

Homework item 29

Provide note on outdoor sports pitch provision at Handforth with reference to Total Fitness site (p25, ED18b)

1. The Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and Action Plan [ED 19] and the Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report [ED 19a] contain the updated Strategy, Assessment Report and Action Plans which are split into seven analysis areas; Congleton, Crewe, Macclesfield, Knutsford, Nantwich, Poynton and Wilmslow to coincide with the Borough's local area partnerships.
2. The PPS Assessment and Strategy includes analysis of football pitches (including 3G and Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs), cricket pitches, rugby union pitches, hockey pitches (sand/water-based AGPs) and lacrosse pitches.
3. Cheshire East Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan [ED 19] contains an analysis of the Wilmslow area (which includes Handforth) in terms of supply and demand for these sports. See [Page 106 in ED 19 for the Wilmslow area.](#)
4. Whilst tennis courts are included in the [Open Spaces Assessment](#), analysis of the demand for tennis is not currently included in the PPS. There is an intention to include all courts and greens including tennis in the 2023 new Outdoor Sports Strategy which will be fully supported by Sport England. Current tennis information is already shared with the Council from the Lawn Tennis Association who will become part of the working group behind the strategy, with the other NGB's.
5. The 2012 Open Spaces Assessment produced a comprehensive survey of all sports information, gathered through site visits by CEC and consultation with the owner/operator.
6. Since the original OSA, some information has been updated when changes have been known to the council. Neither the PPS or the OSA annually reinspect all sites. This would be unrealistic and is not required by Sport England
7. For the sports currently covered by the PPS, the annual review includes feedback and discussion with the relevant national governing bodies [NGB's] e.g. Cheshire FA to reflect changes in demand and growth and site conditions.
8. Because courts and green are currently not in the PPS the council relies on contact being made by sites directly, or where linked to planning apps, or from officers observations.
9. Courts and greens will be included in 2023 Outdoor Sports Strategy in recognition that tennis will benefit from same updating process annually.
10. The tennis court at Total Fitness in Handforth appears as site 32HA on Page [25 of the Outdoor Sport Technical Appendices](#) [ED18b].

Demand for sports pitches in Handforth

11. As set out in the Handforth Settlement Report [Ed 31] page 3, Handforth is likely to see approximately 2,200 new homes built over the plan period to 2030.
12. In addition to providing land to meet its own development requirements, Handforth is the location for a new settlement (North Cheshire Growth Village, Handforth East, reference LPS 33, and now referred to as The Garden Village at Handforth) to assist in meeting development needs arising across the northern sub-area of the borough.
13. [The Garden Village at Handforth SDP 2018](#) contains aspirations for sports facilities under the Land uses 5 'Sports facilities' key development requirement, which accord with the Playing Pitch Strategy 2021 [ED 19a]

Land uses 5 Sports facilities

As above, formal sports pitches (including ancillary facilities) should be co-located with the primary school and community centre (village hall). The pitches should include a grass pitch area incorporating one adult grass football pitch; grass field area to double as outside flexible grass space for the primary school activities; and half-size/junior floodlit 3g artificial grass area to meet the needs of 9 v 9 football and other appropriate sports activities. The ancillary facilities should include changing rooms and rooms for physical activity classes (e.g. pilates, yoga). All new sports provision should be in line with an adopted up to date and robust Playing Pitch Strategy and Indoor Sports Strategy published by the council, in accordance with LPS Policy SC 2 'Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities and in consultation with Sport England.

14. There is a Sports Needs Assessment approved as a supporting document on SPD <https://cheshireeast-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/planning/spd/handforth> and there is an updated SNA submitted as part of current application.

Information from the Lawn Tennis Association

15. There are 9 tennis clubs within 3 miles of the Total Fitness site. All operate under a membership structure with non-members access to coaching programmes.
16. Within 3 miles of Total Fitness there is only the park facility at Handforth offering courts for casual public play.
17. The view of the Lawn Tennis Association is that if the courts at Total Fitness were to be lost it would have limited impact on regular players, however the courts could potentially provide an opportunity for casual participation which is limited in the Handforth area. An investment into improving (increasing the number of playing hours with the installation of floodlights) at other tennis facilities could be sought if these courts were to be lost.

18. Whilst it appears there is good tennis club provision within a 10 minute radius of Total Fitness, some clubs are close to capacity (based on the LTA's guideline for club capacity of 40 members per non-floodlit and 60 members per floodlit court and their court bookings/programmes).
19. The greatest shortfall is on community access tennis courts for casual play. The LTA have said they would challenge the removal of the Total Fitness court from the provision. "We consider this a loss of tennis provision regardless of their recent lack of maintenance and allowing the courts to deteriorate. We know that there are differences in how people want to consume their tennis and there is potential at a commercial club for traditional and non-traditional tennis (e.g. Cardio Tennis).

Sports Needs Assessment for all sports

20. Finally should a planning application come in for the tennis court area at Total fitness, the council would ask for a Sports Needs Assessment on tennis to be carried out. Sport England maintain that the space has other sports potential even if a SNA shows tennis courts are not required or demand can be met by investment elsewhere.