



# Land to North of Little Green Lane, Croxley Green

## Sport and Leisure Strategy

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## Final Report

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**SPORTS MASTER  
PLANNING**



**PLAYING PITCH AND  
OUTDOOR SPORT  
STRATEGIES**



**SPORTS  
NEEDS  
ASSESSMENTS**



**FEASIBILITY  
STUDIES**



**SPORTS  
MITIGATION  
STRATEGIES**



**SPORTS FACILITY  
DEVELOPMENT**

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Richborough are currently preparing a planning application for residential development at Land to North of Little Green Lane, Croxley Green. Croxley Green falls within the Three Rivers District Council area and lies to the west of Watford.
- 1.1 A comprehensive masterplan is now being developed for the site and it is anticipated that this will include: *Construction of up to 600 residential dwellings (Use Class C3(a)), a 5-bedroom property for children's social care and supported living (Use Class C3(b)). Two vehicular access points from Little Green Lane and further pedestrian / cycleway accesses. A one form entry primary school (Use Class F1(a)) (plus expansion land for a two form entry primary school). A mixed use local centre including provision for NHS health and social care services (Use Class E(e)), community building (Use Class F2), retail and café provision (Use Class E(a-c)), car parking and associated infrastructure. A country park, areas for play and recreation, allotments, community orchard and landscaping with associated infrastructure including sustainable urban drainage systems. (All matters are reserved except for vehicular access).*
- 1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework notes that sport and recreation play a fundamental part in peoples' lives and the provision of the right facilities in the right place is in turn central to this. Directly referencing open space and sport, paragraph 103 of the NPPF states:
- 'Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.'*
- 1.3 Recognising the above, and in order to contribute positively to the masterplan and inform decision making in relation to the site, Richborough have commissioned Sports Planning Consultants (SPC) to prepare an assessment of local need for sports facilities. This assessment will evaluate the current sporting landscape alongside the impact of the new development and propose a package of benefits that responds directly to local need.
- 1.4 This paper sets out the assessment that has been undertaken. It seeks to understand the evidence available in relation to supply and demand for indoor and outdoor sports facilities and evaluates how effectively the existing provision meets current and projected future demand. Specifically, it considers the impact that the proposed development will have and sets out options to create a sport and leisure strategy to address this.
- 1.5 The report does not deal with wider open space issues, which are subject to other studies. A significant amount informal open space, including a new country park, will be delivered within the proposed masterplan. This will add to the recreational and health benefits that will be delivered as part of the scheme.
- 1.6 Figure 1.1 provides an aerial view of the site.

*Figure 1.1 –Aerial view of Land to North of Little Green Lane, Croxley Green*



## 2.0 Policy Context

- 2.1 This section considers the policy context for the proposed new development in relation to the provision of sport and leisure facilities.
- 2.2 The context is set by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 103 (in Section 1) notes the importance of understanding the evidence base to determine what is required and then positively and proactively planning to ensure that the required infrastructure is provided.
- 2.3 This paper seeks to respond to this and to ensure that a strategy is in place to meet the sporting needs of the residents of the new development.

### **Government Sport Strategy 2023- Get Active – A Strategy for the Future of Sport and Physical Activity,**

- 2.4 The Government's Sport Strategy was produced under the previous Government. It seeks to build a healthier nation by tackling high levels of inactivity. It sets out three core priorities specifically:
- Making the nation more active
  - Making sport and physical activity more inclusive
  - Moving towards a sustainable sector that is financially resilient and robust.

- 2.5 The provision of an effective network of facilities will be critical to achieving these objectives.

### **Towards an Active Nation – Sport England**

- 2.6 At a national level, Sport England's strategy 'Uniting the Movement' was published in January 2021. The strategy sets a vision of 'a nation of equal, inclusive and connected communities and a country where people live happier, healthier and more fulfilled lives' and highlights that being active is one of the most effective and sustainable ways of achieving this.
- 2.7 The strategy seeks to ensure that sport and physical activity is to be recognised as essential to help overcome national challenges. It highlights that before the Covid 19 pandemic, record levels of activity were being achieved in England it is important to both get that momentum back, but also to reach people who have traditionally been excluded.
- 2.8 The strategy sets three objectives:
- Advocating for movement, sport and physical activity
  - Joining forces on five big issues
  - Creating the catalysts for change.
- 2.9 Within the Strategy, Sport England highlight five big issues that need to be addressed. These include:

Recover and reinvent – responding to the short, medium and long term challenges of Covid 19 and supporting organisations and people to return to activity that's stronger, more relevant and more inclusive than before

Connecting communities – working in collaboration with communities - local people and organisations. This will include investing in clubs and charities and collaborating on local solutions, helping to deliver the outcomes that are needed through sport

Positive experiences for children and young people – working to ensure that every child / young person experiences the enjoyment and benefits that being active can bring.

Connecting with health and wellbeing – ensuring that sport and physical activity is at the heart of health and well-being both in terms of stopping health problems arising in the first place, but also supporting people to manage problems when they do arise.

Active Environments – the strategy recognises a range of environments, from dedicated leisure facilities and playing fields, other community spaces (parks / open spaces / community centres and schools) through to the built environment (streets / housing estates etc). The strategy focuses upon making activity easier for everyone and focuses upon the protection and improvement of sport and leisure facilities (as well as the innovation of new designs and operational models), the creation of opportunities around community spaces and the creation of better places to live through an influence on design.

- 2.10 It is clear that traditional facilities, whilst still an important part of the provision jigsaw, are no longer the panacea. Over several years, there has been a trend of individual based activities that require little organisation or the development of skills. So, less team based indoor sports or individual sports and much more individual health and fitness activities, plus exercise and dance classes. This means that there is a need to think differently and look at more flexible forms of local provision to meet new participation needs.
- 2.11 To reflect these aims and objectives to promote the role of sport and physical activity in creating healthy and sustainable communities in 2015 Sport England published guidance on Active Design (updated in 2023). Active Design is a key guidance document intended to unify health, design and planning agendas by providing guidance on how to create the right conditions and environments for individuals and communities to lead active and healthy lifestyles. It looks at opportunities to encourage and promote sport and physical activity through design and layout of the built environment. It now also embraces the requirements of Active Travel England.
- 2.12 The creation of healthy places, which embrace the principles of Active Design, is a key driver of Sport England and a concept that they strive to see in all residential developments.
- 2.13 Sport England is a statutory consultee for any planning application that affects playing pitches. Planning guidance also advises that Sport England are consulted on developments of 300 houses or more. Consequently, Sport England will be an important consultee on this planning application.
- 2.14 Sport England will wish to ensure that residents of the new development have access to 'traditional' sports facilities, but also that the development is designed in a way that promotes and facilitates physical activity.

#### **Active Travel England**

- 2.15 Active Travel England are also consulted on any development of over 150 dwellings and it is understood that they have been consulted as part of pre-application work for this development. They help to deliver walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure on new development. In a similar vein to Sport England above, they seek to enable more people to make healthier, greener and cheaper travel choices.



## Three Rivers District Council

### Emerging Local Plan

- 2.16 Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) are currently preparing a new Local Plan. Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation was completed in December 2023 and Regulation 19 consultation is anticipated in February 2026. Despite recent consultation on proposed changes to methods calculating housing need, TRDC have confirmed that the intention is to continue the progression of this low-growth option to the Local Plan.
- 2.17 Regulation 18 consultation included draft policy on Open Space, Play Space, Sport and Recreation (preferred policy option 22). This focuses in the first instance on the protection of existing open space, play space and sport and recreation facilities.
- 2.18 Points 3 to 8 relate to the provision of new and existing sports facilities. Those points within the policy that relate specifically to the provision of sport and recreation facilities are:
- Dual and multiple use of sports facilities will be encouraged, particularly involving public use. In appropriate circumstances the Council may grant planning permission subject to conditions or seek to enter into a planning obligation with the developer to ensure dual or multiple use of facilities.
- Proposals for new open space, sport and recreation facilities and Children's Play Space will be encouraged where they will meet an identified need subject to the protection of the character of the area and amenity.
- The Council will seek to ensure that all new or improved sports and recreation facilities on school sites will be subject to community use agreements
- In order to ensure that any additional demand generated for indoor and outdoor sports facilities arising from new residential developments is met, major development proposals will be expected to contribute to the following:
- o a) The enhancement of existing pitches to increase their capacity or
  - o b) Securing greater community access to currently restricted provision or
  - o c) The provision of new playing pitches on existing sites.
- 2.19 The above therefore suggests that contributions towards facilities will be required, but that new provision will not necessarily be required on site, although proposals will be encouraged where need is identified.
- 2.20 This is set to be consulted upon in the Regulation 19 version of the Plan in 2026 (policy numbers may change).
- 2.21 It is also important to note in the context of the primary school that is proposed on the masterplan, that community / dual use of sports facilities is promoted and encouraged by this Local Plan Policy.
- 2.22 Until the new Local Plan is adopted, planning applications will be assessed against the adopted Local Plan. This comprises a series of policy and strategy documents.

### Adopted Local Plan

#### Three Rivers Core Strategy (adopted 2011)

- 2.23 The Core Strategy forms part of the Development Plan, and details the approach to the promotion of more sustainable development.
- 2.24 Strategic Objective 11 of the Three Rivers Core Strategy is:

*'To provide accessible and varied opportunities for leisure, arts, sport and recreational activities in order to promote healthy lifestyles.'*

- 2.25 This emphasises the important contribution that the effective provision of sports facilities can make. There are no specific policies relating to sports facilities, but the following policies broadly relate to the delivery of this objective:

CP1 – creating sustainable development – this includes the protection and enhancement of existing community, leisure and cultural facilities and the provision of new

CP9 - The Council will seek a net gain in the quality and quantity of Green Infrastructure, through.

**Three Rivers Development Management Policies Local Development Document (adopted 2013)**

- 2.26 The Development Management Policies LDD is also part of the Development Plan. This sets out the criteria against which all planning applications within the District will be considered.
- 2.27 This document notes that the Council recognise the importance of open space, recreation and sports facilities, children's play space and their wider benefits.

*'Policy DM11 firstly focuses on the protection of open space, sport and recreation facilities unless a series of exception criteria are met. It then goes on to provide guidance on the provision of new open space, sport and recreation facilities and children's play space. Specifically it notes that;*

*Proposals for new open space, sport and recreation facilities and Children's Play Space will be encouraged if located in the main urban areas subject to the protection of the character of the area and amenity.*

*When granting planning permission for new residential development of 25 or more dwellings, the Council will expect developer contributions to the provision or enhancement of local sports facilities where a need is demonstrated to have arisen from the development concerned and there are inadequate local facilities.'*

- 2.28 A series of criteria are set for the provision of new open space, amenity and children's play space within new development. There is no clear guidance relating to the provision of any indoor or outdoor sports facilities within Policy DM11.
- 2.29 Policy DM12 sets out the requirement for community, leisure and cultural facilities. The definition suggests that this includes indoor sports facilities. It provides guidance on the provision of new facilities, stating that:

*'Where development proposals are submitted for new or improved community, leisure or cultural facilities, they should be accessible by sustainable modes of transport.'*

**Draft Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan (2022)**

- 2.30 The draft Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan ('dSNP') prepared by Sarratt Parish Council is relevant to the Site.
- 2.31 Following consultation in Summer 2023, the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan was submitted for Independent Examination in August 2023.
- 2.32 The draft Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan summarises the policies and aims that will deliver the overall vision for the area. Whilst there are no specific policies or objectives in relation to sports or sporting provision, pages 16 and 17 of the dSNP set out a list of identified community activities, clubs, events and societies, all contributing to a strong sense of community spirit.



**Croxley Green Neighbourhood Plan 2017 – 2032 (made 2018)**

2.33 Whilst the Site does not fall within the Croxley Green Neighbourhood Plan area, the aspirations of the Parish and indeed existing residents of the area directly to the south of the Site are important to consider where cross-boundary factors relate. For example, if improvements in off-site provision are endorsed, much of this may fall within the Croxley Green Parish area.

2.34 The Croxley Green Neighbourhood Plan summarises the policies and aims that will deliver the overall vision for the area. The objective relating to leisure, community, welfare and health seeks to:

*‘Support and retain the use of the community buildings and outdoor facilities and a viable and adequate provision of health and education services within the Parish.’*

2.35 Specifically, Aim 7 notes that:

*‘The Parish Council will make every effort to secure the future of leisure, community, and health and education facilities and to support the enhancement of existing facilities and the provision of new facilities.’*

2.36 The Neighbourhood Plan therefore endorses the importance of the provision of sport and leisure facilities that meet the needs of local communities.

**Summary**

2.37 Whilst adopted local planning policy does not explicitly require on site indoor and outdoor sports facilities in new development, it is clear that there is a recognition of the benefits that such facilities can bring. Policy DM11 (Development Management Local Policies Document) confirms this, requiring contributions towards local sports facilities where demand is demonstrated to have arisen from the development and where there are inadequacies in the existing facility network.

