

Representer: Tring Sports Forum
Respondent reference: ID 489516
Hearing Session: Wednesday 17 October 2012 10.00-13.00

NB. Question 12.5 has been sub-divided and dealt with as two distinct questions

Question: 12.5(i) Has the Council satisfactorily addressed the need for leisure and sporting facilities in Tring?

1. We would contend that the Council has not satisfactorily addressed the need for leisure and sporting facilities in Tring.
2. What we are trying to achieve is an acknowledgment in the Core Strategy that Tring has a need for significant extra space for sport in order to meet an exceptionally high (and growing) local demand and a current lack of facilities to meet that demand.

We are being thwarted by the inaccuracy of a key piece of evidence relied upon by Dacorum BC Strategic Planning in assessing leisure needs, a report delivered in October 2006 by a firm of consultants, Knight, Kavanagh and Page ("KKP"). This report provides the evidence base for a number of Dacorum's planning documents, including the 2008 Open Space Study.

Our own survey evidence, submitted to Dacorum BC on 23 September 2010 (see Appendix A), clearly demonstrates that the KKP report vastly under-estimated playing numbers and the demand for sporting facilities in Tring, while significantly over-estimating the amount of sporting facilities available in the town.

3. Responding to our earlier suggestion in respect of Paragraph 15.18 (Delivering Leisure Needs) that "the supporting evidence base to the Core Strategy should be updated, and the Spatial Strategy for Tring consequently amended, to reflect the actual (higher) need for open space and sports facilities in the town", Dacorum BC sees no reason for any change and claims that "current technical information is considered to be adequate to support the Core Strategy" (SUB 5, Report of Representations, Part 2, Table 2, Core Strategy Reference: Policy CS23).

The Council has however offered the following small addition of wording to the Core Strategy: "An active sporting community wants to promote indoor and outdoor sport. Investment, which helps to maintain facilities, provides appropriate new space and benefits the town, will be supported." (MC 91).

Whilst we appreciate the Council now recognise the active sporting community in Tring, and its need for special attention, the first sentence of the proposed minor change does not unfortunately acknowledge the level of current demand, and clouds the issue by suggesting that the clubs are trying to increase demand. It also fails to acknowledge the current shortage of facilities for current need and the parlous state of Tring Sports Centre. What is on offer is a mere sop to Tring's requirements.

4. Conclusion

- Paragraph 22, as it relates to sporting and leisure facilities, is "unsound".
- The paragraph fails the "justified" soundness criterion.
- The Tring Place Strategy flies in the face of the facts, unsupported by a robust and credible evidence base.

- In order to be sound, the Core Strategy should acknowledge the need for increased sporting facilities in Tring and accept evidence provided by Tring Sports Forum, which uses data derived from a physical inspection of facilities and membership numbers obtained directly from the sports clubs.
- *Add at paragraph 22.2 (The Vision):* "meeting the demand from both the local community and local schools". *Insert new paragraph 22.10:* "A new or completely refurbished indoor sports facility (including a swimming pool and a full size outdoor astro-turf playing area) will be delivered to replace the existing Sports Centre facilities managed by SportSpace on Mortimer Hill, which are at the end of their serviceable life." *Insert new paragraph 22.11:* "New playing fields, primarily for community use, will be provided." *Amend proposed amendment MC 91 to* "A thriving and growing sporting community requires extra space for sports facilities to meet local demand. Investment, which helps to maintain facilities, provides appropriate new space and benefits the town, will be supported."

Question: 12.5(ii) Is Icknield Way the most appropriate location for new playing fields?

1. We would contend that Icknield Way is not the most appropriate location for new playing fields.
2. We would suggest that the following matter requires clarification. In its response (see page 68 of SUB 5, Report of Representations, Part 2, Table 2) Dacorum BC states that "the reference to playing fields under LA5 should remain". However, under proposed amendment MC 89, the Council proposes to *remove* the words "including playing fields" from the final sentence in paragraph 22.3, which would then read: "Tring will deliver around 480 new homes. This includes approximately 150 homes through a local allocation on the western edge of the town, together with affordable housing and new open space".
3. A number of reasons have already been put forward as to why land adjoining the proposed LA 5 housing development at Icknield Way is not the most appropriate location for new playing fields.

