

Tennis Needs Assessment Fortis Green Tennis Club



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Prepared on behalf of Fortis Green LLP
By Sports Planning Consultants

Contents

Section	Title	Page
1	Introduction	1
2	The Proposal	6
3	National and Local Policy Context	8
4	London Borough of Haringey Tennis Needs Assessment	11
5	Local Needs Assessment Fortis Green Tennis Club	12
6	Summary and Conclusions	21

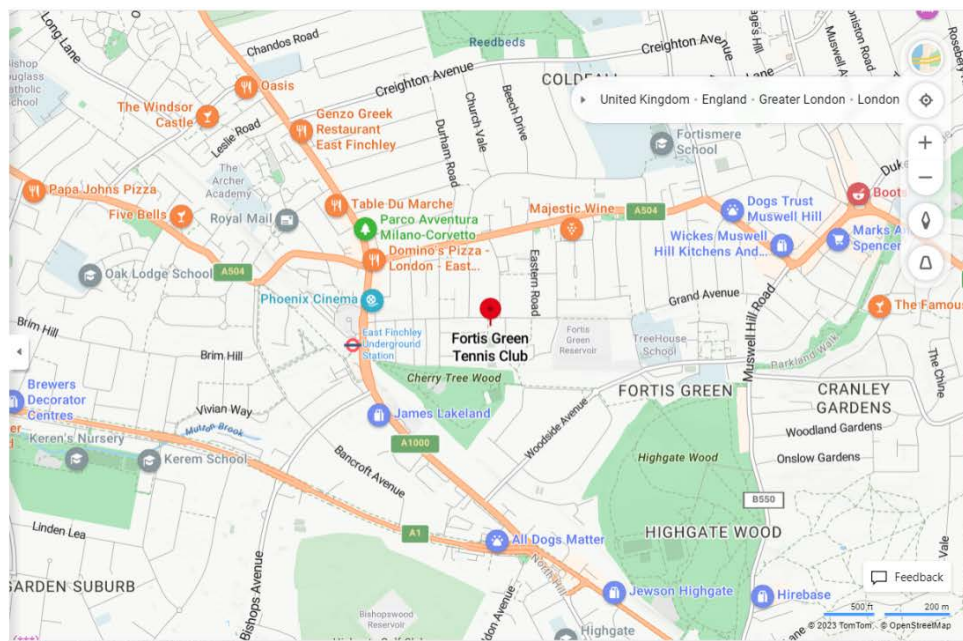
1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Fortis Green LLP are proposing residential development and reconfiguration of the existing sports facilities on land currently occupied by Fortis Green Tennis Club. The proposal is for the redevelopment of the site to provide eight new homes, one new all-weather low maintenance synthetic clay tennis court, a new clubhouse, refurbishment and the resurfacing of the two remaining shale courts to all weather low maintenance synthetic clay. The overall development will also see an improved point of access off Cherry Tree Road, as well as associated landscaping, car parking, cycle storage, and refuse storage.
- 1.2 The proposals recognise the valuable role that the club plays in providing opportunities for sport and recreation. As a consequence, the landowner has been working closely with the club to establish a plan which seeks to future proof the site for tennis and facilitate the delivery of significant improvements, which would not otherwise be possible.
- 1.3 Preapplication advice was sought from Haringey Council on 28th February 2023, and further advice received in June 2023, following some initial alterations to proposals. At this time it was advised by Haringey Council that;
- “we would require the application to be submitted with a needs assessment demonstrating the loss would not have a major impact on any deficiency in provision...” and that the proposals would.....“provide a better facility in the round”.*
- 1.4 This paper therefore seeks to respond to this requirement. It represents a detailed assessment of need and sets out;
- ☐ Current position at Fortis Green Tennis Club
 - ☐ Background to the proposals
 - ☐ Local context
 - ☐ Implications for Proposals at Fortis Green Tennis Club.
- 1.5 It sets out how the proposals align with local and national strategic priorities and policies and summarises the benefits that will be derived for tennis and demonstrates how the proposals will both meet the club needs and respond to and support wider tennis priorities in the area.

Background

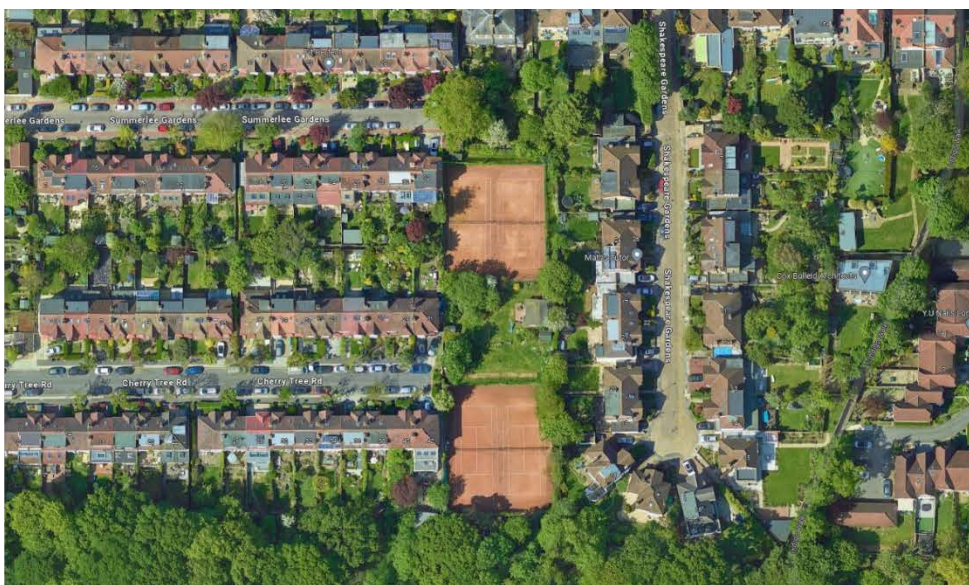
- 1.6 Fortis Green Tennis Club is located on Southern Road, between Muswell Hill and East Finchley in London Borough of Haringey. It is situated on land owned by The United Reform Church. Figure 1.1 overleaf illustrates the geographical location of the club.

Figure 1.1 – Location of Fortis Green Tennis Club



- 1.7 The tennis club is located in a small space between residential properties and adjacent to Cherry Tree Wood as illustrated in Figure 1.2. It is accessed through a small passageway off Southern Road which is secured by a locked gate.

Figure 1.2 – Immediate Surrounds of Fortis Green Tennis Club



Current Usage

- 1.8 Fortis Green Tennis Club is affiliated to the LTA and currently has 104 members, with 80% of these being senior members. Participation has fluctuated in recent years, but is static from 2019 when there were 105 members. During 2023 so far, the club has also accommodated 68 non-members in organised coaching sessions.
- 1.9 The club field one ladies and one male competitive team, as well as a veterans team. The male team has recently experienced declining interest.
- 1.10 A multifaceted coaching programme is also operational involving both members and non-members. This includes;
- ☐ Adult individuals
 - ☐ Junior individuals
 - ☐ Summer coaching
 - ☐ Outreach at local schools
 - ☐ Summer camps.
- 1.11 Club recreational sessions take place on a Saturday afternoon, but outside of this time, members often play without prebooking and by mutual accommodation. There are no booking records, but anecdotally courts are quiet in the mornings, but more busy in the afternoon and early evenings.
- 1.12 The club sees it's welcoming environment as one of the key benefits of the club, and whilst there are competitive teams, the focus is on enjoyment and the social aspect of tennis.
- 1.13 Although Fortis Green Tennis Club is a long running club, the lease between the club and the church expired in 2016 and is now holding over. The club now currently have a rolling annual lease with the Church and therefore have no long term security of tenure.
- 1.14 Fortis Green Tennis Club currently contains;
- ☐ 4 low quality shale courts which do not meet LTA standards or dimensions and which are now reaching the end of their useful life
 - ☐ A small clubhouse in traditional timber structure, which contains a common area, two changing rooms, a kitchen and a toilet in a separate structure. This was last upgraded in 2011
 - ☐ Lawned area used for teas and social interaction
 - ☐ Storage spaces – three sheds.
- 1.15 The quality of facilities is now limited and the courts have reached the end of their lifespan. Equipment is bent and rusty and there is deep filled moss embedded in the shale surface.
- 1.16 The courts also suffer from poor drainage and slippery surfaces and as a result, are unusable for large proportions of the year. They require immediate replacement if they are to continue to be *fit for purpose*. An independent review has been undertaken by Sovereign Sports who are a member of SAPCA, Steven Kennard commented:

'On my last visit to Fortis Green Tennis Club the existing shale courts have clearly suffered from severe subsidence over there lifespan. We would consider the courts dangerous, considering the large depressions / undulations in the playing surface. In our opinion the courts are past their life span. The solution is to reconstruct the court block, this would create a solid uniform

court surface which will stand the test of time, and in the future allow for standard resurfacing techniques to be applied without the need for further reconstructions.'

- 1.17 The small clubhouse, which is situated in the middle of the courts, is still used, but is also of poor quality and does not meet modern day accessibility standards.
- 1.18 Figures 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5 illustrate the current quality of the facilities at the site. The quality of facilities is so poor that it now inhibits the club's ability to retain existing and attract new members.

Figure 1.3 – Poor Quality Courts at Fortis Green Tennis Club



Figure 1.4 – Courts Requiring Resurface



Figure 1.5 – Small Ageing Clubhouse with Restricted Facilities



- 1.19 The club courts are primarily managed and maintained by the members and a regular groundsman, although some work is contracted out. The courts receive regular maintenance and receive a revamp at the beginning of every year.

- 1.20 The poor quality of courts arises primarily from the deterioration of the courts over their lifespan. The location of the site is a barrier to more significant works, which is accessed through a narrow passageway, means that larger vehicles required for maintenance and minor upgrades are not able to access the site.
- 1.21 In addition, the lack of security of tenure, alongside the non-standard dimensions of the club courts, means that the club have not been able to access any funding. This alongside the uncertainty of the club's future given the rolling lease means that there has therefore been no scope for proactive investment or improvement works in recent years, this is despite this work being identified in the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy as far back as 2016.
- 1.22 Significant works are now required if the courts are to remain playable, however no funding is available and the club has no security of tenure. The Church are no longer able to sustain the subsidy that has been granted to the club in the past and require value from the land for their own activities.
- 1.23 As a consequence, the short term and long term future of Fortis Green Tennis Club is uncertain.
- 1.24 The proposals by Fortis Green LLP seek to address these issues and to futureproof the future of tennis on the site. Section 2 therefore summarises the proposals and the benefits that they will bring for tennis.

2.0 The Proposals

- 2.0 The existing tennis club courts are a clay surface, which have a limited lifespan. They have deteriorated over the years and now require continued maintenance. In the not too distant future, they will be in need of replacement. Similarly, the clubhouse facility lacks basic modern facilities and is in need of enhancement to secure the longevity of this important local sports facility.
- 2.1 The rental payments made by the current leasees are unable to sustain the level of ongoing additional maintenance required over and above what is covered by the terms of the current lease. The proposals comprise the development of eight new residential units that will cross-fund the building of a new clubhouse facility, three new low maintenance all weather synthetic clay tennis courts and an improved point of access off Cherry Tree Road. If planning permission is approved, the intention is that a new 125 year lease will be granted to the tennis club, at the same rent as currently paid, to ensure the longevity of the club. The developer will cover the cost of the construction of the new courts and the clubhouse.
- 2.2 As freeholders of the site, URC Thames North Trust is fully committed to ensuring that the tennis club remains as a sports facility for use of the whole community. The preference is for the current operators of the tennis club to sign the new lease that will be available to them, and discussions are ongoing in that regard between the parties. However, in the event the current operators decline to sign the lease, URC is committed to either running the improved facility themselves, or working to find an alternative operator. It is expected that the detail of this agreement will be secured in a section 106 agreement attached to any grant of planning permission. The proposals for the redevelopment of the site is therefore planned to secure the long term future of the club on the site. A new 125 year lease will be granted to the club. This will be delivered through a S106 agreement, which will include a pre-commencement condition of a signed lease. Should this not proceed tennis will be protected.
- 2.3 The new lease will be supported by significant investment into both the courts and ancillary provision. This will involve the reconfiguration of the courts and the creation of a new high quality clubhouse that will provide significant benefits for tennis. .
- 2.4 Figure 1.6 summarises the proposed layout.