2.38 Policy in the emerging Local Plan also clearly set an expectation that new residential development proposals will be expected to contribute to (or provide) indoor and outdoor sports facilities where need is identified. There is an expectation that any required facilities are proactively planned and that new developments are created in a manner that embraces the characteristics of active design and Active travel.

2.39 There may also be a need to consider opportunities for community use of relevant on site facilities (new primary school) if there is an evidenced need.

2.40 The creation of this sports strategy therefore ensures that the requirements of these policies are addressed, and that proactive planning for sport is central to the creation of the development.

### 3.0 Approach

- 3.1 The overall approach to this assessment has been discussed and agreed with Sport England. The assessment has included a desk based exercise comprising the following:

Review of local and national policy to understand the key requirements

Review and update of the existing evidence base for sport and leisure

Interpretation of additional data provided during the process:

- o FA Local Football Facilities Plan
- o Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator and Sports Facility Calculator.

- 3.2 We have benefitted from consultations with the following:

Representatives of Three Rivers Council Sports Team

Hertfordshire FA

The LTA

The Hertfordshire Cricket Board

The RFU

Sport England.

- 3.3 The above consultations have helped to update the existing position statement, as well as to understand key issues and priorities for each sport in 2024. Sport England have supported the process by providing access to their Playing Pitch Calculator and Sports Facility Calculator.

- 3.4 Specifically, this assessment seeks to assess:

The adequacy of existing provision to meet demand

The additional demand that will arise as a result of the proposed development

The adequacy of the existing infrastructure to meet the demand that will be generated by the new development.

- 3.5 It translates the findings of the above assessment in order to provide evidence to support the masterplan for the site and to highlight where off site investment may be required, as well as where on site provision may be of benefit. It considers the requirements that arise directly from the demand generated by the proposed development, as well as opportunities to add value to the local community.

- 3.6 The assessment draws upon the existing evidence base for sport and recreation in Three Rivers District. Specifically, this evidence base includes:

Playing Pitch Assessment Report (2019)

Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan (2019)

Playing Pitch Strategy Developer Contributions Toolkit (2019)

Indoor Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment (2019)

Leisure Facilities Strategy (2019).

- 3.7 These documents have been agreed and approved by the Council and represent part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan. As such, it is important to ensure that proposals at Land to North of Little Green Lane are in line with the findings and priorities set out in these documents.

- 3.8 It should be noted that these strategies are all now five years old. The typical and accepted lifespan of such a strategy is three - five years, particularly for a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS). This means that they are nearing the end of their usable life (and indeed, may be considered to already be out of date).
- 3.9 To supplement the review of the existing evidence base, we have therefore sought to qualify the findings with relevant National Governing Bodies of Sport in order to understand what has changed, and whether the findings of the 2019 documents remain representative of the position today. This future proofs the findings of this sports strategy, in the event that the evidence base documents are updated prior to determination of a planning application.
- 3.10 Sections 4 and 5 of this paper therefore evaluate the implications of these evidence base documents for Land to North of Little Green Lane, Croxley Green, as well as set out the key messages arising from the additional information supplied and the findings of consultations. They provide evidence to enable us to determine:
- Whether there are any requirements for facilities on site
  - The need for any contributions towards off site provision.
- 3.11 Section 4 evaluates the current position for indoor sport and leisure facilities, whilst section 5 reviews supply and demand for outdoor sports facilities.
- 3.12 Section 6 brings all of the analysis together. It considers the demand that will be generated by the proposed new development and then evaluates whether the likely increase in demand can be met by the existing infrastructure, drawing on the findings of Sections 4 and 5. It summarises the options that should be considered in the masterplanning process for Land to North of Little Green Lane.

## 4.0 Indoor Sports Facilities

### Understanding the Current Position

- 4.1 This section considers the evidence available in relation to indoor sports facilities and uses it to provide a statement on the current position. This is then used to determine whether the demand generated by the proposed development can be met (section 6) and the implications for the sports strategy for the proposed development.
- 4.2 Table 4.1 summarises the key issues identified in the Indoor Built Facilities Strategy (2019) and the facility recommendations that were set for each sport, as well as any site specific recommendations within the vicinity of Croxley Green.
- 4.3 In brief, the key issues on a District-wide basis are:
- The existing supply of sports halls is adequate to meet current and future demand. Priority is given to maintaining the quality of existing facilities.
  - The existing stock of swimming pools is also reported to have adequate capacity to meet current and projected future demand, although a lack of access to 25m pools that can support competitive activity was identified.
  - Although the stock of health and fitness facilities falls below quantitative standards, the high levels of provision on the periphery of Three Rivers mean that there are no clear areas of unmet demand. As a consequence, the strategy seeks to monitor any opportunities to deliver new facilities rather than proactively seek additional provision.
  - There is spare capacity within the existing community hall infrastructure. The strategy highlights the importance of continuing to deliver a varied programme of activities to increase opportunities for physical activity, but does not identify a requirement for new provision
  - There is an identified need for a specialist venue for gymnastics.

**Table 4.1 – Summary of Evidence for Indoor Sports Facilities**

| Facility Type       | Indoor Built Facilities Assessment Key Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Indoor Built Facilities Strategy Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Site Specific Recommendations                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sports Halls</b> | <p>20 sports halls provided on 15 different sites</p> <p>Quality is varied but only one hall is good. There is a clear correlation between the age of facilities and quality</p> <p>51.4% of the District population live within a 20 minute walk time catchment, but all of the population live within a 20 minute drivetime of a hall of 3 courts or greater</p> <p>William Penn Leisure Centre is the only local authority owned 4-court sports hall. The majority of other facilities are located at school sites – this means availability is restricted during the daytime</p> <p>There are 22 further sports halls within 2 miles of the district boundary – these add extra capacity</p> <p>Rickmansworth School, which provides 6 courts is the closest site to Croxley Green. The strategy identifies that Croxley Danes School will also be providing a new hall once built (4 courts)</p> <p>Modelling suggests that at a crude level, there is adequate supply to meet current demand, with a positive supply / demand balance of 4.5 courts. Unmet demand equates to 5.6% of total demand. Only 5.1% is due to lack of capacity. The remainder is outside of the catchment area</p> <p>Used capacity is low - 53.2%. This suggests there is capacity within the infrastructure (although it should be noted that there is variation between venues)</p> <p>Overall, the assessment reports adequate capacity to meet current and future demand.</p> <p>Some sport specific needs / issues identified;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Requirement for greater junior provision for badminton. Successful delivery would lead to longer term greater demand</li> <li>o Basketball England identify a very small amount of unmet demand</li> <li>o Booking of indoor netball courts for netball is a challenge due to limited availability</li> <li>o Sports halls are also important for archery, particularly Rickmansworth and Redheath Archers</li> <li>o Rickmansworth Sports Hall is also a key venue for indoor cricket, with a long term agreement with Hertfordshire Cricket.</li> </ul> | <p>Ensure all schools currently offering community use retain this status</p> <p>Work with schools that are not available to explore opportunity to create access</p> <p>Work with schools to increase the number of hours available for community use</p> <p>Support a coordinated approach to programming and pricing</p> <p>Seek to improve quality of sports halls on condition of improved community use</p> <p>Ensure any new / replacement provision has community use incorporated</p> <p>No clear requirement for additional provision identified, although demand to be monitored as new developments generate additional growth in demand</p> <p>Key priority at Rickmansworth School is retain and potentially increase community use</p> | <p>New sports hall at Croxley Danes School</p> <p>Maintenance of Rickmansworth School – this is a key facility for cricket, badminton and gymnastics – in good condition</p> |

| Facility Type             | Indoor Built Facilities Assessment Key Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Indoor Built Facilities Strategy Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Site Specific Recommendations                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Swimming Pools</b>     | <p>10 swimming pools on 7 sites, located in areas of higher population density</p> <p>Lack of provision in the north of the district</p> <p>Harvey Road School (lido) and Rickmansworth School are located in Croxley Green. New pools are being built at The Centre, South Oxhey</p> <p>There are no poor quality pools, the pool at Rickmansworth School is in good condition having been refurbished in 2014</p> <p>57.8% of residents live within one mile of a community available swimming pool. All residents of Three Rivers Council live within a 20 minute drivetime of a pool</p> <p>Sport England Facilities Planning Model (FPM) calculates a demand of water space equivalent to 993m2 (this includes a comfort factor). For Three Rivers, this means that there is a positive supply demand balance of 128m2</p> <p>96.5% of the total demand for swimming is being met/satisfied. Much of the demand is however met by pools outside of Three Rivers local authority - exported demand is high</p> <p>The FPM reports that existing pools are operating well below capacity</p> <p>The assessment therefore concludes that the existing supply meets demand and there is no requirement for new provision to meet future demand</p> | <p>Manage opening of South Oxhey Leisure Centre</p> <p>Ensure programming is coordinated</p> <p>Maintain and invest in William Penn Leisure Centre</p> <p>Provide competitive 25m swimming provision should opportunity arise</p> <p>Sufficient capacity to meet current and future demand – monitor use as projected new developments start to emerge</p> <p>No clear requirements for new provision currently</p> | <p>New pool at Oxhey Leisure Centre to serve the District</p> <p>Maintenance of Rickmansworth School – facility quality currently good</p> |
| <b>Health and Fitness</b> | <p>Eight health and fitness facilities identified, mainly in the more densely populated areas. These provide 302 stations</p> <p>Facilities are of mixed quality, but none are poor</p> <p>Rickmansworth School is the main facility for Croxley Green. Nuffield Health is the nearest private gym</p> <p>60% of the population live within 1 mile of a health and fitness facility, including circa half of Croxley Green residents. All of the population are within a 20 minute drivetime</p> <p>The surrounding area contains a substantial number of health and fitness venues particularly to the east of Croxley Green into Watford</p> <p>Modelling reports a need for 452 stations increasing to 598 by 2036. This means that there is an undersupply of 158 increasing to 304.</p> <p>the assessment notes that the variety of facilities on the periphery of the district meet some of this unmet demand.</p> <p>The need to ensure that health and fitness facilities cater fully for the range of different market segments is emphasised.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>Monitor the availability of health and fitness provision in the area. Future provision needs to ensure that it is of the requisite quality and that the highest levels of communication are used to attract relevant market segments in order to ensure viability</p> <p>Ensure age appropriate provision is available</p>                                                                                       | <p>None</p>                                                                                                                                |



| Facility Type                            | Indoor Built Facilities Assessment Key Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Indoor Built Facilities Strategy Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Site Specific Recommendations         |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Squash</b>                            | <p>Three sites providing 8 courts, primarily located in the centre of the district. Quality is good with the exception of those at Merchant Taylors School Complex</p> <p>Nuffield Health is the nearest facility to Croxley Green and provides good quality courts</p> <p>Demand is limited to recreational play and there is no unmet demand identified</p> <p>Strategy identifies no requirement for additional courts, but a need to maintain/improve the condition of existing courts and support the development of squash and racquetball where possible</p> | <p>Retention of existing courts</p> <p>Retention of pay and play access</p> <p>Maintain court quality</p> <p>No new provision required</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | None                                  |
| <b>Specialist Facilities</b>             | <p>There is no specialist gymnastics venue. Clubs currently use sports halls. Several clubs express an interest in access to specialist venues. The assessment notes the importance of providing new facilities, as well as securing access to existing facilities. Projected housing growth likely to increase demand for gymnastics</p> <p>There are no indoor bowls venues, although there are 7 within 30 minutes drivetime. Three Rivers is not a priority area for new facilities and no demand is identified</p>                                             | <p>Support Harefield Gymnastics Club to identify appropriate facilities for them to move into,</p> <p>Monitor demand for indoor bowls</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | New facility for Harefield gymnastics |
| <b>Community Centres / Village Halls</b> | <p>Over 55% of the population live within 800m of a community hall</p> <p>These venues accommodate a variety of activities</p> <p>Many community centres have spare capacity</p> <p>No need for additional venues identified to meet current demand, maintaining quality of facilities considered to be of greater importance</p> <p>Projected growth in housing development may need to requirement for additional spaces for indoor activity.</p>                                                                                                                 | <p>Continue to offer, coordinate and publicise community spaces which contribute positively to the physical activity and health and wellbeing agenda particularly of a daytime.</p> <p>The projected growth in housing development is likely to lead to the need for additional spaces for indoor activity; community spaces which can enhance physical activity, cultural and sporting activity need to be considered by planners when developing new neighbourhoods.</p> | None                                  |

- 4.4 It is clear therefore from Table 1 that there is no evidence of a requirement for additional facilities within the indoor facilities strategy, although the demand that will be generated by new development is recognised. On the whole, the strategy reported that both current and projected future use can be sustained by the existing infrastructure.
- 4.5 Instead, focus is on maintaining the quality and capacity of existing provision, and maximising opportunities for participation through effective programming.
- 4.6 With strategies relating to indoor facilities typically having an accepted lifespan of five years, this strategy theoretically remains up to date as a robust representation of need. It is however at the end of this lifespan, and will require update within the very short term.
- 4.7 As a consequence, we have undertaken research as to any changes that have taken place, in order to evaluate whether an updated strategy may present alternative picture. This is set out below.

