32 years. Over the period to 2031 there will be a need to modernise the sports hall venues at both Swaffham Leisure Centre and Attleborough sports hall. In particular, replace the floor surface, upgrade the lighting systems and modernise changing rooms.
- 1.14 The second stage of this report will consider the possibility of re-providing these centres as this could be more cost effective than modernising.
- 1.15 These findings broadly support Objective 3 and Policy SLC.P1 of the Attleborough Draft Neighbourhood Plan, which seeks an indoor sports hub at or near Attleborough Academy to include community use.

### **Artificial Grass Pitches**

- 1.16 In 2016 Breckland has 5 AGPs on four sites (Dereham Hockey Club, Breckland Leisure Centre, Watton Sports Centre and Dereham Neatherd High School). The five pitches have an effective supply of 4.8 pitch equivalents in weekly peak period due to reduced hours for community access. The demand for AGPs within Breckland is between 3.6 and 4.8 pitches.
- 1.17 The report sets out that the existing supply of AGPs across the district should be maintained. There will be a need to resurface all pitches over the period to 2031. The average age for a pitch carpet is around 6-8 years, depending on the level of use.
- 1.18 There is scope to convert the pitches at both Watton Sports Centre and Breckland Leisure

Centre.

### **Indoor Bowling**

- 1.19 There are currently 12 rinks across three indoor bowling centres in Breckland (Breckland Leisure Centre, Dereham Leisure Centre and Old Hall Indoor Bowls Club). By applying the Sport England rates and frequency of participation to the Breckland population in 2016 and 2031, it is possible to identify the potential demand for indoor bowling. In 2016 this equates to 908 bowlers in 2016 and increasing to 1,081 bowlers in 2031. At a per rink capacity of 100 bowlers per rink, this equates to 9 rinks in 2016 and 11 in 2031.
- 1.20 Based on current participation rates it is proposed to maintain, but keep under review, the need for the three indoor bowling centres over the period to 2031.
- 1.21 The quality of the centres is good and the main quality requirement over the period to 2031 will be replacement of the carpet every 8-10 years, depending on the amount of play. There will also be a need to maintain and improve lighting systems.

### **Indoor Tennis**

- 1.22 There are no indoor tennis courts/centres in Breckland.
- 1.23 Based on the Sport England data of Breckland adults who do play and those who would like to play indoor tennis, the 2016 Breckland adult population would generate 246 tennis players. Based on the same participation rate applied to the Breckland adult population in 2036 would generate 274 tennis players.
- 1.24 Based on projected participation rates the Breckland population would generate demand for just over 1 indoor court in each of the two years (2016 and 2031). It is not a viable proposition to provide just one court and the usual provision is for at least two and usually three indoor courts, ideally situated alongside an established outdoor tennis court club, or, as part of a public or commercial indoor sports centre.
- 1.25 It is considered that there is no need to consider the provision of an indoor tennis centre until there is an increase in tennis participation and a viable club base that can create sufficient demand for at least 2 indoor courts. The potential provision of an indoor centre could then be subject to detailed feasibility work.

### **Squash**

- 1.26 Participation in squash at the East Region level has declined from 0.74% of adults playing at least once a week in 2006 to 0.48% of adults in 2016. Should participation not increase there may be competing demand for the space at the existing centres. Retention of courts at the Breckland Leisure Centre is very important, so that there is continued provision of (at least) one location in Breckland.
- 1.27 Maintain the existing courts and venues at Breckland Leisure Centre, Watton Sports Centre and Swaffham Sports Centre.
- 1.28 There is no identified need to provide further squash courts in Breckland up to 2031. Further development of the sport is dependent of rates of participation stabilising, then increasing and attracting a younger age group of players.

### **Health and Fitness**

- 1.29 There are 11 venues across the district, and although the average age for these venues is 18 years many venues have replaced or upgraded equipment in the past 5 years.
- 1.30 Maintain the existing provision of Health and Fitness in terms of scale, location and accessibility. Maintain a watching brief on trends in health and fitness provision and participation. It will be important to monitor how these changes reflect the current supply and demand balance- quantitatively, spatially and across all providers.
- 1.31 Projecting the potential demand for health and fitness to 2031 is very challenging, given the

dynamic nature and frequent changes in both provision and participation. Health and fitness provision, more than any other indoor facility type is very much 'market' led and changes frequently.