Whilst new housing obviously needs to be supported by additional open leisure space nearby, the Dacorum Sports Policy Statement that the Council will, where possible, enable clubs to manage sport and leisure facilities such as public courts and astro-turf provides a further reason as to why locating playing fields off Icknield Way would be a mistake. Additional playing fields required to support any increase in population would be better located where they can be effectively managed by local sports clubs, that is, at the eastern end of Tring.

4. Conclusion

- Paragraph 22 is "unsound".
- This paragraph fails the "justified" soundness criterion.
- The proposed location for these new playing fields is not "the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives".
- In order to be sound, the Core Strategy should adopt the change outlined below.
- *Delete at paragraph 22 LA 5 (Proposals Box):* "playing fields and".

NB. Please see also our Statement dealing with Question 8.1

APPENDIX (A) - Summary

Comparison between DBC commissioned report...

Dacorom Sport & Recreation Study - Outdoor Sports Assessment and Strategy & Action Plan - by Knight, Kavanagh & Page Oct '06
and

Actual physical and club contact survey by Tring Sports Forum - April/May '10

Highlights -

Rugby - 50% less pitches than reported, playing numbers over 450 more than reported

Cricket - playing numbers almost 30% more than reported

Hockey - pitches only 40% of what was reported, playing numbers 30 more than reported

Mini/Junior football - playing numbers 58% more than reported

Tennis - 21% less courts, 39% more teams

Overall - over 750 more people playing than reported, 27% less playing facilities than reported

Available playing facilities summary (pitches and courts)										
	Senior Football	Junior Football	Mini Football	Senior Rugby	Junior Rugby	Mini Rugby	Cricket	Hockey	Tennis	
DBC Report	11	4	n/a	6	4	n/a	5	5	14	
Current Actual	8	5	0	3	2	n/a	5	2	11	
Variance	-27%	+25%	n/a	-50%	-50%	n/a	no variance	-40%	-21%	

Numbers of active teams - summary										
	Senior Football	Junior Football	Mini Football	Senior Rugby	Junior Rugby	Mini Rugby	Cricket	Hockey	Tennis	
DBC Report	17	15	5	4	1	7	25	21	18	
Current Actual	15	22	10	4	17	14	35	24	25	
Variance %	-12%	+47%	+100%	no variance	+1700%	+100%	+29%	+13%	+39%	
Variance player no's	-24	+84	+50	no variance	+352	+105	+120	+30	+42	

NB Although there were increases in playing numbers in most sports between 2006 and 2010, the increase was nowhere near as large as the variances apparent above. Furthermore the numbers of facilities have hardly changed in this period. All of which would indicate that the commissioned report was wildly inaccurate and that DBC planners have been working with unreliable data.

APPENDIX (A) - DETAIL

Analysis of Tring Sports Facilities

Reviewing accuracy of:-

Dacorum Sport & Recreation Study Outdoor Sports

Area covered:
Tring Inci, Long Marston, Wigginton,
Abbury & Cow Roast

Row No.

Facilities Assessment and Strategy & Action Plan Oct '06

Current Actual Mar '10

Variance (reported v current actual)

Population - total

15659

12735

Facilities/Pitches

Reported figures for	KRP Report '06 Pitches/Courts	Teams	Known Actual '06 Pitches	Teams	Current Actual Mar '10 Pitches	Teams	Variance (reported v current actual) Pitches	Teams
Football - Senior	11	17	9	8	15	15		
Football - Junior	4	15	5	8	22	10		
Football - Mini	0	5	2	10	10	10		
Cricket - Senior	15	37	16	16	47	47	7% more	27% more
Cricket - Junior	5	15	4	9	4	11		
Cricket - Mini	0	10	1	13	1	18		
Rugby - Senior	5	25	5	25	5	35	no change	40% more
Rugby - Junior	6	4	3	4	3	4		
Rugby - Mini	4	1	2	14	2	17		
Hockey teams - senior	0	3 or 7?	0	0	0	14		
Hockey teams - Junior	10	12	5	30	5	35	50% less	292% more
Hockey pitches - grass	4	1	n/a	n/a	1	6		
Hockey pitches - ATP	1	21	3	2	24	24	60% less	14% more
Bowls - Greens	1	6	1	9	1	9		50% more
Tennis	14	18	11	25	11	25	22% less	39% more
Netball	3	0	0	3	0	3	no change	>300%

Schools

Tring School	Reported	Known Actual '06	Current Actual Mar '10	Variance (reported v current actual)
Football pitches senior	2	0	2	
Football pitches Junior	2	0	2	
Rugby pitches senior	2	2	2	
Rugby pitches Junior	1	1	1	
ATP	3	0	0	
Tennis courts	3	0	0	
Netball courts	3	0	0	

Primary schools

Football pitches Junior	3	2	2	
Football pitches mini	3	2	0	

Pitch provision summary

Reported	Known Actual '06	Current Actual Mar '10	Variance (reported v current actual)
Senior Football	11	6	5
Junior Fb	4	4	0
Sen Rugby	6	2	4
Jun Rugby	4	2	2
Cricket	5	5	0
Hockey	5	2	3

Teams summary

Reported	Known Actual '06	Current Actual Mar '10	Variance (reported v current actual)
Senior Football	17	5	12
Junior Fb	15	4	11
Mini Fb	22	10	12
Sen Rugby	15	4	11
Jun Rugby	15	1	14
Mini	15	7	8
Cricket	22	25	3
Hockey	22	21	1

APPENDIX (A) - Notes

Notes part 1 - Pitches

161616

Tring 11635 Tring Rural 1100 NB Dacorum SFDG Strategy document quotes Tring and villages at 16157

15 Pitches incl. Cow Roast x1, Icknield way x1, Miswell Lane x1, Mortimer Hill x1, Pendley x1 senior (TAFCC), Pound Meadow x1, Aldbury x1, Wigginton x1
16 Pitches incl. Tring school x 2 junior, TPCC x3, Pendley/Cow Lane x 3 Junior
17 No playable pitches but appropriate space at Bishops Wood and Grove Schools may have been in use in 2006

18 Includes TPCC x2, Long Marston x1, Aldbury x1, and no longer 1 at Cow Roast
19 Tring School Astro turf wicket in poor condition (school seeking to use TPCC)

20 Tring RUFC Pendley/Cow Lane x3
21 Pitches incl Tring School x2 junior
22 KKP Report contains conflicting data

23 1 grass pitch still at Cow Roast used for Junior coaching only

24 Incl Long Marston x2, Aldbury x1, TLTC x 6, Pound meadow x2 (3 at Tring School no longer usable)

25 Tring school 2x but not in safe playable condition

26 2x not in safe playable condition

27 Tring school x2
28 Space available at Grove and Bishops Wood - but not in use

29 Tennis
30 14

31 11 3 provided on a temp basis only by TPCC

32 Tennis
33 18
34 25

APPENDIX (A) - Notes (cont'd)

Notes Part 2 - Teams

- 12 Assumes 1 team for each village pitch, TRFC x 3, TCFC x2, 5 teams using public pitches (e.g. pub teams)
- 13 12 Tring Tornadoes teams - plus assumes 5 age group boys teams and 3 age group girls teams at Tring School plus 2 at Corinthian;
- 14 Tornadoes 10 mini teams plus assumes 1 team per primary school
- 15 Incl. 6 mens (4 x Sat, 2 x Sun) at TPCC, 1 ladies at TPCC, 3 at LM, 1 at Aldbury
- 16 assumes 4 age group boys teams at Tring school, 9 at TPCC, 5 at LM, assumes 6 at TPCC
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23 11 at TRFC and 6 age group teams at Tring school
- 24 14 at TRFC
- 25
- 26
- 27 11 at Tring HC, 7 at Berko HC
- 28 3 at Tring school, 2 at Tring HC, assumes 1 at Berko HC
- 29
- 30
- 31
- 32
- 33 9 leagues have teams entered by Tring Bowls club (i.e. not incl. friendlies)
- 34
- 35 Tring tennis senior x 9, plus assumes 6 junior, Long Marston assumes 6 senior, Tring school assumes 2 each boys and girls
- 36 Assumes an average of 3 at Tring School - based on recent years activity
- 37