### **Updated Position**

#### ***Sports Halls***

- 4.8 Table 4.1 reported that the existing stock of sports halls was adequate to meet current and projected future demand and that the focus was on retaining quality and maximising community use of existing facilities.
- 4.9 Since the strategy was produced, the new facility at Croxley Danes School that was referenced in the 2019 document has been delivered. This four court hall is now the closest facility to the proposed development site and offers full community use (outside of school hours). The facility provides opportunities for badminton, basketball, cricket, gymnastics, volleyball and netball amongst other sports, and therefore starts to address some of the sport specific gaps that were also raised. As a new facility, this site is of good quality.
- 4.10 Consultation with representatives of Three Rivers District Council confirms that no other significant changes have taken place, and as a result, the current position has improved from that set out in the Leisure Strategy. The key recommendations, which focus on retaining quality and maximising community usage therefore remain relevant.

#### ***Swimming Pools***

- 4.11 The 2019 Leisure Strategy indicated that there was adequate water space in the Borough to meet current and projected future demand.
- 4.12 Since the strategy was produced, a new facility has been provided at The Centre, South Oxhey. This facility replaced Sir James Altham Swimming Pool, which was active at the time of the strategy production. The new facility has provided a modern 4 lane swimming pool alongside a teaching pool. This means that the amount of water space available has increased since the leisure strategy was produced, as well as the quality of facilities.
- 4.13 The leisure strategy confirmed that this new facility would improve the quality and quantity of facilities once delivered, and ensure that supply was adequate to meet current and projected future demand. Notably, this facility also delivers on the other recommendation of the strategy, which was to provide a 25m competition pool should the opportunity arise.
- 4.14 The remaining recommendations of the leisure strategy, which (after the delivery of the new facility at South Oxhey Leisure Centre), focus on the maintenance of the existing swimming facilities, therefore remain representative of the up to date picture for swimming.

### ***Health and Fitness Facilities***

- 4.15 Whilst the 2019 Leisure Strategy reported that levels of health and fitness provision were low, the assessment concluded that the substantial amount of facilities on the boundaries of Three Rivers District meant that there was no clear driver for additional provision.
- 4.16 Consultation with Three Rivers District Council, as well as a review of Active Places Power suggest that there has been no changes to the stock of facilities in terms of new provision. The current position, and the associated recommendations which seek to maximise access to a range of health and fitness provision and support any new provision where opportunity arises, therefore remain relevant.

### ***Community Halls***

- 4.17 The 2019 Leisure Strategy noted that there was adequate capacity in the existing stock of community halls, with spare capacity at most venues. Most residents in the more urban areas of the district had access to a community hall, and it was concluded that there was no requirement to develop additional venues to meet the needs of the current population.
- 4.18 Since the 2019 strategy, consultation with representatives of the District Council suggests that there has been some change in the facilities provided. A new activity hall and drama hall are now available to hire at Croxley Danes School outside of school hours, and these can be booked online and used to accommodate a variety of physical activities. Offsetting this, a community venue in Croxley Green (near to the library) has closed, although it is anticipated that this will be re-provided.
- 4.19 The position therefore remains broadly similar to that presented in the strategy and the key findings and recommendations remain relevant.
- 4.20 Consultation with the District Council however notes that ongoing increases in demand for community space means that opportunities to provide a new community venue in Croxley Green to meet the needs of the existing population, as well as residents in any new development, could be considered.

### ***Other Facilities***

- 4.21 The assessment and strategy identified a need to support the provision of a new bespoke gymnastics facility. Consultation demonstrates that this requirement remains and that there is still a requirement to deliver a purpose built gymnastics centre.

### **Summary of Needs – Indoor Facilities Position Statement**

- 4.22 Table 4.2 overleaf therefore summarises the key messages arising from the existing leisure strategy, and the updated position statement. It outlines where deficiencies exist that still need to be addressed and highlights where capacity may remain insufficient to meet future demand.
- 4.23 The potential impact for the new development from a contextual perspective is therefore considered.
- 4.24 Section 6 brings together this analysis with the findings from the outdoor sports strategy and evaluates the impact that the proposed development will have on this position, and the subsequent options and implications for the sports strategy.

**Table 4.2 - Summary of Indoor Facility Position**

| Facility Type                | Current Position                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Updated Position                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Potential implications for proposed housing development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sports Halls</b>          | 2019 Leisure Strategy identified that there is adequate provision<br>Some sport specific needs were identified, but overall, no additional provision was required to meet future demand<br>The strategy recommendations focus on the maintenance of facilities that are fit for purpose<br>The strategy also seeks to ensure that programming maximises the opportunities for all residents | An additional 4 court hall has been provided at Croxley Danes School – this is available for community use and therefore supplements the supply in this area<br>It is understood that the position statement in the leisure strategy otherwise remains accurate                                           | Improved position since strategy was developed<br>Strategy confirmed existing provision was sufficient to meet current and projected future need<br>New hall therefore improves these circumstances meaning limited rationale for provision of any new sports hall<br>Potential need to contribute to management / maintenance of existing facilities |
| <b>Swimming Pools</b>        | 2019 Leisure Strategy identified that there is adequate provision, although a potential requirement for a 25m pool that could meet competitive demand was identified<br>The strategy recommendations focus on the maintenance of facilities that are fit for purpose<br>The strategy also seeks to ensure that programming maximises the opportunities for all residents                    | A new facility has been provided at the centre – this includes a 25m four lane pool as well as a learner pool. Supply has therefore increased<br>There is consequently perceived to be adequate supply to meet future demand<br>The position statement in the leisure strategy therefore remains accurate | Improved position since strategy was developed<br>Strategy confirmed existing provision was sufficient to meet current and projected future need<br>New pool improves circumstances, meaning limited rationale for provision of any new swimming pool<br>Potential need to contribute to management / maintenance of existing facilities              |
| <b>Health and Fitness</b>    | 2019 Leisure strategy identified deficiency in provision<br>The strategy however reported that the strong provision on the boundaries of the district meant that much of the existing demand was served, and that there was no clear requirement for additional provision                                                                                                                   | No known changes to provision have been identified<br>Consultation suggests that there remain no clear requirements for additional provision to meet future need                                                                                                                                          | Position consistent with leisure strategy<br>No specific requirement for new facility evidenced, although new provision supported                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Community Halls</b>       | Existing facilities adequate to meet current demand                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Small changes to the existing infrastructure<br>Consultation suggests that consideration should be given to the demand for additional community halls                                                                                                                                                     | Leisure strategy does not identify unmet demand (current or future)<br>Updated position suggests increasing demand for community halls, particularly due to closure<br>Potential requirement to consider community provision to add value, but no clearly defined requirement                                                                         |
| <b>Specialist Facilities</b> | Gymnastics venue to support Harefield Gymnastics Club (school hall of at least two courts) still required<br>Indoor tennis                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Consultation identifies that both needs still exist                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Facility need still exists                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

4.25 Section 5 considers the contextual position relating to outdoor sports.

## 5.0 Outdoor Sports Facilities

### Introduction

- 5.1 This section considers the evidence provided in relation to outdoor sports facilities. It sets out the key findings of the Playing Pitch Assessment and Strategy (PPS), and provides an updated position based on detailed consultation undertaken with Three Rivers District Council and relevant National Governing Bodies (NGBs).
- 5.2 Table 5.1 summarises the key issues identified in the PPPS (2019) and the facility recommendations that were set for each sport, as well as any site specific recommendations within the vicinity of Croxley Green.
- 5.3 The main conclusions are:
- There are shortfalls in the existing capacity for football both across Three Rivers District as a whole and more locally in Croxley Green. These will be exacerbated in future years
  - There is an identified need for additional 3G AGPs in both Three Rivers District (5) and Croxley Green (1)
  - Districtwide, there is overplay on cricket pitches and no available remaining capacity at peak times
  - There is overplay on existing rugby pitches and a lack of capacity to meet demand. This overplay is focused in Croxley Green
  - No additional requirements are identified for hockey –supply is adequate to meet demand and indeed there is scope to rationalise provision
  - There is adequate supply of tennis courts for clubs, although some club bases (including Croxley Green TC) are nearing capacity. Tennis courts for recreational play are underused
  - There is no clear demand for additional bowling greens, although there is some evidence that facilities are approaching capacity
  - There is no evidence of demand for athletics, although the strategy articulates the importance of ensuring that new developments provide links to running routes.

**Table 5.1 – Understanding the Current Position - Outdoor Sports Facilities**

| Facility Type   | Outdoor Facilities Assessment Key Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Outdoor Facilities Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Strategy | Site Specific Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Football</b> | <p>112 grass football pitches identified, 99 of which are available for community use. All unavailable pitches are on education sites</p> <p>12 of these pitches are located in Croxley Green (5 adult, 1 youth, 1 9v9, 2 mini 7v7 and 3 5v5)</p> <p>Pitch quality is standard, with only one venue offering good quality pitches. All pitches in Croxley Green rated standard</p> <p>The quality of ancillary facilities varies. All ancillary provision in Croxley Green is standard, with the exception of at Croxley Guild of Sports and Social Club which is rated poor</p> <p>191 teams football teams playing. This includes 12 girls team. The FA has a drive to increase women and girls participation by 50%,</p> <p>There is little exported demand, but 12 teams are imported due to a lack of facilities in neighbouring areas</p> <p>Three clubs in Croxley Green report latent demand – all of these clubs require adult pitches</p> <p>Projections suggest population growth will result in an additional 10 teams across the district. Sub area analysis however suggests that this will not be in Croxley Green</p> <p>When taking into account overplay, as well as latent demand therefore, the assessment concludes the following position for football in Three Rivers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Just 0.5 MES available on adult pitches</li> <li>o Shortage of 13 MES on youth pitches</li> <li>o Deficit of 2 MES on 9v9 pitches</li> <li>o Shortfall of 2.5 MES on 7v7 pitches and 4.5 MES on 5v5 pitches</li> </ul> <p>More locally in Croxley Green;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Deficit of 2 MES on adult pitches</li> <li>o Supply meets demand on youth and 9v9 pitches</li> <li>o Supply of 7v7 pitches adequate and 0.5 MES spare capacity available on 5v5 pitches</li> </ul> <p>Within Croxley Green, Baldwins Lane Playing Fields is overplayed, whilst Barton Way Playing Fields is played to capacity. There is spare capacity available at Harvey Road School,, Croxley Guild of Sport and Social Club, Little Green Junior School, Yorke Meade Primary School and March Durrants Sports and Social Club. At Rickmansworth School, larger pitches are at capacity but there is spare capacity on the smaller pitches</p> | <p>Protect of active and disused football pitches</p> <p>Prioritise investment where sites are of poor quality and / or overplayed</p> <p>Where overplay still exists, transfer demand to sites with capacity</p> <p>Reconfigure 11v11 adult pitches to accommodate youth teams</p> <p>Provide security of tenure</p> <p>Improve ancillary facilities where there is demand to do so</p> |          | <p><b>New Provision</b></p> <p>New provision (2 adult and 4 9v9) expected to be delivered at Croxley Danes School</p> <p><b>Qualitative improvements</b></p> <p>Baldwins Green – pitch quality</p> <p>Croxley Guild of Sport and Social Club – ancillary provision</p> |