## **Stage 2**

- 1.32 Stage two of the report will seek to 'build a picture' of the provision within the district based around location, quality, quantity and management. This work will carry out modelling for Swimming pools and sports halls based on population projections and Local Plan preferred sites to inform conclusions, key issues and priorities in the framework of protect, enhance, provide up to 2031.
- 1.33 Swimming pools 2016-31 will examine key issues around:
- The impact the scale and location of the projected population growth 2016-31 has on the demand for swimming pools and the capacity of the existing venues to meet an increase in demand from population growth.
  - The impact of the ageing of the core resident population from 2016 to 2031.
  - The impact of the ageing of the existing swimming pools over the 2016-31 period.
- 1.34 Sports Halls 2016-31 will examine key issues around:
- The impact of the scale and location of the projected population growth 2016-2031 has on the demand for sports halls and the ability of the existing venues to meet this demand.
  - The impact of the ageing of the core resident population from 2016-to 2031.
  - The impact of the ageing of the existing sports halls over the 2016-2031 period, the stock has an average age of 32 years in 2016.
  - The impact of population growth at specific sports hall sites/catchment areas.

## **2.0 OPTIONS**

- 2.1 There are essentially two options available
- 2.2 Option 1 – For members to consider the report and endorse it as a basis for the Local Plan policy and to integrate within the wider Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)
- 2.3 Option 2 – Members do not endorse the stage 1 study as evidence for the local plan.

## **3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 It is recommended that members note the content of this report and agree for the Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities study to form part of the evidence base to inform Local Plan Policies. The recommendation has been made in order to comply with requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework and to support the Local Plan preparation.
- 3.2 Should members not support option 1 to publish Part 1 of the Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities study, this would pose a considerable risk at the examination of the Local Plan as there would be insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the plan is in conformity with the requirements set out in the NPPF.

## **4.0 EXPECTED BENEFITS**

4.1 The NPPF requires Local Authorities to prepare Local Plans. The Study forms an essential part of the evidence base for the Local Plan. The requirement to assess Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational facilities is set out in Paragraphs 73 and 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and is in line with Sport England Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance (ANOG).

## 5.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

### 5.1 **Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues**

5.1.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

### 5.2 **Constitution & Legal**

5.2.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

### 5.3 **Contracts**

5.3.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

### 5.4 **Corporate Priorities**

5.4.1 Publishing the Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities study supports the work on the Local Plan and aligns with corporate priority: Supporting Breckland to develop and thrive; providing the right services at the right time and in the right way; developing the local economy to be vibrant with continued growth and enabling stronger, more independent communities. The production also aligns with the priority of enabling effective planning and delivery of housing solutions to meet local needs.

### 5.5 **Crime and Disorder**

5.5.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

### 5.6 **Equality and Diversity / Human Rights**

5.6.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

### 5.7 **Financial**

5.7.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

### 5.8 **Health & Wellbeing**

5.8.1 Publishing the Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities study supports the important role that Indoor Sport provision plays in creating opportunities for healthy lifestyles and the definition of sustainable development within the National Planning Policy Framework.

### 5.9 **Risk Management**

5.8.2 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

### 5.10 **Safeguarding**

5.10.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

#### 5.11 **Staffing**

5.11.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

#### 5.12 **Stakeholders / Consultation / Timescales**

5.12.1 Member's discussion will help to inform the preparation of the pre-submission Local Plan.

### 6.0 **WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED**

6.1 The study has implications for all wards in Breckland.

### 7.0 **ACRONYMS**

7.1 Acronyms include

- AGP: Artificial Grass Pitch
- ANOG: Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance
- FPM: Facilities Planning Model
- NPPF: National Planning Policy Framework

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#### **Background papers:-**

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**Key Decision:** No

**Exempt Decision:** No

**This report refers to a Mandatory Service**

#### **Appendices attached to this report:**

Appendix A: Evidence Base for Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities

Appendix B: Audit, Assessment and Evidence Base for Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities