

Tunbridge Wells Local Plan

Stage 3 Evidence Base Documents Consultations

23rd October 2024

Policy STR/SS1 – The Strategy for Paddock Wood Including Land at east Capel

Infrastructure delivery in the Paddock Wood Growth area is supported by the Paddock Wood Growth Follow-on Study (October 2023) – this document was created following issues raised by the inspector’s initial findings and outlines a revised growth strategy for the area. This document was not created in collaboration with Sport England or the National Governing Bodies for Sport and is not a comprehensive strategy assessing the current provision of sport facilities and the future needs in the area. Given the delivery of over 2,500 homes in the area and an increase in demand for sport and physical activity provision, Sport England would highly recommend an updated Playing Pitch Strategy and Built Facilities Strategy is conducted to understand the strategic need for sport facilities in the area.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan (August 2024)

The evidence base that is supporting the infrastructure delivery plan for Theme 6: Community, Public and Social Services, under Community Centres and Related Strategies and evidence is currently out of date. The Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Built Sports Facilities Assessment (2018) is over six years old and as a guide under Sport England’s Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance, if no review and update has been carried out within five years of the assessment being completed, the assessment and the information on which it is based would be considered to be out of date.

Page 104 and 105 of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan notes that Funding Sources will be Section 106, Sport England and Governing Bodies. Sport England are concerned that a lack of understanding of financial support to create sustainable sports provision has properly been considered. Conversations should take place with all NGB’s to produce a management plan to better understand what financial support will be possible.

The NPPF Paragraph 31 states that "The preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence." Policy STR/SS1 plus the Infrastructure Delivery Plan have not been backed up by up-to-date evidence. Sport England have continued to encourage Tunbridge Wells to prepare an updated Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and Built Facilities Strategy (BFS) which were adopted in 2017 and are now out of date. There has been assessments done in 2018 and 2019 but Sport England have not had any oversight of these assessments. We would encourage a PPS and BFS to be done in collaboration with the NGB's so that a full review of the existing facilities for sport and recreation can be done. This is important to better understand the strategic needs in Paddock Wood with the delivery of over 2,500 homes.

If you would like any further information or advice please contact me at the address below.

Yours sincerely,

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