

# SPORTS AND RECREATION

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# SPORTS AND RECREATION

## Introduction

10.01 Hastings Borough Council recognises the role and importance of recreation and sport within the local community. In 1998 the Council published 'Time For Action – Hastings Sport and Recreation Strategy'. This sets out ways in which the Borough Council will develop and improve the opportunities for foundation, participation, performance and excellence in a wide variety of sport and leisure pursuits. The Local Plan land use policies on sport and recreation seek to underpin this strategy. The Council also recognises the importance of the East Sussex County Council strategy for sport and recreation in determining the future distribution of sports resources in the county.

## Playing Fields and Sports Pitches

10.02 Playing fields and sports pitches are an increasingly valuable aspect of the total open space within the built-up area of the Borough – not only do they provide recreational facilities, they contribute also to the environmental amenity of the urban area.

10.03 There are few 'greenfield' development sites left in Hastings and St Leonards. It is likely that there will be increasing pressure for development in the urban area. The Local Plan encourages redevelopment, refurbishment of existing premises and reclamation of derelict land; however, there will also be demand for infill backland development and development of open space in the urban area.

10.04 All playing fields, whether school playing fields or those owned by other public, private or voluntary organisations, are of special

significance both for their recreational and amenity value and for their contribution to the green space of the urban environment.

10.05 In some cases, school playing fields are used by the local community in the evenings and at weekends – this ‘dual use’ ensures efficient use of valuable green spaces.

## The Existing Stock

10.06 The figures below give the total number of playing fields and sports pitches, but not all these are dual use. The extent to which agreement can be reached on dual use provision for both new buildings and playing fields/recreation grounds is subject to negotiation between the Borough Council, the County Council and the governors of individual schools.

Hastings Borough Council Ownership	Area	
	Acres	Hectares
Tilekiln	12.1	4.9
The Harrow	9.9	4.0
Sandhurst	9.1	3.7
Wishing Tree Road	2.5	1.0
Pilot Field	11.5	4.6
Elphinstone Road	4.1	1.6
Pebsham (14.5 acres in Borough / 23 outside – total 37.5)	14.5	5.4
East Hill – Pitch & Putt 10.5 – Cricket 2.5	13.0	5.2
Amherst Gardens	2.5	1.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>79.2</b>	<b>31.4</b>

School Playing Fields	Area	
	Acres	Hectares
The Grove School	10.5	4.2
Harley Shute Road	9.8	4.0
Hillcrest School	3.8	1.5
Sandown School	12.6	5.1
Filsham Valley School	24.0	9.7
William Parker School	35.4	14.3
Red Lake School	3.0	1.2
Helenswood School	5.2	2.1
Elphinstone School	1.7	0.7
Blacklands School	3.0	1.2
Silverdale School	6.2	2.5
Hollington School	1.9	0.8
Church-in-the-Wood School	2.1	0.8
St Leonards School	2.1	0.8
St Pauls School	3.2	1.3
Robsack School	3.5	1.4
Little Ridge School	2.9	1.2

Westerleigh School	3.1	1.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>134.0</b>	<b>54.0</b>

Private Ownership	Area	
	Acres	Hectares
Sandhurst	4.3	1.7
The Green	2.0	0.8
Maplehurst / Beaulieu Farm	1.7	0.7
Barley Lane	6.0	2.5
Convent, Magdalen Road	3.8	1.5
Hornbye Cricket Ground	8.1	3.3
Wishing Tree Road	3.7	1.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>12.0</b>

## Recreational Uses

10.07 The area at Pebsham which is within the Borough is currently used as playing fields, and the Council will continue to improve the playing fields and sports pitches in this area.

10.08 A civic amenity and landfill site is located at Pebsham, just outside the Borough. When the operational life has ended, the operators will undertake substantial landscaping of the area so that it can be returned to community use.

10.09 A new landscape is being created which represents an opportunity to plan for the needs of the community and nature conservation over a substantial area. This can include the provision of additional playing fields.

## Standards of Provision

10.10 There are no nationally adopted standards for the provision of public open space or outdoor playing space, but the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) and some local authorities have developed their own.

10.11 The NPFA recommends 6 acres (2.43 hectares) per 1,000 population for outdoor recreational space. This includes about 4

acres for sports pitches for adults and young people. The standard does not include public open space for informal recreation for the general population.

10.12 The standard does not take into account the quality of design of the open space, the character of the surrounding built-up area, or the social structure of the population.

10.13 Hastings Borough has a little over half the required amount of open space as set out by these standards. Even taking into account the local variations in the age structure of the population and the landscape nature of the Borough, there is a clear need to safeguard the existing playing fields and sports pitches.

10.14 Sport England have produced a planning policy statement on playing fields and, as a statutory consultee, will be consulted on all development proposals relating to playing fields and sports pitches of 0.2 hectares or more. The policy below is phrased in negative terms because the Council considers that there will be few, if any, instances where development will be permitted on playing fields and sports pitches..

## **POLICY SP1**

### **Playing Fields and Sports Pitches**

**Planning permission for the reduction in size or number of playing fields or sports pitches will not be granted unless:-**

- (a) Existing facilities are surplus to requirements; or**
- (b) The proposal would serve to upgrade the sports facilities on the site; or**
- (c) The proposed development is necessary to meet an important national, regional or local need and alternative provision is made that enhances, or is equivalent to, existing recreational facilities; or**
- (d) In the case of a school site, the proposal is for educational purposes that are essential and cannot be satisfactorily accommodated elsewhere.**

## **New and Improved Sports and Recreational Facilities**

10.15 The Borough Council supports the development of improved sports and recreational facilities, ranging from major proposals such as multi-screen cinemas or bowling alleys to small extensions to existing sports centres or club houses. A detailed needs assessment of indoor sports facilities commissioned by the Borough Council in 2003 identified a general requirement for improving existing facilities, and a specific requirement for expanding the availability of fitness equipment by 25% by 2006. Any such proposals must have regard to protection of the environment and the amenity of nearby residents.

