

STATEMENT FOR LPP2 HEARING: WINCHESTER TOWN

Organisation: The Winchester Sport Art and Leisure Trust (Winchester SALT)

Representor number: 51988

Hearing session: Wednesday 20th July AM, WINCHESTER TOWN Policies WIN 1-4, Matter 14

Background

The Winchester Sport Art and Leisure Trust (Winchester SALT) is a registered charity (no 1165047), which works to enhance community sport, art and leisure in the Winchester Town area and its surrounds.

Winchester SALT is a small charity run entirely by volunteers. All of its projects are undertaken in collaboration and through partnership. The charity was formed to take forward and complement previous work undertaken by community volunteers through the Winchester Fit for the Future project. This project began in 2011 and focuses on delivering a sustainable legacy for Winchester from the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics. Specifically, it has undertaken research and analysis to develop community proposals for new sports and leisure facilities.

Images at [Annex A](#) show a conceptual layout for a 'community sport and recreational hub' at Bar End just off Junction 10 of the M3. Bar End is one of two large public sites for sport and recreation serving Winchester Town and appears on LPP2 Policy Map 26 (Winchester East).

LPP2: Key Issues

We have several concerns about the development process and content of LPP2 ("the Plan").

In summary:

- The process has not adequately engaged the local sports sector in the development of Plan policies related to built facilities or open space, nor in the generation of the evidence base underpinning these policies;
- The process has misled local people into thinking that the public sports grounds in the Winchester Town area would be offered some protection under the Plan through the application of policy DM4;
- The Plan does not clearly identify sites for community sport and recreation. Existing public sports grounds are not distinguished from other "countryside". No site(s) are allocated for the provision of built facilities to serve Winchester Town and the surrounding District.

On this basis, we consider that the Plan has not been "positively prepared" nor "fully justified".

LPP2 Process

Local people working in the sports sector have tried to engage constructively with the development of the Plan. Specifically, volunteers from Winchester SALT (and the Winchester Fit for the Future project) have made unsolicited inputs to the process to develop the Plan, including:

1. A submission in response to the Local Development Framework 'Plans for Places... after Blueprint' consultation (August 2011);
2. A response to 'Vision for Winchester 2012-2017' consultation (May 2012), which annexed the Winchester Fit for the Future outline proposals for a new community sports facilities in Winchester;
3. A comment form in response to consultation on the Draft LPP2 (December 2014);
4. A comment form in response to publication of the pre-submission LPP2 (December 2015).

We have also engaged in several consultations related to the development of new sport and leisure facilities in Winchester, which were not directly related to development of the Plan.

Winchester City Council (WCC) commissioned a built facilities study from Knight Kavanagh & Page, to inform development of the Plan. This study was published in January 2014. However, most local sports sector organisations, including many large community sports clubs and the Winchester Fit for the Future project, were not consulted through the study. Nor were their comments sought on the study following its publication. Nevertheless, the study highlighted serious shortfalls in community accessible water (pool) space and sports halls, in particular.

WCC also prepared an Open Space Strategy to inform development of Local Plan Part 1. This was updated in September 2015 to sit alongside LPP2. This 2015-16 Open Space Strategy identifies a shortfall of public sports grounds in the Winchester Town area of 11.10 hectares (p.73). All the public sports grounds in the Winchester Town area (with the exception of the synthetic turf pitch at Henry Beaufort School that is open to those who have booked it only) are located just outside the settlement boundary. In the Draft LPP2 that was consulted on in late 2014, all these sports grounds had policy DM5 on "protecting open areas" (now DM4) applied to them; in the pre-submission version of the Plan this policy and the protection it affords had been removed without explanation.

We consider that the application of then policy DM5 on "protecting open areas" in the 2014 draft Plan gave local residents a false sense of security regarding the status of the public sports grounds (and other open spaces around the settlement boundary) in the Winchester Town area. It is reasonable to assume that, had this policy not been applied in the draft Plan, local residents may have sought to protect such open space through Local Green Space designation, consistent with NPPF paragraphs 76 and 77.

