

## **Planning for Sport in Harrogate, Knaresborough and Ripon**

**Draft notes from the Working Group meeting at Council Offices, Harrogate, 5.30pm, Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2010**

Present:

Mark Taylor (Pannal Sport FC and JFC)  
John McGivern (Sports Development, HBC)  
Lynne Garne (Harrogate District Sports Council)  
Paul Ashfield (Harrogate Racquets Club)  
Alec Porter (Rugby Football Union)  
Brian Forshaw (Harrogate Rugby Union Football Club)  
Dave Sykes (Planning Policy, HBC)  
James Langler (Planning Policy, HBC)

Apologies:

Gordon Renton (Knaresborough Lions/Renaissance Knaresborough)  
Damien Smith (Harrogate Schools Sport Partnership)

Minutes of Meeting:

Dave Sykes explained that this meeting was convened in order to complete the agenda from the meeting held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February.

### **Agenda Item 5 Options for increasing capacity in sport**

#### **Option 2 – More community use of local school sports facilities (discussion continued from last meeting)**

- There are limited opportunities for using schools at the moment – other options are needed.

***Action: We need a more accurate picture of school use before we can dismiss this as an option.***

- It doesn't get us over the issue of clubs wanting their own facilities. The onus is on the local authority to provide the evidence at examination to support our preferred approach. This option alone is unlikely to be the answer.
- Floodlighting was raised as a particular concern. The Grammar School have had problems with neighbouring residential amenity. They are looking to install a MUGA pitch, but without the desired floodlighting option as this is too difficult. This will reduce the benefit of the pitch.
- There are a lot of misconceptions of floodlighting, the technology has moved on a great deal. There is an example in Scarborough where floodlighting backs onto residential development. Modern floodlighting is often no more polluting than streetlights.

#### **Option 3 – Different/more intensive use of existing public open space, and;**

#### **Option 4 – Increasing the capacity of existing playing fields and sports facilities**

- Need to strike a balance between creating new facilities and improving existing ones.
- The question was raised about how much was assessed during the preparation of the Core Strategy regarding options? It was explained by Council officers that the Inspector's Report highlights that more needed to be documented regarding the assessment of sites. Option 6 involving the development of new facilities for sport was explored but this needed to be assessed against other options as we are doing now.

**Action: It was suggested that HBC needed to provide information on the current usage of the Stray, and other Council owned /maintained facilities, and the quality of the pitches.**

- The Stray would sort out some junior use but needs parking and changing facilities. This would be a short-term strategy for junior teams.
- This issue needs to be put to the National Governing Bodies (NGBs), they are trying to get away from people changing in cars for juniors etc (possibly to the prohibition of teams without adequate changing facilities). Need a certain level of facilities. There are child protection issues involved with mixed age group facilities and getting changed at the side of the road.

**Action: Contact NGBs regarding standards for supporting facilities.**

- Should look at the possibility of linking up use of facilities at St Aidan's and the Stray.
- Junior football has grown at a massive rate that has resulted in difficulties in accommodating teams. The senior sport has seen a decline allowing some senior pitches to be converted to junior pitches.
- The downward trend at senior level is largely due to the quality of facilities available. There are more comfortable fitness options elsewhere e.g. gyms.
- As part of the bid for the 2018 football world cup the aim is to create 1 more senior team for all clubs, which will lead to increased demand for facilities.
- Existing pitches do need improvement but the main issue is paying for it. Even with the best pitches they have a maximum usage. Existing pitches can't cope with the demand.
- There is a problem with the allocation of pitches to clubs. If longer-term leases were granted to clubs it would give them the confidence and incentive to invest their own money in improving the quality of the pitches. The example of Starbeck Tennis Club was raised where it is understood that the club now control the courts leased from the Council. This option needs to be explored further.
- The RFU or Football Foundation would not provide funding to improve pitches unless clubs have a 20/21 year lease.
- Installing modern drainage costs in the order of £20,000 per pitch but is generally very effective.
- Most are public owned pitches – what is the scope for funding from the public purse? It was explained that some funding for the enhancement of existing facilities or provision of new pitches can come from commuted sums or planning obligations from development. However, contributions have to be directly related to the development taking place. The Council will know more about the opportunity to use this source of funding when preferred development sites emerge.