| Facility Type  | Outdoor Facilities Assessment Key Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Outdoor Facilities Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Strategy | Site Specific Recommendations                                                                                                              |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                | <p>Not all of these sites are considered to offer actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure on school sites and a lack of availability in the peak period</p> <p>The assessment notes that the majority of overplay occurs due to high demand from specific clubs</p> <p>New playing field land at Croxley Danes School will increase the provision in Croxley Green (2 adult football pitches and 4 youth pitches)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |          |                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>3G AGP</b>  | <p>2 full size pitches – at St Joan of Arc Catholic School and Thomas Parmiter Sports Centre</p> <p>Further five small sized 3G AGPs provided</p> <p>No provision in Croxley Green (full size or small). St Joan of Arc School is closest provision (to the west). This hosts Chess Valley RFC for training and matches</p> <p>Both 3G AGPs are of good quality and well used for both match play and training</p> <p>Unmet demand is identified across the District (3 pitches).</p> <p>Of this, there is considered to be a shortfall of 1 3G AGP in Croxley Green</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>Protect existing 3G AGPs</p> <p>Provide new 3G AGPs in Chorleywood and Croxley Green. Potential need to provide new pitch in Abbots Langley depending upon proposals in Watford</p> <p>The above could be delivered by conversion of sand based AGPs at St Michaels High School and St Clement Danes High School. There are no such options in Croxley Green</p> <p>Ensure new pitches meet FA criteria and have CUA</p> <p>Encourage providers to include sinking fund</p> <p>Transfer more match play to 3G AGP</p> |          | <p><b>New Provision</b></p> <p>New 3G AGP required – expected to be delivered at Croxley Danes School</p>                                  |
| <b>Cricket</b> | <p>23 grass squares at 11 sites. Of these 9 are available at 7 locations. There are also 2 disused sites</p> <p>There is no grass provision in Croxley Green sub area</p> <p>Supplementing the grass squares, there are 9 NTPs. Four of these are on the same sites as grass squares, whilst 5 are standalone NTPs. There are two standalone NTPs in Croxley Green at Rickmansworth School and Croxley Guild of Sports and Social Club</p> <p>The quality of facilities is varying, but Bushey Cricket Club and Bedmond Recreation Ground are poor</p> <p>Ancillary provision at all sites is standard or good except Chorleywood CC (poor)</p> <p>Three sites are not serviced by fixed practice nets, and additional training facilities are required at four other sites – practice facilities are therefore a key area of improvement</p> <p>There are 6 clubs (55 teams) across the District</p> | <p>Retain all pitches including those not currently in use</p> <p>Ensure protection from new development in relation to Ball Strike</p> <p>Improve quality (Bedmond Recreation Ground and Bushey CC)</p> <p>Review quality issues to improve sites to good</p> <p>Ensure security of tenure</p> <p>Work with clubs with identified need for practice nets – Bushey CC, Chorleywood CC, Abbots Langley CC and Rickmansworth CC</p>                                                                                        |          | <p><b>New Provision</b></p> <p>N/a</p> <p><b>Site Specific</b></p> <p>Sustain quality of NTP at Croxley Guild of Sport and Social Club</p> |



| Facility Type      | Outdoor Facilities Assessment Key Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Outdoor Facilities Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Strategy | Site Specific Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                    | <p>There is a degree of movement between local authorities. Both Bushey CC and Chorleywood CC export demand to neighbouring authorities, but this is not identified as a concern. One club travels into Three Rivers but is seeking new provision in Hertsmere</p> <p>Population growth is likely to see demand increase by circa 5 youth teams, it is also anticipated that developmental activities will stimulate further growth</p> <p>At the majority of grounds, there is adequate capacity to sustain the required demand. The exception to this is at Bemond Recreation Ground and Bushey Cricket Club, both of which are deemed to offer no capacity due to the poor quality of the facilities. Manor House Grounds is also overplayed by 1 MES</p> <p>Whilst there is spare capacity across the season, the PPS reports that supply is more constrained at peak time, with no available capacity on a Saturday PM for adult play Across Three Rivers as a whole overplay is equivalent to 59 MES. This arises primarily because of the poor quality of two facilities. There is spare capacity for junior cricket.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Rugby Union</b> | <p>There are two rugby union clubs in the District, specifically; Chess Valley RFC and Merchant Taylors RFC.</p> <p>There are 8 senior and 8 junior rugby pitches across the district, 2 of which are in Croxley Green at Croxley Guild Sport and Social Club. These pitches are of standard quality. The two good pitches are at Merchant Taylors School whilst there are poor pitches at Saint Joan of Arc and St Clement Danes School</p> <p>New provision (1 pitch) was also anticipated to be provided at Croxley Danes School.</p> <p>There are two community rugby union clubs - Chess Valley RFC and Old Merchant Taylor's RFC. The clubs provide a total of 16 teams. There are three senior teams; seven junior teams, two of which are Colts teams (senior and junior); and six mini squads, which usually field multiple teams. There are no dedicated female teams representing either club</p> <p>Chess Valley RFC run 15 of the 16 teams and participation is increasing. They are based at Croxley Guild Sport and Social club, as well as at Joan of Arc Catholic School on the 3G AGP. Most training activity takes place on the 3G AGP, as well as ad hoc match activity.</p> <p>Ancillary facilities at this club are poor, with significant modernisation required</p> <p>Both pitches at Croxley Sports and Social Club are currently overplayed (2.5 MES and 2 MES respectively). This is due to the high demand from the club. All remaining sites have spare capacity</p> | <p>Retain all pitches</p> <p>Improve quality at Chess Valley RUFC through improved maintenance and installation of effective drainage system</p> <p>Increase usage of 3G AGP at St Joan of Arc</p> <p>Improve changing facilities at Chess Valley and secure long term lease</p> <p>Retain rugby pitches at school sites – secure community use if demand exists in future</p> |          | <p><b>New Provision</b></p> <p>Croxley Danes School expected to deliver new rugby union pitches</p> <p><b>Site Specific</b></p> <p>Improve pitch – maintenance and drainage at Croxley Guild of Sport and Social Club. Improve ancillary provision</p> |

| Facility Type | Outdoor Facilities Assessment Key Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Outdoor Facilities Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Strategy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Site Specific Recommendations |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|               | The assessment therefore concludes that there is a deficit of 4.5 MES in the district. In Croxley Green, this will rise to 5.5 MES taking into account anticipated growth projections                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                               |
| Hockey        | <p>There are two hockey clubs based in Three Rivers; Rickmansworth HC and Old Merchant Taylors HC running 19 teams in total</p> <p>Five full size AGPs across Three Rivers spread across four sites, all of which, have floodlighting and are available for community use. There is no full size hockey provision in either of Croxley Green or Sarratt analysis areas</p> <p>Rickmansworth play at Nuffield Health (a good pitch) whilst Merchant Taylors HC play at Merchant Taylors School (standard pitch)</p> <p>The assessment noted that Croxley Danes School (Croxley Green Analysis area) was shortly to open and that that would also contain a new full sized floodlit sand based AGP</p> <p>Both community clubs have unsecure tenure on AGP, renting on an annual agreement</p> <p>Quality of pitches is varying – one is good, two standard and two poor</p> <p>Spare capacity identified at peak time on both club sites, as well as at other pitches across the District. No formal hockey at other sites and therefore spare capacity exists</p> <p>Current supply for hockey considered adequate, increase in demand can be sustained at either club site</p> | <p>Retain AGPs at Merchant Taylors School and Nuffield Heath at RMS for hockey</p> <p>Ensure sinking funds are in place for long-term sustainability.</p> <p>Secure community use</p> <p>Seek to maximise hockey usage where hockey is being played.</p> <p>Increase participation driven through community clubs and schools</p>       | <p><b>New Provision</b></p> <p>None-required</p> <p><b>Site Specific</b></p> <p>Improvements to existing facilities where required (Merchant Taylors / Nuffield Health)</p>                                                                                                                        |                               |
| Bowls         | <p>Five bowling greens serving six clubs in the Borough. For the most part, facility quality was deemed to be good although the quality of pavilions was more variable.</p> <p>Two of the greens are located in the Rickmansworth Analysis Area with one green each in the Abbots Langley, Croxley Green (Croxley Guild of Sports and Social Club) and Watford Rural analysis areas. There is no bowls provision located in the Chorleywood and Sarratt analysis areas</p> <p>The quality of greens is good, with three good and two rated as standard. The green in Croxley is standard quality, with the surface having recently deteriorated. Ancillary facilities are good</p> <p>There are 220 players in total. Croxley Guild BC has the largest membership (75)</p> <p>The assessment reports that the green at Croxley Guild BC is operating above capacity (based upon capacity of 60) and Rickmansworth Bowls Club is operating close to capacity</p> <p>No reported need for additional greens, but concern that the quality of greens will deteriorate given the levels of play that they must sustain</p>                                                          | <p>Retain existing quantity of greens.</p> <p>Sustain good quality greens and explore improvements on greens assessed as standard quality, particularly at Croxley Guild BC</p> <p>Support clubs with plans to increase membership so that growth can be maximised.</p> <p>ensure that potential future demand can be accommodated.</p> | <p><b>New Provision</b></p> <p>N/a, although recommendation requires work with club to explore how future demand can be accommodated (limited spare capacity)</p> <p><b>Site Specific</b></p> <p>Improve maintenance regime at Croxley Guild of Sport and Social Club to sustain green quality</p> |                               |

| Facility Type  | Outdoor Facilities Assessment Key Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Outdoor Facilities Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Strategy | Site Specific Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Tennis</b>  | <p>104 tennis courts across 23 sites, of which 91 are available for community use</p> <p>Courts in Croyley Green are all available for community use. Tennis courts located at Baldwins Lane Playing Fields (2), Croyley Guild of Sport and Social Club (6) and March Durrants Sports and Social Club (3) and Rickmansworth School (4)</p> <p>Floodlit courts available and Croyley Guild of Sport and Social Club</p> <p>Majority of courts are of good quality. In Croyley Green, Baldwins Lane Playing Fields is the only poor site, courts at Croyley Guild of Sport and Social Club are good, while the remainder are standard</p> <p>There are 7 tennis clubs. Croyley TC is the only club in Croyley Green (based at Croyley Guild of Sport). The club has 290 members</p> <p>The high membership of Croyley TC means that spare capacity at this site is now limited (20 members) and the assessment notes that this will be close to capacity if demand aspirations are realised</p> <p>All courts not accessed by clubs are considered to have spare capacity, although this is not quantified due to open access arrangements at most sites. Improvements to quality will be crucial in meeting needs and increasing participation</p> <p>No indoor tennis courts available and need identified</p> | <p>Retain and protect the existing stock of tennis club facilities via appropriate maintenance and management support</p> <p>Protect non club tennis courts – create hub sites with improved club journey</p> <p>Ensure clubs operating above membership thresholds continue to have a supply that adequately meets needs.</p> <p>Support improved changing / car parking at Croyley TC</p> <p>Improve courts located at education sites to meet curricular and extra-curricular needs which are poor quality.</p> |          | <p><b>New Provision</b></p> <p>Croyley Danes School expected to deliver new tennis courts</p> <p><b>Site Specific</b></p> <p>Baldwins Green – improve court quality by resurfacing. Implementation of Clubspark</p> <p>Sustain court quality at Croyley Guild of Sport and Social Club. Support improved changing / car parking at Croyley TC</p> <p>March Durrants Sports and Social Club – implementation of Club Spark</p> |
| <b>Netball</b> | <p>66 outdoor netball courts. Of these 30 courts are available for community use</p> <p>In Croyley Green, there are courts at Harvey Road School (2 standard), Rickmansworth School (3 standard) and Yorke Meade School (1 good)</p> <p>Only 2 sites (12 courts) are regularly accessed for community netball</p> <p>Nuffield at RMS, Thomas Parmiter Sports Centre, St Clement Danes and William Penn sports centres all also offer indoor netball.</p> <p>Two netball clubs– teams play at Clement Danes School (1 team) and the remainder at Thomas Parmiter Sports Centre. Leagues also operate from this site</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>Protect netball provision at Thomas Parmiter Sports Centre and Nuffield Health at RMS secure use through community use agreements.</p> <p>Ensure that future investment into netball courts is targeted at the above sites.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |          | <p>Protect netball provision at Thomas Parmiter Sports Centre and Nuffield Health at RMS secure use through community use agreements</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

| Facility Type    | Outdoor Facilities Assessment Key Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Outdoor Facilities Strategy Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Site Specific Recommendations                                                                                                                                |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                  | <p>There is no community netball in Croxley green</p> <p>Supply and demand analysis suggests that there is enough outdoor netball provision.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>Improve poor quality courts at education venues where there are opportunities for netball.</p> <p>Work with England Netball to increase participation</p> <p>Support investment at sites where sports halls are being refurbished or developed to ensure indoor netball is catered for</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Athletics</b> | <p>One formal athletics track (Merchant Taylors) and school grass tracks. The synthetic track is good quality</p> <p>Tracks in Watford add to overall supply</p> <p>There are no track and field athletics clubs, although there are some road running clubs.. The track is used by clubs from other areas.</p> <p>Several events such as park run (South Oxhey, Rickmansworth Aquadrome). Junior parkrun takes place at Leavesden Country Park</p> <p>No evidence of wider need for facilities, but opportunity to increase the running events that take place</p> | <p>Explore opportunities to use track at Merchant Taylors School for competition usage (if demand arises in the future) through the installation of floodlighting</p> <p>Explore future opportunities to deliver a Compact Athletic Facility if demand arises.</p> <p>Support the running events taking place as well as exploring the implementation of initiatives not currently serviced</p> <p>Ensure that any new developments consider the need for running and opportunities to link with/to existing running routes.</p> | <p><b>New Provision</b></p> <p>Ensure that any new developments consider the need for running and opportunities to link with/to existing running routes.</p> |

- 5.4 Table 5.1 therefore indicates that there are some pressures on the existing infrastructure, and indeed, the PPS states that there are shortfalls now, and in the future. That said, there are few recommendations for additional provision, with issues for most sports to be addressed through qualitative improvements / improvement of community use. Confirming this, the strategy states:

*'Including the need for additional facilities in the Local Plan is therefore not recommended as a priority, except in the case of 3G pitches where there is a discrete need for additional provision, or where there is significant housing growth.'*

- 5.5 Given the age of the PPS, and the accepted lifespan of a strategy (3 – 5 years). this is now out of date. Changes to the way in which sport is played, changes to the population profile, as well as the successful delivery of some of the actions identified within the Strategy document will however have impacted upon the findings and relevance of the recommendations.
- 5.6 The remainder of this section therefore draws upon the findings of consultation as well as additional research to provide an updated picture for each of the outdoor sports facility types.
- 5.7 This will enable us to determine whether any demand exists for facilities that did not at the time of the PPS.

