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Extracts from the London Plan

Policy S5 Sports and recreation facilities

A To ensure there is sufficient supply of good quality sports and recreation facilities, boroughs should:

1) prepare Development Plans informed by a needs assessment for sports and recreation facilities. Needs should be assessed at the local and subregional level. Needs assessments should include an audit of existing facilities

2) secure sites for a range of sports and recreation facilities in Development Plans, as justified by the needs assessment 3) maintain, promote and enhance networks for walking, cycling and other activities including the Walk London Network shown on Figure 5.1 B Development proposals for sports and recreation facilities should: 1) increase or enhance the provision of facilities in accessible locations, well-connected to public transport and link to networks for walking and cycling 2) maximise the multiple use of facilities, and encourage the co-location of services between sports providers, schools, colleges, universities and other community facilities

3) support the provision of sports lighting within reasonable hours, where there is an identified need for sports facilities, and lighting is required to increase their potential usage, unless the lighting gives rise to demonstrable harm to the local community or biodiversity.

5.5.2 Current provision of swimming pools, artificial grass pitches (AGPs), and sports halls is not meeting demand.⁹¹ The need is most significant for AGPs where only 55 per cent of demand is currently being met. Swimming pools currently meet 93 per cent of total demand across London and sports halls meet 85 per cent of demand. For all types of facilities, the level of unmet demand is projected to increase by 2041 if no new facilities are provided. Increasing the catchment areas of existing facilities by improving public transport accessibility and access by walking and cycling, plus extending their opening hours, could increase their availability and potential number of users. Where new facilities are to be provided, they should be located in accessible locations, with the ability to maximise opening hours.

5.5.3 It is essential that boroughs plan strategically for future provision of these core sports facilities. Boroughs should assess the need for sport and recreation facilities to ensure appropriate levels of provision and help tackle inequality of access in London, particularly in areas or for groups with low participation. By their nature, sports facilities often form a part of open space, so sports and open space needs assessments should have regard to one another. Built sports facilities should only be accommodated on green open space if that area has been identified as surplus to requirements as per an open space strategy or the development is for alternative sports and recreation provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss of green open space.

5.5.4 Up-to-date playing pitch strategies can be used to protect and enhance the use of existing playing fields and help to plan for where more are needed. Sport England provides guidance on the preparation of these strategies, which underscores the importance of a strategic

approach to provision to take account of demand for facilities crossing borough boundaries, particularly in relation to specialist activities.