#### **Option 5 – Extending/enhancing existing facilities for sport**

- It was suggested that Knaresborough Celtic knew that their new site was too small when it was designed but this was the only way they could hope to get development in the Green Belt. It is a shame that it had to be so short term a development.
- Harrogate Rugby Football Club commented that there is land adjacent to the club's Claro Road site that could be used to create new pitches. It was suggested that this was the same at Ripon where the rugby club could extend onto the football ground if the football club were allowed to relocate.

#### **Option 6 – Developing new facilities for sport, and;**

#### **Option 7 – The redevelopment of existing facilities for sport and their replacement**

The following comments were made by members of the group about the use of land for new facilities:

- The land to the west of Cardale Park (site H32(1)) was seen as the best option for future sport provision relating to potential future development. The option of moving a school to the edge of town was discussed (e.g. Rossett or the Grammar School) freeing up a more central site for sport.
- It was suggested that the owners of the Bilton triangle would release land for a mixture of housing and sport.
- The Harrogate Rugby Club are exploring the possibility of moving to land at the Harrogate High School.

***Action: The Council are to present maps to the next working group showing sites that have previously been considered for sports use in and around Harrogate/Knaresborough.***

The following comments about 3G (Third Generation) floodlit pitches were made by members of the group:

- Should explore the possibility of providing a new floodlight pitch alongside the existing pitch at the hockey club.
- A 3G pitch can be put almost anywhere provided that it is flat but the issue is paying for it. There is possibly only funding for one pitch in the District and the Council are currently exploring Rossett.
- It was argued that it would be better to provide a 3G pitch associated with a club rather than a school because of the commercial benefits and restrictions on use associated with a school.
- It was argued that we really need more than one 3G pitch. Grass pitches will only withstand so much usage each day/week whereas an artificial pitch has a much higher capacity. However, artificial pitches are becoming more sport specific (e.g. hockey and football pitches are no longer compatible at the top level).
- The cost per club is probably better even with the initial cost.
- The Council have been proposing this for some time but this needs to be fully justified.

Other matters discussed:

- There needs to be a long term plan with regards to new greenfield sites e.g. large scale provision outside Manchester off the M6.
- Greenbelt policy is restrictive around Harrogate and Pannal but we may need to think inventively. If there are no other options than green belt land may need to be carefully considered.

***Action: May need to consider option of less restrictive policy for sport in the Greenbelt around Harrogate and Knaresborough.***

- The question was raised about the use of agricultural land. Is there a strategy/possibility of looking at agricultural land beyond the settlement boundary?
- The question was raised as to whether there are any proposals to improve access to the Claro Road area? Any scheme in this area needs to be supported by improved access infrastructure.
- It was argued that the Council need to look at the need for all sports in order to quantify the amount of land needed over the long term. However, there is a need to balance the theoretical need for new sports facilities and what it is practical to provide on the ground, considering the constraints on land/funding. With the level of need so high we must therefore prioritise provision carefully to maximise community benefits.
- If larger clubs were moved to new sites this would free up sites for smaller clubs/sports.
- Plans are being drawn up for a tennis centre at Harrogate High School. We need to future proof plans for the location of the site is this area is to be part of a 10-15 year strategy. Don't want to spend money on facilities only to miss out on shared facility/funding opportunities.

- General support of the group given to a multi-sport complex with the Harrogate High School/Claro Road /Kingsley Drive area identified as having potential for such a complex.
- Need for North Yorkshire Sport representation on the group.

### **Agenda Item 6 Funding Opportunities**

John McGivern provided the following summary of funding issues:

- No funder will give a club money if it is purely about providing a better quality of offer to existing members. Bids need to be more far reaching. It is now a lot harder to get funding but that is not to say that it is not possible and the Council have a good track record.
- Bids for 100% funding are things of the past.
- Bids need to identify the benefits to the wider community. They need to be very realistic, focused on what is needed to continue as a sports club, with no luxury extras. You need a lease of 21 years as a minimum. Funding will come with lots of targets to be monitored by the club (e.g. the Football Foundation have a 25 year monitoring period).
- The comment was made that nobody provides funding for purchasing land and the Council were asked for their position on purchasing land and then leasing it to a club? Council officers explained that a clear route to planning permission and development would be necessary (including the necessary funding) before talking to the Councils Estates. However, funding will generally not be available before land is secured.

### **Agenda Item 7 Future Meetings**

Next meeting - Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2010.