### **Football**

- 5.8 Table 5.1 revealed that there were pressures on the football pitch stock at the time of the 2019 PPS. Across Three Rivers District as a whole, shortages of provision were evident and predicted to increase as the population grew. Pressures were also evident more locally in Croxley Green, with no spare capacity and some deficiencies identified. Recommendations therefore focus on improving capacity.
- 5.9 Consultation with Hertfordshire FA and Three Rivers District Council revealed that:

Participation has increased significantly. The PPS identified 191 teams, whereas the most up to date information provided by Hertfordshire FA demonstrates that there are now 266 teams playing in Three Rivers District. This represents a 29% increase

Whilst adult participation has remained broadly static, across Hertfordshire participation in youth and mini football has increased. The biggest percentage growth has taken place in female football across all age groups. This has significantly increased the pressures that are evident on the grass pitches and this impacts on demand both at peak time but also across the weekend as a whole

In Croxley Green specifically, there is significant evidence of growth. Croxley FC now run 54 teams and have over 900 members.

The area is increasingly characterised by big clubs and there are now very few single adult teams or smaller clubs. Clubs require access to appropriate match venues and training venues

Whilst participation growth has been significant, there has been little progress with the delivery of any priority actions in the PPS. One new full size 3G AGP has been provided at St Clements School, but proposals for a new full size 3G AGP at Croxley Danes School have not been delivered. Instead, the school contains a small sized MUGA

New grass pitches have been delivered at Croxley Danes School, and there is good community use of these facilities. Croxley FC are using these pitches as one of seven club bases

The quality of pitches has not improved. Pitches at Baldwins Recreation Ground were identified as requiring improvement in the Local Facilities Football Plan and this has also

- not been delivered. A site owned by the Council is unavailable this year due to quality issues (flooding).
- 5.10 As a consequence, consultation demonstrates that the picture presented in the PPS remains accurate, but that participation growth has significantly exacerbated the position. In particular, the pressures identified in Croxley Green mean that there is now urgent need for additional capacity.
- 5.11 Overplay has increased on existing sites, and unmet demand has increased in Croxley Green. This is evidenced through the actions of Croxley Green FC, who export 18 teams into neighbouring Watford, and travel significant distances from Croxley Green for match play due to a lack of pitch availability.
- 5.12 The unmet demand for an AGP in Croxley Green has also grown – the 54 teams run by Croxley Green FC alone generate demand for almost 1.5 AGPs. With no additional facility provided, the creation of additional capacity is needed to support existing participation. Population growth (and new development) will place additional pressures on this demand.
- 5.13 The lack of capacity in the infrastructure across Three Rivers as a whole, as well as neighbouring authorities means that increasing the amount of facilities available is a priority. The benefits that 3G provision can bring in terms of sustaining multiple fixtures, and the impact that this can have in terms of reducing unmet demand quickly mean that new pitches are required urgently. Improvements to grass pitches are however also deemed to be critical, alongside opportunities for new provision.
- 5.14 The picture presented in the PPS is therefore thought to remain reasonably accurate, but unmet demand is even more clearly evident. There is a clear need to provide additional capacity to meet current demand and population growth is likely to exacerbate this further.
- 5.15 Consultation with representatives of Three Rivers District Council echoed the views of the FA, noting the significant rise of female football and the urgent need for additional capacity. Alongside cricket, facilities for football were viewed as a key priority and the impact that new development would have on demand was highlighted.
- Rugby Union**
- 5.16 The 2019 strategy reported that there was an overall deficit of pitch provision to meet the needs of the two rugby clubs in the district. Overplay was primarily focused at the home of Chess Valley RFC, who were the largest club in Three Rivers.
- 5.17 The 2019 strategy reported recent increase in participation at Chess Valley RFC. Following the covid pandemic, when demand dropped, the number of players has grown again and is now just below the position in 2019. The club is currently running 2 senior teams and a full age grade section of 11 teams. Opportunities for rugby are available from mini age groups right through to senior rugby.
- 5.18 There has been limited change to the facilities that are available to the club. They continue to be based at Croxley Guild of Sport, but the long term security of tenure remains a concern, with the Social Club leasing the site from the Council, and Chess Valley RFC renting the pitches on an annual renewal basis. The club continue to access the 3G AGP at Saint Joan of Arc Catholic School as well as the grass rugby pitch at Rickmansworth School on an ad hoc basis.
- 5.19 In a recent facility needs audit undertaken by the RFU, the club reported that pitch quality remained poor, and that floodlighting capacity and changing room improvements continued to require investment. Additional floodlighting is necessary to enable the club to better spread their training over both grass pitches, whilst pitch quality improvements will increase the number of games that can be sustained. The changing facilities are no longer fit for purpose.



- 5.20 The sustained participation, alongside the lack of improvements to the facilities that are provided mean that the picture painted in the PPS remains accurate. The lack of capacity at the club base however means that the identified improvements are now required urgently.
- 5.21 Whilst an additional rugby pitch has been provided at Croxley Danes School since the creation of the PPS, the ethos of rugby clubs means that they would prefer to accommodate all activity at, or in close proximity to, their own base. Improvements to the club base are therefore a priority over further new provision. This view was shared by representatives of Three Rivers District Council.
- 5.22 It is clear therefore that the picture presented in the 2019 PPS for rugby union remains accurate and that there remains a need for improvements at Chess Valley RFC.

### **Cricket**

- 5.23 The 2019 strategy reported that there were some pressures on the existing infrastructure for cricket, with some overplay identified, some poor quality facilities and a lack of capacity at peak time.
- 5.24 Since 2019, cricket has continued to grow, both nationally and locally and participation in Hertfordshire remains strong. Reflecting national trends, across Hertfordshire there has been clear growth in female and girls participation and the size and scale of junior sections has also increased.
- 5.25 In Three Rivers, all clubs identified in the 2019 PPS continue to exist and have exhibited recent growth in terms of number of players. A new club has also been created – Batchworth Cricket Club. This means that cricket is now played in Croxley Green, when it wasn't at the time of the 2019 PPS. The new club play on NTP's within Croxley Green – at Rickmansworth School and Croxley Guild Sport and Social Club. Whilst NTPs can be used for league cricket, this limits club progression, as grass squares are required above a certain level.
- 5.26 Hertfordshire Cricket Board report that all clubs in Three Rivers remain strong and sustainable clubs. Most are running multiple junior teams and are now developing female cricket. Chorleywood CC are also an ECB Disability Cricket champion club. These strong development pathways mean that there are solid foundations for the further growth.
- 5.27 Table 5.2 outlines the growth that has taken place since 2019 in terms of team numbers. It reveals that the main increases are evident in senior male cricket, where there has been almost a 25% increase in play and junior girls, with 4 new teams created. This is of particular significance, as the PPS reported that there was no remaining capacity for senior cricket in the District (without overplay).

**Table 5.2 – Participation in Cricket**

| Year | Senior Male Cricket | Senior Female Cricket | Youth Male Cricket | Youth Female Cricket |
|------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 2019 | 20                  | 1                     | 34                 | 0                    |
| 2024 | 24                  | 1                     | 35                 | 4                    |

- 5.28 The increased participation means that Hertfordshire Cricket report that the amount of facilities available is now starting to impact cricket development, with clubs unable to create new teams as there is no ground to play at.
- 5.29 In addition to the Three Rivers based clubs, there are also several large and growing clubs on the boundaries of the district, particularly in the south of the Borough close to Croxley Green. Most notably, West Hertfordshire Cricket Club (circa 2 miles from Croxley Green) are over – capacity and are currently travelling 30 – 45 minutes into Buckinghamshire. As a consequence of the challenges for cricket, the provision of new grass cricket grounds is now the priority for the Cricket Board.



- 5.30 In addition to the growing pressures in terms of the quantity of grounds that are available, some quality issues remain, although there have been improvements since the 2019 PPS. Hertfordshire CC comment that:

There remain flooding issues at both Rickmansworth CC and Bushey CC – this impacts on the quality of facilities provided significantly

Reflecting the PPS, some clubs also still require further investment into training facilities

The recent improvements to the pavilion at Chorleywood CC mean that this important priority of the PPS action plan has now been delivered.

- 5.31 The issues relating to the delivery of cricket in the Three Rivers District are therefore perceived to have grown since the 2019 PPS. Although the Cricket Board recognise the challenges of providing additional facilities to meet demand, and the need for sustainability, the creation of additional grounds is now considered essential. The key priorities for cricket (in order) are therefore now deemed to be:

Provision of new grass cricket square to function as second ground for one or more local clubs – need evidenced by the increase in teams, the PPS already reported no spare capacity

Qualitative improvement of existing grass squares

Improvement of existing training facilities.

- 5.32 Greater emphasis is therefore now placed on the need for new cricket provision than in the PPS although it is clear that the other issues identified also continue to exist. Representatives of Hertfordshire Cricket Board consider Croxley Green to be an appropriate location for new provision, as it is considered to be within clear travelling distance for several clubs that are known to be struggling to access appropriate facilities.

- 5.33 Discussions with Three Rivers District Council representatives confirm that new and improved facilities for cricket are now deemed to be a priority, given the growth that has been experienced in recent years.

### **Hockey**

- 5.34 The 2019 PPS reported the existing stock of facilities to be adequate in quantitative terms, with spare capacity identified at both sites accommodating clubs. Pitches used by the clubs were also reported to be good quality.

- 5.35 Since 2019 a new pitch has been provided at Merchant Taylors School, following grant of planning permission in early 2024.. Although the PPS assessment report suggested that a new sand based floodlit AGP would be included at Croxley Danes School, this was not delivered.

- 5.36 Both clubs demonstrate a slight increase in participation based on their teams numbers, with additional male and junior teams running at Old Merchant Taylors HC and additional junior teams evident at Rickmansworth HC.

- 5.37 The PPS identified that growth in participation could be accommodated by the existing infrastructure, but that maintaining pitch quality and a surface suitable for hockey on these facilities remained a priority. The additional pitch provided therefore provides extra capacity, and hockey can be accommodated by the facilities that are provided.

- 5.38 The current position for hockey is therefore more positive than the picture presented in the 2019 PPS. There is adequate provision and this was confirmed in discussions with sporting representatives at Three Rivers District Council.

### ***Tennis***

- 5.39 The 2019 leisure strategy sought to retain the existing facilities, but highlighted the need to improve public courts, which were both underused and in poor condition.
- 5.40 Since 2019, there has been an increase in provision, with 4 new high quality tennis courts provided at Croxley Danes School. These courts are available for community use outside of school hours and offer online booking through the School Hire website. These courts therefore add extra capacity to the infrastructure in close proximity to the proposed development site.
- 5.41 A Parks Investment programme has been administered by the LTA in recent years nationally. This focused on improving the quality of public facilities as well as installing LTA technology including gate access and clubspark booking. Two facilities in Three Rivers District were refurbished as part of this programme.
- 5.42 Baldwins Recreation Ground, the nearest facility to the proposed development site, was not included and the condition remains consistent with that identified in the PPS. Both the LTA and the Council confirm that the recommendation for refurbishment of this site remains a key priority. It is highlighted that the increasing demand generated from new developments in the area will create additional pressures on this site. Consultation also highlighted an aspiration for the refurbishment of tennis courts at Scotsbridge Mill, Rickmansworth.
- 5.43 At club level, the 2019 strategy reported that Croxley Green Tennis Club was functioning close to capacity. LTA records demonstrate that membership remains strong and the club continues to operate close to capacity. No additional courts are deemed to be needed, but improvement to ancillary facilities continue to be required. Maintaining quality of courts will also be critical to ensuring that future demand can be sustained.
- 5.44 Overall therefore, the recommendations of the 2019 strategy for tennis remain representative of the current priorities for tennis.

### ***Bowls***

- 5.45 The PPS identified six bowling clubs playing across five sites. All clubs are believed to remain in existence in 2024 and there has been no change to the stock of greens.
- 5.46 The PPS confirmed that Croxley Guild Bowls Club was the only club within Croxley Green. With 75 members, the club was close to capacity and it was identified that ongoing efforts on maintenance were required to ensure that quality was retained in the face of high demand.
- 5.47 Consultation with the District Council reports that the club continue to demonstrate good levels of participation, with particular efforts to grow the number of members evident following the covid pandemic. The club website demonstrates that there remain opportunities for people of all ages and abilities, running ladies, men, veterans and junior sections.
- 5.48 Data on the Hertfordshire Bowling Association website suggests that the club currently has 55 members, which represents a slightly decline on the position in 2019, but still a very sustainable position. The club continues to seek new members and is actively running open days each year. This suggests that there remains adequate capacity on this site and no requirement for additional greens.
- 5.49 The priorities set out in the PPS for bowls, which focus on the retention of existing greens and the quality of these facilities are therefore representative of the current picture.