LPP2 Policies

NPPF paragraph 14 makes clear that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs. The Plan policies for Winchester Town do not respond to the evidence base developed to inform the Plan, in respect of the assessed needs for community sport and leisure facilities.

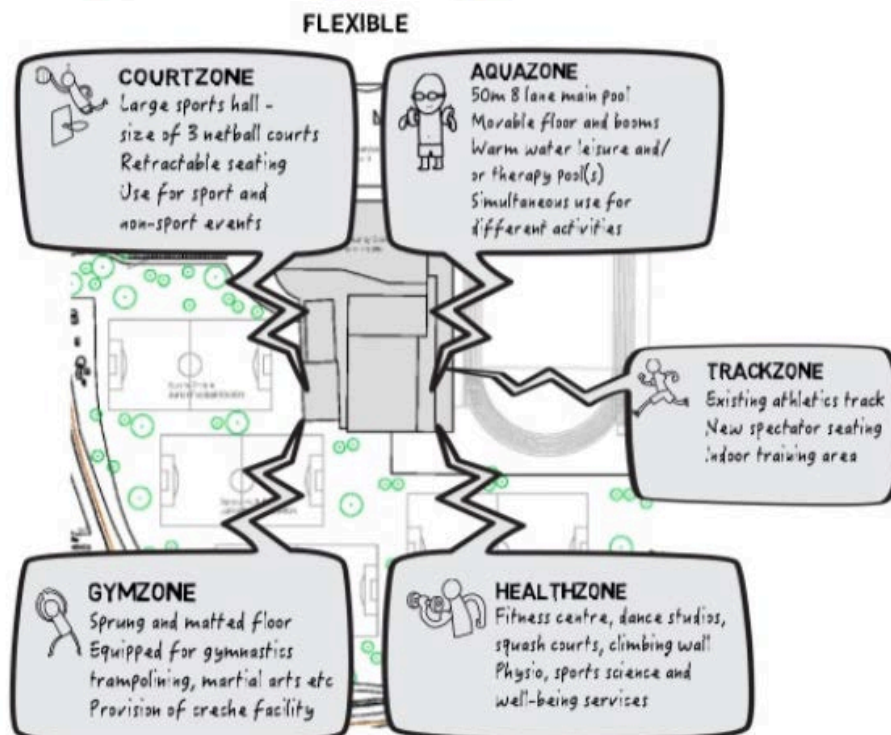
Specifically, the Open Space Strategy and Built Facilities Assessment identified shortfalls in both public sports grounds and publicly accessible indoor sports facilities in the Winchester Town area. The Built Facilities Assessment further identified the role played by facilities in Winchester Town in providing sports and leisure services for residents beyond the Town, particularly those in the northern part of the District. However, the Plan does not determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required (NPPF paragraph 73) or allocate land for built facility development, nor does it clearly demarcate public sports grounds (including playing fields) and apply policies to protect them from inappropriate development (NPPF paragraph 74).

We consider that the Plan should:

1. Align with other District and Town strategies, for example the Open Space Strategy and the Winchester District Community Strategy 2012-2020 (in particular its Active Communities outcome area);
2. Reflect the need for improved sports and recreational facilities identified by the community (including specifically through the Winchester Fit for the Future project) and by the built facilities study commissioned to inform the Plan;
3. Include a policy that protects public sports grounds (including those beyond the settlement boundary) whilst allowing for their enhancement through the development of new indoor and outdoor facilities for sport.

Annex A

Community research, analysis and consultation has generated proposals for a “community sport and recreational hub” at Bar End that can meet assessed needs for indoor and outdoor facilities. It could offer fun and fitness, support training and talent development, and host competitive events – with a 50m community pool, a large sports hall and a gymnastics centre. The aim is to offer a better sporting future for Winchester.



Concept for potential new built facility at Bar End:

