

Planning for Sport in Harrogate, Knaresborough and Ripon

Draft notes from the Working Group meeting at Council Offices, Harrogate, 5.30pm, 27th October 2011

Present:

Cllr Greta Knight (HBC - sub for Cllr Pat Marsh)
Irving Weaver (Harrogate Town AFC)
John McGivern (Sports Development, HBC)
Patrick Kilburn (Parks, HBC)
Cllr Caroline Bayliss (HBC)
Alec Porter (Rugby Football Union)
Brian Forshaw (Harrogate Rugby Union Football Club)
Oliver Scaife (Harrogate Racquets Club)
Andrew Gair (Harrogate RUFC)
Mark Taylor (Pannal Sport FC and JFC)
Dave Sykes (Planning Policy, HBC)
James Langler (Planning Policy, HBC)

Apologies:

Damien Smith (Harrogate Schools Sport Partnership)
Richard Irving (on behalf of Ripon City Football Club)
Paul Ashfield (Harrogate Racquets Club – substituted by Oliver Scaife)
Cllr Pat Marsh (HBC - substituted by Cllr Greta Knight)
Terry Wilkinson (new chair of Harrogate & District Sports Council)
Andrew Wadsworth (West Riding Football Association)

Minutes of Meeting:

Agenda Item 3 – Notes of previous meeting

These were agreed as a fair representation of the meeting.

Agenda Item 4 and 5 – HBC's Sport, Recreation, Open Space and Village Hall Study: Parts 1 & 2

A summary of the currently on-going Urban Areas Consultation was provided to the group along with a brief introduction to the first two parts of the Council's study on the needs and opportunities to deliver new sport, recreation, open space and village hall facilities as part of the emerging Sites & Policies Development Plan Document (DPD).

It was highlighted that the Part 1 report provides a summary of responses received from schools in the District on their current and potential level of community use of their sports facilities. It was suggested by the group that we are unlikely to be able to increase the use of facilities in all schools and that the Council should concentrate on a handful of schools with the greatest opportunities.

Action: Set up a meeting with the Schools Sports Partnership to discuss the response from schools in more detail and discuss how it can be taken forward.

It was mentioned that the Council would be fast tracking our review of the comments submitted on sports and open space in order to reconvene a meeting of the sports working group in December.

Action: Aim to report comments received relating to sports provision at a meeting of the Sports Working Group in December.

The question was raised about what other criteria (e.g. viability, topography etc.) would be considered in order to determine the overall deliverability of sites. In response it was stated that the current study looks at sites from a landscape impact point of view but that the Council would look at other factors that will determine the deliverability of sites as part of the next stage in the process. It was also stated that all of the landowners of those site options assessed so far in Part 2 of the study have been written to and we are awaiting their response.

Oliver Scaife provided an update on the position of the Racquets Club with regards to their potential relocation. A vote of club members has resulted in a decision to stay at the current facility, with the proviso that they will continue to look at opportunities. The club is undergoing change and there is a need for members to look at the overall plan. The club will respond in writing to the consultation to make its position clear.

The question was asked about how this would look when finally approved. Would the DPD include some or all sites identified in the study. It was explained that the DPD would certainly not include all of the sites as there will inevitably be certain issues that are likely to prevent the Council from allocating some of the sites for sport. There is a strong case for the allocation of land for sport in the town of Harrogate. It is hoped that some suitable sites will be identified through this process. Landowners are less likely to come forward with sites for sports over higher value uses such as housing but experience through the Local Plan has demonstrated that land for sports and open space can be delivered through the plan led process. The Council have therefore suggested site options that will be assessed on a similar basis. The Council is also likely to have some additional sites suggested through the consultation.

It was asked whether, if a housing site drops out of contention, it could subsequently be considered for sport. The answer was yes, but that the landowner/agent would probably argue their case for housing through the examination and are unlikely to be supportive of the alternative use of the site for sport.

It was raised that there needs to be more clarity about the mix of land uses proposed for each potential allocation site. It was questioned whether each site will specify the area of land required to be set aside for sports use. Without this the Council will be raising landowner's expectations of obtaining higher value land uses on the site. In response it was highlighted that all housing sites would be required to provide for sports and open space in line with the Council's current quantity standards. On larger sites this will involve the provision of new sports facilities. However, this provision is in response to the increase in households in the area and will not address current deficiencies. The only way of doing this is by way of allocating land specifically for sport in the DPD. The Council cannot allocate land for a specific end user (e.g. one specific sports club), and ultimately may not find enough land to satisfy the needs of all clubs.

Andrew Gair reported that the rugby club would consider their response to the consultation at a meeting to take place the following Monday. He also requested that when considering facilities at schools the Council should look at facilities in terms of outside grass, outside other and indoor facilities. Each will have their own capacity.

It was asked what timetable the Council are working towards. It was reported that due to the level of responses we have been receiving and due to the need to ensure that the DPD reflects the policy implications of the emerging National Planning Policy Framework there is likely to be some slippage in the current timetable with a report going to Council during the

summer of 2012. The Council are working towards the adoption of the DPD towards the end of 2013.

There were concerns expressed that the Council were still looking at the issue from a quantitative point of view and that we need to also address the qualitative element and address problems with the quality of existing sports facilities that can limit use and dissuade people from taking up sport.

A question was raised about the impact on sport of the identification of the Cathedral Choir School in Ripon as a preferred site option for housing. It was stated that the school is searching for a relocation site. Therefore, provided the school can be relocated, there should be no net loss of sports facilities and the school would benefit from new modern facilities.

It was also noted that with the move to academy status for schools should give more flexibility as to what can be achieved at schools, with more emphasis on longer term development strategies.

Agenda Item 6 – Next Steps

Members of the group were urged to get their responses in on Parts 1 & 2 of the Sport, Recreation, Open Space and Village Hall Study by 4 November 2011. ***Post meeting note – the deadline for comments on Parts 1 & 2 of the study is actually 25 November 2011 as stated in the letters sent to sports clubs and not 4 November as stated in the study documents. However, the deadline for responses to all other consultation material relating to housing/employment site allocations and draft planning policies is the 4 November.***

Future Meetings

Aim to reconvene the working group in December to consider the response to the public consultation. No date was set but Wednesdays or Thursdays are generally the best for most attendees.