### ***Other Facilities***

- 5.50 The PPS identified some other facility needs. We have verified through consultation that:

the aspiration of Three Rivers DC to integrate opportunities for physical activity / running into new developments remains. It is not necessarily expected that specific facilities are provided, but that design of any new development takes into account active travel and active design principles.

Sport England emphasise the need to consider new guidance provided by England Athletics relating to opportunities to integrate Newgen athletics tracks into parks / strategic open space settings.

there remains a deficiency of indoor tennis provision (as set out in the PPS) but Dacorum District is currently considered to be the most appropriate location for such a facility.

- 5.51 The increasing importance of padel, a new format of tennis, was also raised in consultation with the LTA. With no existing padel venues in Three Rivers or neighbouring Watford, there is perceived to be a deficiency. Padel venues operate as commercially viable sports facilities and the LTA highlight opportunity to consider the provision of a new facility as part of the proposed development. Consultation with representatives of Three Rivers District Council viewed this as a lower priority, with demand as yet not clearly understood.

#### Summary of Outdoor Facility Provision

- 5.52 Table 5.2 therefore summarises the facility needs based upon the existing PPS and the updated position statement. It outlines the key deficiencies identified and highlights where provision is considered unable to meet current and / or future needs.

- 5.53 The implications for the proposed development are reviewed in Section 6.

**Table 5.2 - Summary of Needs – Outdoor Sports Provision**

| Facility Type      | PPS Position                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Updated Position                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Implications for Proposed Development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Football</b>    | 2019 PPS identified pressures on existing pitches, particularly youth and 9v9 pitches<br>Picture evident across Three Rivers District but also in Croxley Green<br>Deficit of 3 3G pitches across the District, including one in Croxley Green<br>Recommendations focus on new 3G provision, as well as qualitative improvement to existing pitches<br>Use of unsecured venues and community venues that were not available also a key priority. | Significant growth in football participation<br>Limited change to football facility stock – only one new 3G AGP delivered<br>Identified deficiencies therefore exacerbated, particularly in Croxley Green<br>Requirement for at least one new 3G AGP in Croxley Green<br>Need for additional grass pitches / quality improvements also exacerbated | Existing deficiencies mean that any new demand cannot be accommodated<br>Inclusion of football within the package will be an expectation (and is justified)<br>3G pitch provision is also a key priority<br>3G pitch provision would have greater impact on capacity pressures than grass pitches, and a strategy that focuses on the provision of a 3G AGP could be considered<br>Provision of / investment into grass football pitches also needs to be considered |
| <b>Rugby Union</b> | The largest rugby club in Three Rivers is based in Croxley Green<br>The club use grass pitches at Croxley Guild of Sports and Social Club as well as 3G provision at Saint Joan of Arc                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Participation has increased and overplay still remains<br>The club continue to use both 3G and grass pitches<br>The position recorded in the PPS remains valid                                                                                                                                                                                     | Existing deficiencies mean that any new demand cannot be accommodated<br>Contribution towards rugby union therefore justified<br>On site provision likely to be of limited value, given the focus of all activity at one club, and the preference of clubs to host activity at their club base                                                                                                                                                                       |

| Facility Type  | PPS Position                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Updated Position                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Implications for Proposed Development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                | 2019 PPS identified overplay at their home ground<br>Recommendations focused on improvements to pitch conditions and ancillary provision                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Opportunities for investment at Croxley Guild of Sport and Social Club, including ancillary provision and pitch quality                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Cricket</b> | PPS indicated that clubs were approaching capacity and that was no spare capacity at peak time<br>Some quality issues were also evident<br>PPS recommended improvements, and protection of all sites including lapsed sites                                                                 | Consultation identifies significant increases in participation in cricket, particularly in female cricket<br>Any spare capacity that was available has now disappeared, and there is evidence of displaced demand<br>Creation of additional capacity required urgently to ensure that participation is not constrained by facilities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Existing deficiencies mean that any new demand cannot be accommodated<br>Contribution towards cricket therefore justified<br>Recommendations of PPS suggest that focus is on qualitative improvements<br>Consultation however demonstrates a need for additional capacity as a priority, which can only be delivered through the creation of new facilities<br>New provision now identified as key priority – potential to <i>add value</i><br>On and off site opportunities will need to be considered as part of the sports strategy for the proposed development |
| <b>Hockey</b>  | 2019 PPS indicated that provision was adequate<br>Spare capacity was identified on both sites<br>The quality of pitches was also good<br>PPS recommendations focus on the protection of sand based AGPs that serve clubs and qualitative improvements to sustain the surface where required | Participation has increased across Three Rivers in hockey<br>Additional pitch has been provided<br>There is sufficient capacity in the district to meet current and projected future demand                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Existing position is reported to be adequate to meet both current and future demand<br>No clear requirement for contribution, with pitch provision currently adequate in terms of both quantity and quality. That said, maintenance and upkeep of the facilities will be required to ensure that they meet future demand.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Tennis</b>  | PPS identifies that supply is primarily adequate in quantitative terms, although Croxley Green LTC are reported to be operating close to capacity<br>Recommendations focus on the improvement of public facilities                                                                          | Since the PPS was produced, 4 new courts have been provided at Croxley Danes School – these courts are available for public use and add to the stock of facilities<br>Croxley Green LTC continue to function close to capacity. LTA confirm that improvements to the club site are their priority in relation to club activity (as opposed to new provision)<br>Recent improvements have been undertaken to some public sites in Three Rivers, but these have not included public facilities within Croxley Green<br>The focus remains on improving the quality of existing facilities<br>The growth of padel nationally means that there is now a gap | Existing position is reported to be adequate to meet both current and future demand in quantitative terms. Some improvements are required if existing facilities are able to meet future demand<br>Contribution justified<br>Limited evidence to suggest that new tennis courts are required. Improvements are however needed to public courts (and club courts) if facilities are to be fit for purpose<br>The LTA also emphasise the need to consider the provision of padel courts – there is a gap in the Croxley Green area for this type of facility          |

| Facility Type    | PPS Position                                                                                                                                                                    | Updated Position                                                   | Implications for Proposed Development                                                                                                                |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                  |                                                                                                                                                                                 | in provision in Three Rivers District                              |                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Bowls</b>     | Existing facilities adequate to meet current demand<br>PPS seeks to protect all greens and retain quality                                                                       | Supply and demand position remains broadly consistent with the PPS | Existing position is reported to be adequate to meet both current and future demand                                                                  |
| <b>Athletics</b> | One track provided<br>No evidence of additional need<br>Opportunity to integrate opportunities for physical activity / running into new development highlighted as key priority | Position remains relevant                                          | No requirement for formal athletics track<br>Potential requirement to consider integration of informal opportunities for physical activity / running |

## 6.0 Implications for Land to North of Little Green Lane, Croxley Green

### Introduction

- 6.1 Sections 4 and 5 have considered the adequacy of current provision drawing on the existing evidence base, as well as the views of National Governing Bodies of Sport. They have provided an updated position statement, outlining whether provision is adequate to meet existing and projected future demand.
- 6.2 This section considers firstly the additional demand that will be generated by the new development. It then compiles this information with the position statements set out in Sections 4 and 5 to ascertain whether existing provision is able to sustain the additional demand and the potential implications for the sports strategy for the development.
- 6.3 We have considered both the baseline requirement to meet identified need, but also any opportunities to provide additionality over and above the minimum requirements in order to make the development a desirable place to live, as well as to provide greater sporting benefit.

### Impact of Proposed New Development

- 6.4 The Strategic Recommendations within the PPS suggest that Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator should be used to determine the impact of new development. This is now the most frequently used tool for this purpose as it provides a transparent indicator of amount of demand that will be created by a specific development, based on the levels of participation in an area.
- 6.5 A separate paper, Playing Pitch Strategy – Developer Contributions Toolkit, was prepared as part of the Three Rivers District Council Playing Pitch Strategy to support the use of this calculator. Access to the calculator can be obtained (and has been for the purposes of this assessment) through engagement with Sport England.
- 6.6 The calculations in the calculator are based on the Team Generation Rate (TGR) which is provided in a PPS and as such, is bespoke to each local authority. TGRs are typically updated each year as part of the PPS monitoring process.
- 6.7 In consultation with Sport England, given the age of the PPS, to ensure that the calculations reflect the up to date position (which would be required at application stage), we have obtained 2024 figures and these have been used to populate the model. The calculations have been undertaken with the support of Sport England, who will use the same method to provide comment on an application once it is submitted.
- 6.8 The use of the updated figures ensures that we present an accurate perspective of the demand that will be generated and consequently, the adequacy of the infrastructure to meet this demand.
- 6.9 The results of the application of the calculator are set out in Table 6.1.
- 6.10 The calculations have been undertaken on the assumption that the new development will provide 600 new dwellings, which is the most up to date position at the time of writing. We have estimated that the new development will accommodate 1380 people (2.3 per dwelling).



**Table 6.1 – Impact of New Development on Demand for Pitch Sports (600 dwellings).**

| Facility Type                   | Impact of New Development (Number of Pitches) | Capital Cost | Lifecycle Cost |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <b>Natural Grass Pitches</b>    | 2.12                                          | £217,169     | £42,212        |
| Adult Football                  | 0.46                                          | £52,381      | £10,319        |
| Youth Football                  | 0.75                                          | £70,447      | £14,230        |
| Mini Soccer                     | 0.67                                          | £20,951      | £4,148         |
| Rugby Union                     | 0.06                                          | £10,767      | £1,992         |
| Cricket                         | 0.17                                          | £62,624      | £11,523        |
| <b>Artificial Grass Pitches</b> |                                               |              |                |
| Sand Based                      | 0.02                                          | £23,708      | £616           |
| 3G                              | 0.10                                          | £117,438     | £3,388         |

6.11 The Playing Pitch Calculator provides only an indication of demand that will be generated specifically by the new development.

6.12 This additional demand is then considered in the context of the adequacy of existing provision (Section 5) in order to determine if this demand can be met. This provides an understanding of:

Whether on site provision should be considered

Whether contributions towards off site provision may be required.

6.13 The developer contributions guide states that:

*'Where there is no identified shortfall in provision or future demand for new provision within an area relevant to the development (e.g. an analysis area or settlement), consideration should be given to the nearest site to the development containing that type of pitch provision. This should consider if the site could benefit from a contribution towards increasing capacity to meet likely need generated from the development. For example, this could include increasing quality, addition of ancillary facilities such as floodlighting, changing rooms or car parking. Use the PPS action plan to identify site by site recommendations.'*

6.14 It should be noted that the strategy also states that:

*'The longer term aim is to move towards increasing use of 3G pitches to accommodate competitive football fixtures. Therefore, there is a case to suggest that contributions towards football provision (and in some cases rugby union) could be made.'*

*Although the Playing Pitch Strategy will help to identify existing shortfalls (and in doing so provide a guide as to how best to meet demand generated from the new development), local clubs/groups should be consulted to further update the most recent local situation. Useful questions to answer may include, for example:*

*Are there any teams/clubs playing outside of the local area (displaced demand) which could utilise provision at the site?*



*Do any local clubs identify existing plans/demand for access to new provision?  
Are there any overplayed sites in the local area where existing demand could be transferred to a new site?  
Do any local clubs identify any latent demand (i.e. if they had access to more pitches they could they field more teams?)'*

- 6.15 The analysis carried out in Sections 5 enables us to provide an up to date picture of requirements relating to outdoor sports. This helps us to determine not only whether the additional demand that will be generated by the development can be sustained by the existing infrastructure, but also to understand whether there are any opportunities to deliver additional facilities that could bring added value to the development.

### **Sports Facility Calculator (SFC)**

- 6.16 The SFC covers Swimming pools, Sports halls, Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) and Indoor bowls centres.
- 6.17 It helps to quantify the demand for these facilities, providing an understanding of the additional demand that the population is likely to generate. Like the Playing Pitch Calculator, it does not take into account the existing supply of facilities – this means that the results must then be considered in the context of the findings of Section 4 (adequacy of current provision).
- 6.18 The calculator can also be used to inform decision making in relation to the cost of off-site contributions (where these are identified as being required) as well as to understand where on site provision is required. This will be part of the negotiation process in relation to S106 agreements.
- 6.19 Table 6.2 sets out the application of the Sports Facility Calculator for the proposed new development and demonstrates that the new development will generate relatively little demand in terms of indoor sports facilities. It is based upon the provision of 600 new dwellings.
- 6.20 The Sports Facility Calculator also includes a cost for AGPs. We have however used the PPC for AGPs (which is more bespoke to local demand) and have therefore excluded this from Table 6.2 below.

**Table 6.2 – Demand Generated by New Development**

| Facility Type  | Demand Generated by Land at Croxley Green | Estimated Cost |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Swimming Pools | 14.9 sqm (0.07 pools)                     | £330,488       |
| Sports Halls   | 0.35 courts – equivalent to 0.09 halls    | £273,238       |
| Indoor Bowls   | 0.02 rinks                                | £10,560        |

### **Tennis Calculator**

- 6.21 A new calculator has been developed by Sport England, in partnership with the LTA, to estimate the demand that a new development will generate for tennis..
- 6.22 Use of this calculator suggests that the proposed new development will generate 28 visits per week to a tennis court. This equates to demand for 0.18 courts (£21,226).

### Implications for proposed development at Croxley Green – Creation of a Sports Strategy

- 6.23 Policy in both the existing Local Plan and the emerging Local Plan acknowledge the impact that new development will have in generating additional demand, and require that this is considered (in the context of new provision / contributions towards existing provision) as part of the planning process.
- 6.24 The calculations set out in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 confirm the scale of demand that the proposed new development in Croxley Green will generate. This additional demand then needs to be considered in the context of the existing infrastructure in order to create a sports strategy for the development.
- 6.25 Table 6.3 therefore draws upon the information presented in Sections 4 and 5, as well as the results of the SFC and PPC (Tables 6.1 and 6.2) and evaluates whether the existing infrastructure is able to accommodate the existing (and projected future) demand and the implications of this for the Sports Strategy.

**Table 6.3 – Implications for Proposed Development**

| Facility Type             | Is existing infrastructure adequate?                                                                                                                                                                      | Impact of Development     | On Site Provision Justified? | Off Site Contribution justified?                                                                                                                                                | Justification                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sports Halls</b>       | Yes – strategy reported existing facilities to be adequate to meet current and projected future demand.<br><br>New hall since developed at Croxley Danes School. Strategy focuses on maintaining quality. | 0.39 courts               | No                           | No clear requirements as existing provision is largely adequate in qualitative terms, but potential justification as strategy seeks to maintain quality of existing facilities. | No justification for on-site facilities as supply is now adequate.<br><br>Qualitative improvements potentially required to ensure facilities continue to meet demand, this should be part of overall s106 discussions with the Council. Potential requirements include Rickmansworth School / Croxley Danes School.                  |
| <b>Swimming Pools</b>     | Yes – strategy reported existing facilities to be adequate to meet current and projected future demand.<br><br>New pool since developed.<br><br>Strategy focuses on maintaining quality.                  | 0.07 pools                | No                           | No clear requirements as existing provision is largely adequate in qualitative terms. but potential justification as strategy seeks to maintain quality of existing facilities. | No justification for on-site facilities as supply is now adequate.<br><br>Qualitative improvements potentially required to ensure facilities continue to meet demand, this should be part of overall s106 discussions with the Council. Closest pools potentially requiring investment are William Penn LC and Rickmansworth School. |
| <b>Health and Fitness</b> | Strategy reports quantitative deficit, but access to facilities in neighbouring authorities means new provision not prioritised.                                                                          | Excluded from calculators | No                           | No                                                                                                                                                                              | No clear evidence demand cannot be met, or that qualitative improvements are required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

| Facility Type                | Is existing infrastructure adequate?                                                                                                                             | Impact of Development                                                                                    | On Site Provision Justified?                                                                                                         | Off Site Contribution justified? | Justification                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Community Halls</b>       | Strategy reports existing provision to be adequate.<br><br>Recent changes mean greater demand now exists.                                                        | Excluded from calculators, but very low.                                                                 | No                                                                                                                                   | No                               | No clear mechanism for securing contributions.<br><br>Consultation suggests on site provision would be desirable, but would represent added value only. Could be part of a community building offer, encompassing a small hall.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Specialist Facilities</b> | Some new provision required to accommodate gymnastic clubs.                                                                                                      | Excluded from calculators.                                                                               | No                                                                                                                                   | No                               | This is a large scale requirement.<br><br>No requirements from development.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Football</b>              | No. PPS identifies deficiencies in current and projected future provision.<br><br>These have been exacerbated since PPS was created.<br><br>Gaps also in 3G AGP. | 0.46 adult football pitches. 0.75 youth pitches and 0.67 mini pitches.<br><br>3G provision - 0.1 3G AGPs | Demand from development cannot be met.<br><br>But scale of development is not necessarily large enough to require on site provision. | Yes (grass)<br>Yes (3G)          | Clear evidence that provision is insufficient to accommodate demand from new development.<br><br>Demand equates to greater than 0.5 of youth and mini football pitches, but for all forms of football is less than one pitch. On site provision to be considered, but contributions towards football pitches required if not deliverable.<br><br>Whilst demand for 3G also cannot be met, the scale of the development is insufficient to warrant on site provision. |
| <b>Cricket</b>               | No. PPS identified that there was no spare capacity.<br><br>Participation growth means that this position is now exacerbated.                                    | 0.17 pitches                                                                                             | Demand from development cannot be met.<br><br>But scale of development is not large enough to require on site provision.             | Yes                              | Clear evidence that provision is insufficient to accommodate demand from new development.<br><br>Scale of development alone means on site provision is not necessarily justified (although on site provision would add value). Contributions towards off site provision required.                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Rugby Union</b>           | No. PPS identified both existing and projected future deficiencies in provision.                                                                                 | 0.06                                                                                                     | Demand from development cannot be met.<br><br>But scale of development is not large enough to require on site provision              | Yes                              | Clear evidence that provision is insufficient to accommodate demand from new development.<br><br>Qualitative improvement to Chess Valley RFC identified in strategy as key to addressing deficiency.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Hockey</b>                | Yes – both current and projected future demand can be accommodated within existing infrastructure.                                                               | 0.02 pitches                                                                                             | No. There is spare capacity to accommodate demand that will be generated                                                             | No                               | Adequate capacity already available to accommodate demand from new development.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

| Facility Type    | Is existing infrastructure adequate?                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Impact of Development      | On Site Provision Justified?                                     | Off Site Contribution justified?                                 | Justification                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                            |                                                                  |                                                                  | That said, potential requirement to support ongoing maintenance of facilities.                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Tennis</b>    | Clubs are approaching capacity, including nearby club in Croxley Green. Public facilities are underused, but qualitative issues exist. Additional facilities have been provided in Croxley Green since PPS meaning in quantitative terms, provision is adequate. | 0.18 courts                | No. Spare capacity to accommodate demand that will be generated  | Yes                                                              | No clear rationale for on-site provision – existing supply already adequate and able to sustain additional demand.<br><br>Clear requirement however for contribution due to poor quality of existing public infrastructure – particularly at Baldwins Lane Recreation Ground. |
| <b>Bowls</b>     | PPS confirms that facilities are well used, but that there is spare capacity, and no new provision is required.                                                                                                                                                  | Excluded from calculators. | No. Spare capacity to accommodate demand that will be generated. | No clear requirements as existing provision is largely adequate. | No clear rationale for on-site provision – existing supply already adequate and able to sustain additional demand.<br><br>No clear improvements required to ensure that future demand can be met.                                                                             |
| <b>Athletics</b> | No formal tracks required. PPS and consultation suggest that informal opportunities for athletics should be considered as part of new development                                                                                                                | Excluded from calculators. | Potentially.                                                     | No                                                               | No requirement to contribute to off-site provision – this is adequate.<br><br>PPS reports that new development should consider integrating opportunities for athletics / physical activity within wider open spaces.                                                          |

6.26 Table 6.3 therefore suggests that based upon the evidence presented in Sections 3 and 4, supply is already sufficient to meet the anticipated growth in demand that will be generated by the new development in the following sports facilities:

Swimming  
Sports halls  
Health and fitness (although opportunity to potentially add value by providing such a facility in a community hall setting)  
Squash

Community halls  
Hockey.

- 6.27 For the above sports, the amount of facilities that are already provided are able to sustain the current and projected future demand, and more specifically the demand that will be generated by the proposed new development in Croxley Green. It may be that contributions are expected towards some of these facilities (towards maintenance / improvement of existing sites), particularly where the nearest facilities are ageing. This will be part of the s106 negotiation process and considered against other requirements.
- 6.28 For sports where demand cannot be met by the existing infrastructure, calculators suggest that the development in itself will not necessarily generate enough demand to require on site provision. With evidence that the existing facilities cannot sustain the additional demand, contributions will be required to support necessary improvements. There may also be opportunities to meet needs on site, and to develop a package that adds value to the local community, by meeting and exceeding baseline requirements.
- 6.29 For sports where provision is inadequate, we therefore explore the potential solutions / opportunities in more detail.

**Rugby union** - whilst it is clear that there is not enough capacity at existing rugby union sites, the provision of new pitches would effectively create a satellite facility for Chess Valley RUFC. This does not deliver on the rugby club ethos, which prioritises hosting all activity (or as much as possible) at the club base. Both the PPS and consultation with the RFU report that maximising capacity at the club facilities is the key priority. At Chess Valley RFC, capacity is significantly restricted by several factors, specifically;

Quality of pitches  
Lack of floodlighting  
Poor ancillary facilities.

To address the impact of the proposed development therefore, financial contributions should be made towards improvements to facilities at Chess Valley RFC to improve capacity at this site.

**Cricket** – analysis clearly demonstrates that there is not enough capacity in the existing infrastructure and the new demand generated by the development cannot be met. The PPC however suggests that the additional demand that will be generated is not enough to require on site cricket provision (below 1 pitch). It is clear however that additional capacity is required. There are no existing grass cricket squares in Croxley Green, but since the development of the PPS, a new club has been created. Match play currently takes place on an NTP at Croxley Guild of Sport. With the use of NTP restricted (certainly to lower divisions in the senior league) investment could consequently be channelled into this site to provide a grass square. Alternatively, consultation demonstrates that the qualitative issues identified in the PPS at Rickmansworth CC and Bushey CC continue to exist, and investment is required to address these and improve the capacity of the grounds for the clubs.

As an alternative, with consultation with the Council and the Cricket Board demonstrating that issues with the supply of facilities for cricket are one of the greatest priorities in Three Rivers, and specifically the Croxley Green area, there would also be scope for the proposed development to add extra value, by delivering a new grass square for cricket on-site. This could contribute to meeting existing deficiencies as well as compensating for the impact of new development. This would bring significant additional value to the proposed development and could potentially sit well within the country park setting.

For **football**, it is evident that the existing supply is insufficient, and that the new development will exacerbate this. The calculator suggests that the new development will generate demand equivalent to less than half a senior pitch, and just over half for youth pitch and small sized pitches. In the context of significant unmet demand for football, although the demand that will be generated is below one pitch, on site provision could be considered, and this would add value to the development. Alternatively, there are opportunities to improve the quality of facilities in the vicinity of the proposed development site, with Baldwins Lane Recreation Ground identified for improvement, and a further site closed by the Council this year due to the quality issues that are being experienced. Investment into these facilities would add extra capacity to the existing infrastructure. Any contributions towards grass pitches will be required alongside contributions towards 3G provision. Pressures on provision have however now reached such a large scale that an alternative strategy could be employed, with all contributions for football directed towards the provision of an AGP, which would offer much higher levels of capacity and consequently have greater impact in addressing existing deficiencies, as well as accommodating the increase in demand generated by the development. This contribution could be directed towards off site provision, potentially at Croxley Danes School, which was the location prioritised in the PPS (but not subsequently delivered). The creation of new AGP was highlighted as a key priority by both Hertfordshire FA and Three Rivers District Council, with both parties recognising the inroads that such a facility could make into addressing the deficiencies. There are therefore different delivery strategies that could be adopted to meet the needs of football clubs and to mitigate the impact of the proposed development.

For **tennis**, it is clear that whilst infrastructure is not able to meet demand, this occurs primarily due to the poor quality of existing facilities, rather than a need for new provision. The PPS identifies a need to improve facilities at Baldwins Lane Recreation Ground and consultation demonstrates that this need remains. This clear requirement means that off-site improvements will deliver the greatest benefits. Consultation has also demonstrated an aspiration for padel facilities. With evidence that tennis courts would be best placed off site, this could be delivered in isolation as part of the proposed new development, although this may be a commercially led decision, as there is no clear requirement for padel through policy

For athletics, there is adequate formal provision, but an aspiration is identified to integrate more informal athletics facilities into new developments. This could potentially be delivered within the country park setting.

6.30 The above issues give rise to several options that could be provided as part of a sports strategy for the proposed development.

6.31 Table 6.3 therefore sets out a range of strategies to deliver the sporting requirements. Responding directly to the evidence that has been collated, all options:

Propose off site contributions towards tennis – with a suggested focus on improvement of public facilities at Baldwins Lane Recreation Ground

Include contributions towards improvement of facilities at Chess Valley RUFC. There is evidenced need that pitch improvement works, floodlighting and enhanced ancillary provision are all required

Suggest that negotiation will be required in relation to indoor facilities. There is no on site requirement for sport specific facilities, and only limited evidence to suggest that off-site contributions are needed. It is perhaps swimming pools where facilities are ageing that the greatest evidence of a requirement for contributions is evident. A community hall is also being considered, and it may be that health and fitness could be integrated into this.