Figure 1.6 – Proposed Layout



- 2.5 The proposals will see;
- ☐ Creation of one new larger synthetic clay courts
 - ☐ Replacement of two existing shale courts with a synthetic clay surface. This work will include lengthening and widening the existing courts
 - ☐ Provision of a new purpose built clubhouse, which will include a flexible club room, views of all 3 courts, a bar, kitchen area, shower rooms, lockers changing provision and an outdoor amenity space.
- 2.6 Following the reconfiguration of courts therefore, members and tennis users in the catchment will have access to a significantly higher calibre of tennis courts and a modern clubhouse that meets all needs. This will improve the user experience and ensure that the club can continue to host recreational and competitive tennis as well as running coaching activities. The 3 courts will be the only clay courts in the area, providing a point of difference from other nearby facilities. This was highlighted as important through the consultation with Haringey Council. The surface will also play similarly to the existing shale surface, which is considered important for club members.
- 2.7 The poor quality of the existing facilities impacts the club's ability to retain members and attract new players. The new clubhouse and courts will therefore breathe new life into the club and its activities and stimulate participation growth in tennis across this part of Haringey and Barnet.
- 2.8 Figure 1.6 demonstrates that the proposals will see a reduction in the number of courts from four to three. The quality of courts will however be significantly improved and overall, will offer multiple benefits when compared to the status quo. The new courts will be usable all year round and in all weathers, whilst the quality of courts currently restricts activity to only good weather. Courts will also be larger and closer to meeting LTA guidelines (which they currently do not). Most critically, security of tenure will be achieved. Finally improved access from Cherry Tree Road will be delivered, much better than the current narrow muddy alleyway.
- 2.9 Whilst the benefits that will arise are clear, as set out in the pre-application advise, national and local planning policy seek to protect existing facilities unless compliance with one of a series of acceptance criteria can be proven.
- 2.10 The next section therefore sets out the policy context relating to the loss of tennis courts and evaluates the implications for proposals.

3.0 National and Local Policy Context

3.0 This section considers the national and local policy context relating to the proposed redevelopment and investment in Fortis Green Tennis Club.

National Planning Policy Guidance

3.1 National Planning Policy Guidance Paragraph 103 states that:

‘Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- *an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- *the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- *the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use’*

3.2 The use of the proposed development site as a tennis club means that it falls under the above policy.

Sport England Policy

3.3 Sport England has a statutory responsibility for planning applications involving playing fields. Sport England playing field policy does not extend to tennis courts, unless they are part of a wider playing field site, which is not the case in this instance.

3.4 Despite this, Sport England policy notes that;

‘Even where wider sports facilities fall outside the definition of a playing field, they are afforded protection through the planning system under the provisions of paragraph 97 of the Governments National Planning Policy Framework.’ (Paragraph 97 has now become paragraph 103 in the more recently published NPPF).

3.5 For applications involving non playing field sites such as this, Sport England are therefore a non-statutory consultee. Sport England will therefore seek to ensure compliance with NPPF policy.

3.6 The next sections of this report therefore consider how the proposed development meets with the exception criteria set out in Paragraph 103, alongside local policy considerations.

Local Policy

3.7 In addition to considering the implications of National Policy, the requirements of regional and local policy must also be taken into account. The London Plan was adopted by the Mayor of London, specifically for Greater London on 1st March 2021.

3.8 Policy S5 of this document indicates that;

'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 sub regional 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.