## **POLICY SP2**

### **Sports and Recreational Facilities**

**The Council will permit development for formal sports or recreational use where:-**

- (a) The nature and built form of the proposal will be in keeping with the character of the surrounding area;
- (b) Disturbance to the surrounding area in terms of noise, lighting and other forms of pollution will be minimised;
- (c) Appropriate facilities for people with disabilities are provided;
- (d) The proposed development has no significant effect on the residential amenity of nearby dwellings; and
- (e) The proposed development is readily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.

Where floodlighting is permitted, conditions will be imposed to regulate operation, including hours of use.

## **Location of Major New Sports and Recreational Facilities**

10.16 The relationship between where people live and work, and the location of sports and recreational facilities will strongly affect the amount of travelling that people will need to undertake as well as the mode of transport used. To achieve a more sustainable pattern of development, it is considered that major new facilities should be located in Hastings and St Leonards town centres and close to public transport routes. This is in line with the 'sequential test' set out in PPG6 which applies to leisure as well as retail uses.

### **POLICY SP3**

#### **Location of Major New Sports and Recreational Facilities**

**Planning permission for major sports and recreational facilities will be granted provided any new facility:–**

- (a) Is located within Hastings or St Leonards town centres; or
- (b) If no suitable site exists, is located on the edge-of-centre with good pedestrian and cycle links to the centre; or
- (c) If no such site exists, is located elsewhere in the urban area on a site which is, or can be made accessible by a range of

transport modes, including public transport, walking and cycling.

## **White Rock Gardens**

10.17 White Rock Gardens were subject to pressures for development in the mid 1990s. The Gardens are owned by the Borough Council, and its policy is that the area should be retained for outdoor, low intensity sports and recreational uses. The Council is keen to encourage the enhancement of the range and quality of the sports, play and similar leisure provision in the White Rock area. The existing tennis courts will be consolidated and then upgraded. The Council also plans to create a managed recreation area for young people. A replacement bowls facility will be provided on the site of the existing indoor bowls centre.

### **POLICY SP4**

#### **White Rock Area**

Planning permission will be granted for proposals which enhance the range and quality of the sports, play and similar leisure provision within the White Rock area west of Falaise Road provided that:-

- (a) It would not detract from the character of the White Rock Gardens; and
- (b) Suitable provision is made to ensure convenient access by public transport, walking and cycling, including the storage of bicycles.

## **Football – Pilot Field**

10.18 The two main football teams in the Borough currently play on the two pitches at the Pilot Field. The Borough Council will continue to support the retention of the football pitches. Proposals for the enhancement of facilities on the existing site for football or

community use will be supported, provided that these do not affect the amenities of neighbouring residential properties.

## **POLICY SP5**

### **Football – Pilot Field**

**Any development of the Pilot Field for the purpose of enhancing football or community use must not unreasonably affect the amenities of neighbouring residential properties.**

**Extension of football-related development into the Archery Field and Ochiltree Woods will be resisted. (Policy OS1 refers.)**

## **Community Use**

10.19 The provision of community use helps to promote the efficient use of education facilities out-of-hours e.g. at weekends and in the evenings. The Borough Council recognises the community value of this type of arrangement, and will seek to secure a formal arrangement for access by the community when school developments are being considered. (See also Policy CN8).

## **Indoor Recreation**

10.20 The provision of facilities for indoor recreation is partly met by the extensive number of churches and church halls in the Borough. There is a need to improve the supply of small halls or rooms for hire by community and recreation groups who do not require specialised accommodation. However, more specialised accommodation is needed for many sports in the town, and the Council will support such provision in appropriate locations.

10.21 The Borough Council will support the conversion, erection, or use of buildings suitable for community, recreational and cultural purposes in those areas where there is a shortage or lack of these facilities, or where these activities would not be detrimental to the

amenities of the surrounding area. Policy CN8 in Chapter 7b 'Community Needs' will be applied in assessing such proposals.

## Outdoor Basketball

10.22 Provision of additional informal sporting facilities for young people throughout Hastings and St Leonards is a priority identified in the Borough Council's 1998 Sports and Recreation Strategy 'Time For Action'.

10.23 Within the timescale of this Plan, the Council, in consultation with the local community, will seek to identify 20–30 sites in the Borough where outdoor basketball facilities can be provided. The most important criteria in site selection will be the need to cause minimum disturbance to local residents, and the accessibility of the sites to young people who live in the area. This scheme is supported nationally by the English Basketball Association (Outdoor Basketball Initiative) and is part-funded by the National Lottery Sports Fund.

## Children's Play Areas

10.24 Play opportunities are of vital importance to the physical, creative and social development of children. Providing for play helps to support families, strengthen communities and enhance the environment.

10.25 21% of the population of the Borough is under the age of 15 – a large proportion of the resident population whose land use needs are frequently overlooked.

10.26 In 1998, the Play Strategy was adopted and through its implementation over the past few years, the provision of play facilities and quality play opportunities for all children in the Borough have increased and improved. Some areas of the Borough are well served by play areas, but have outdated or vandalised equipment and surfacing. The Council has worked

with Hastings and Rother Play Council, the community, play providers, local residents and statutory bodies to develop the Borough-wide Play Strategy. This is seeking to improve provision of play facilities and provide quality play opportunities for all children in the Borough. A refurbishment and maintenance programme is underway, including consultation with local groups and residents as part of the process.

10.27 This subject is covered in Policy DG13 in Chapter 9a 'Development Guidelines'.