- 6.32 The key differences between the options is how needs for football and cricket are delivered. For football, there is clear evidence that the existing infrastructure cannot accommodate the demand that will be generated. What is more questionable however, given the scale of the pressures that are identified in Croxley Green, and the growth in participation that has taken place, is whether new / improved grass pitches represent the best solution – or whether an AGP (on or off site), which would offer significantly higher capacity and consequently have greater impact in reducing deficiencies would be the best solution for sport.
- 6.33 For cricket, evidence also clearly demonstrates that the new demand that will be generated cannot be accommodated. The new development will not contain enough houses by itself to require new cricket provision, but significant benefit could be delivered from investment into cricket in the area. There is also an opportunity to add value, if a cricket pitch could be delivered on site.
- 6.34 Table 6.3 sets out a series of options that would mitigate the impact of the development and deliver benefit to the existing communities. Off-site contributions will be informed by the use of the PPC (set out earlier in this section).

**Table 6.3 – Potential Options for Sports Strategy**

| Option                                  | Package                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 – Off site mitigation                 | Off-site contribution to grass football pitches, 3G AGP, rugby, cricket and tennis<br>Negotiation required in relation to indoor facility contributions (off site), and hockey.                                                   | Mitigates the impact of the development<br>Sites to benefit to be agreed with Council, but suggested to include Chess Valley RFC, Baldwins Lane Recreation Ground (tennis), Council venue (football) and Croxley Guild of Sport (Cricket) or Bushey CC / Rickmansworth CC.                                                           |
| 2 – Off site mitigation focusing on AGP | Off-site contribution to rugby, cricket and tennis<br>Larger contribution to 3G AGP (replacing contribution to grass football pitches)<br>Negotiation required in relation to indoor facility contributions and hockey (off site) | Mitigates the impact of the development<br>Sites for cricket / tennis / rugby suggested as above<br>Contribution to 3G AGP at Croxley Danes School for football                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 3 – On site provision – added value     | Grass cricket ground on site<br>Football pitches provided on cricket outfield<br>Off-site contributions to 3G AGP, rugby union, tennis<br><br>This option could be extended further to create a sports hub (AGP also on site).    | Cricket needs that cannot be met are delivered on site – this represents added value (calculator shows impact of development to be less than a pitch).<br>Football pitches can be delivered on outfield to add further value<br>Also addresses impact created on other sports through off site contributions (in line with option 1) |

- 6.35 The brief that was set for the sports strategy was to explore opportunities to add extra value, as well as to understand the baseline requirements. Options 1 and 2 provide the baseline requirements (with 2 responding to the need to increase capacity for football through additional



3G AGP) and will deliver significant benefit to the existing local community while Option 3 would add further value and address wider need through on site provision.

- 6.36 It is important to note that the provision of a new primary school as part of the proposed development offers a potential opportunity to deliver extra community value through facilities through the provision of a secured community use agreement, coupled with an effective design, which includes separate access to the school fields and the provision of accessible ancillary facilities. Whilst encouraged as part of Local Plan policy, early discussions with Sport England in relation to this scheme confirmed that they would not wish to see community use of the primary school as the only sporting benefit offered. There are considered to be significant limitations with community use of grass pitches at a primary school, and it was recommended that this was delivered to offer additional benefit only, rather than presented as part of the strategy to mitigate the impact of the proposed development.
- 6.37 Community use of school sites is promoted in the Local Plan (Section 24). If designed effectively, with separate access to the school fields (and the provision of accessible toilets), the school playing fields could function for curricular use during the week and become the home of a mini football club at weekends. It is recognised that there are challenges in providing community use of school sites, however Sport England provides guidance as to how facilities can be delivered effectively. <https://www.sportengland.org/funds-and-campaigns/use-our-school>
- 6.38 It is therefore suggested that in addition to the options set out in Section 3 above, a CUA is pursued at the primary school to add local community value.

### **Implementing the Sports Strategy on the New Development**

- 6.39 The above options have fed directly into the masterplanning process. The team were keen to add value and therefore the opportunity to deliver Option 3, which would entailed the provision of both football and cricket on site, significantly over providing in terms of the impact of the development was explored in full.
- 6.40 Unfortunately, the detailed work that was undertaken demonstrated that the delivery of on-site sports facilities for cricket (and / or football) was not possible for a variety of reasons. These include;

**From an engineering viewpoint**, the existing topography across the site is very steep and in places up to 1 in 10, which does not lend itself to the provision of sports fields which need to comply with Sport England standards. There would need to be significant engineering works to facilitate a plateau for the sports provision - approximately 20,000m<sup>3</sup> earthworks to flatten an appropriate area of the site with areas needing to be lowered or raised by 4m or more.'

**From a landscape perspective** - there are several additional influences within these parts of the Site, including the Ancient Woodland (and proposed 30m buffers around them), as well as a public footpath. These elements together mean that the cut and fill required to achieve a level platform suitable for sports pitches is only achievable within two potential areas of public open space on the development. A cricket pitch can just be accommodated to the north of the proposed housing and south of the existing public footpath, however the earthworks would extend into the Ancient Woodland buffers. Further more, this area has a natural valley form at the moment, and the introduction of sports pitches would remove this feature, resulting in a substantial effect on the natural landform and landscape character of the area. While the land to the north of the public footpath is more level, significant earthworks would still be required to accommodate pitches here. This, alongside the associated lighting, club house, parking and access, would intrude into a sensitive part of the Site which is currently associated with the woodland around it, and which ought to be retained more rural in character to minimise wider landscape harm beyond the Site.

**In relation to highways;** If sports provision is to be made on site it makes most sense for it to be provided as close to the edge of the built form as reasonably possible, i.e to the south of the PROW running west: east across the northern area of the site. This would allow parking to be provided close to the sports provision and to enable emergency access through the development. Sports provision to the north of the PROW would isolate the pitches from the development and any parking provision. In terms of emergency access provision, it is likely that this would have to be undertaken via Rousebarn Lane and a link from that single track route. Although technically a highway, that route is primarily used by active travel modes and is far from ideal for emergency vehicle access. This is far from an ideal route especially as there is a car park further to the north on Rousebarn Lane and it is difficult to envisage an emergency vehicle passing a car on this route without provision of passing areas along the route.

- 6.41 Discussion was also held at the Design Review Panel in relation to the provision of on site sports facilities. The following feedback was received;

*The extensive Country Park will wrap around the north and east of the development and will provide a wonderful facility for new and established local residents. Its location may provide an appropriate transition to the wider countryside and facilitate linkages into the local footpath network thereby improving the green infrastructure design more widely. Again for its success to be optimised, it's detailed design may be critical. There was a discussion during the presentation about whether a cricket pitch or other more formal sports facility could be provided in this area. The Panel recognises that on one hand, such facilities could be welcome in the local area and benefit both existing and future residents but there are practical considerations which may make this challenging. First of all, there is the topography, which although only gently undulating, will be challenging in terms of creating a suitably flat playing surface. In addition, the potential need to accommodate changing accommodation, buildings for pitch maintenance and car parking could begin to impact negatively on the special character of the area. This is also an area where a floodlit facility may not be appropriate. It is suggested it may be beneficial for the potential impact of parking on street scenes and public squares to be carefully considered and a Design Code may be a useful tool in this regard.*

- 6.42 It has therefore been concluded that either Option 1 or 2 will form the basis of the sports strategy. This will deliver significant off site benefits for a range of sports and respond directly to the need that will be generated by the development, taking into account the current facility infrastructure.
- 6.43 Given that it has not been possible to integrate on site formal outdoor sports facilities within the site, consideration is now being given to the provision of an informal Newgen active track within the country park setting. This responds to the aspirations set out in the PPS.
- 6.44 Early discussions with Sport England have demonstrated support for the approach set out in this sports strategy.

#### **Active Design**

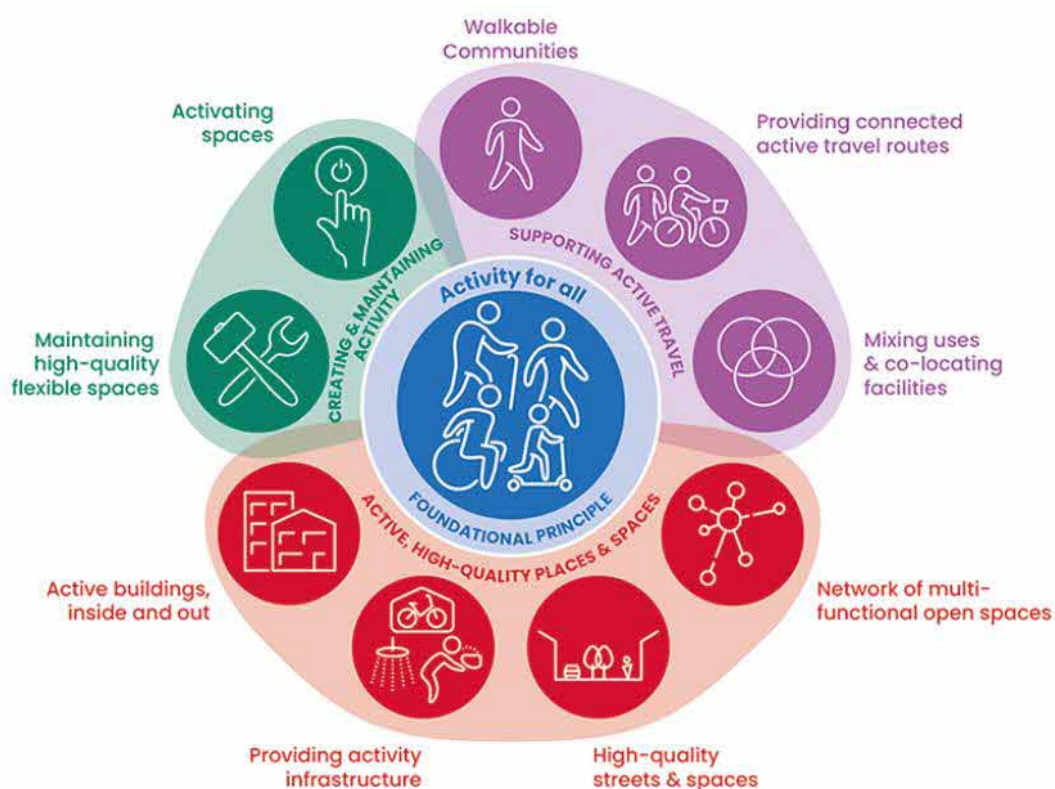
- 6.45 Alongside the provision of on-site sports facilities, and off site contributions, active design has been a key consideration of the development. The principles of active design support the delivery of strong, sustainable connections with nearby neighbourhoods and with existing sports facilities.
- 6.46 Active Design takes a fresh look at the opportunities to encourage and promote sport and physical activity through the design and layout of the built environment to support a step change towards healthier and more active lifestyles. The foundation principle is activity for all, and this is supported by the remaining principles that are brought together under the themes of;

Supporting active travel  
Creating and maintaining activity

Creating active, high quality, places and spaces.

- 6.47 Figure 6.1 (extracted directly from Sport England's Active Design Guidance) sets out the key elements that have been considered to create a successful development.

**Figure 6.1 – Key Principles of Active Design Guidance**



- 6.48 The Health Impact Assessment (RPS November 2024) summarises how the proposed development responds to each of the principles within this Active Design Framework.

### Summary

- 6.49 This paper has evaluated the leisure needs for the proposed development at Croxley Green. It considers both the adequacy of current provision, and the ability of the existing infrastructure to sustain the growth that is proposed in the context of the existing provision.
- 6.50 In order to arrive at the conclusions set out, we have used the Playing Pitch Assessment and Strategy (2019) and the Built Facilities Strategy (also 2019) and checked and challenged these through consultation with Three Rivers District Council and the relevant National Governing Bodies of Sport.
- 6.51 We have also encapsulated the principles set out in the Three Rivers District Developers Toolkit, which was prepared alongside the PPS. This requires the use of both the Sports Facilities Calculator (SFC) and Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC) to determine the impact of the proposed development.
- 6.52 The paper sets out three potential delivery options, all of which respond directly to need and take into account the demand that will be generated by the proposed development.

- 6.53 Given that subsequent work has demonstrated that on site delivery to add value is not possible, Options 1 and 2 are now put forward as potential approaches to mitigate the impact of the proposed development. These off site contributions will bring significant off site benefit to the existing sporting infrastructure. On site, the development will benefit from careful consideration of active design principles within the masterplan.
- 6.54 Early discussions with Sport England have demonstrated support for the approach set out in this sports strategy.