Existing sports and recreational land (including playing fields) and facilities for sports and recreation should be retained unless:

1) an assessment has been undertaken which clearly shows the sports and recreational land or facilities to be surplus to requirements (for the existing or alternative sports and recreational provision) at the local and sub-regional level. Where published, a borough's assessment of need for sports and recreation facilities should inform this assessment;

2) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location;

3) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.'

3.9 The London Plan therefore reflects the principles of the NPPF, but highlights the need to take into account the findings of needs assessments as a basis for decision making.

3.10 At a local level, London Borough of Haringey's Local Plan comprises the Strategic Policies DPD, which was adopted in March 2013 and updated in 2017. Its Development Management Policies DPD was adopted in 2017.

3.11 The Local Plan recognises the importance of health and wellbeing, with Policy SP14 Of the Strategic Policies DPD seeking to improve health and wellbeing across Haringey. Policy SP15 recognises the importance of appropriate facilities stating:

'The Council will safeguard and foster the borough's existing recreational and sporting facilities through:

1) The protection and enhancement of sporting and leisure facilities in areas of deficiency

2) The dual use of the borough's cultural assets, such as land and buildings to meet the needs of local communities, for example meeting space, arts and leisure activities, opportunities for recreation and sport.'

3.12 Policy DM49 of the Development Management Policies DPD notes the importance of quality provision of community infrastructure. Part B of the policy requires evidence to show that the existing facility is no longer required in its current use, the loss would not result in a shortfall, and the facility is no longer viable and there is no demand for any other suitable community use on the site. Part d of the policy states the Council will consider supporting the consolidation of equal or enhanced provision to meet an identified need.

- 3.13 All policies therefore seek to protect local sports facilities unless a series of exception criteria can be met. To consider how the requirements of these policies are met, a needs assessment is therefore required.
- 3.14 Linking with the above policies and the NPPF, Sport England published two guidance documents in 2013 for how NPPF compliant needs assessment work should be undertaken; the Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (ANOG) and the Playing Pitch Strategy guidance (PPS). Essentially these form the 'how to do' needs assessments for indoor / outdoor sport and pitch sports in England and represent Sport England's response to the NPPF.
- 3.15 In response to these documents, The London Borough of Haringey Tennis Needs Assessment was published in 2015. This forms a key part of the evidence base for the local plan and provides an understanding of the adequacy of provision and key issues for tennis in the surrounding area.
- 3.16 Having been completed in accordance with the process advocated by Sport England, it represent a robust representation of tennis needs. As the document has not been updated since 2017 however, it is now considered to be out of date and further update work is therefore required.
- 3.17 Nevertheless, whilst dated, the baseline audit from 2017 is an important starting point for analysis of how proposals at Fortis Green Tennis Club fit into the wider context.
- 3.18 Section four therefore considers the findings of this needs assessment and the implications of the proposed development, whilst section five supplements the 2017 assessment with an updated assessment of needs.
- 3.19 Section 6 draws together the key findings and summarises how the proposals result in a positive improvement for tennis.

4.0 London Borough of Haringey Tennis Needs Assessment

Introduction

- 4.0 proposals meet with the needs of Fortis Green TC is important, it is also important to understand, the proposals in the wider context for tennis across the Borough, given the current position with the tennis club.
- 4.1 This section therefore considers the issues for tennis across London Borough of Haringey as a whole, drawing upon the findings of the London Borough of Haringey Tennis Needs Assessment (2015). This document evaluates the adequacy of tennis courts across the Borough and includes a site by site action plan which outlines the priorities for improvement.
- 4.2 While as set out in Section 2, it is recognised that the document is out of date, it continues to provide important context that should be taken into account in the decision-making process.
- Area A contains 16 different sites offering a total of 83 courts and a further 6 mini courts. Area A has more courts than the other areas combined, meaning that the baseline supply of facilities is high
 - Reflecting this, analysis of the geographical distribution of facilities shows that the majority of courts are situated in the west of the Borough, where Fortis Green LTC is located
 - 44 of the courts in Area A are floodlit, which is nearly half of all courts
 - The average site quality score for Area A is 65%. Area B has the highest average site quality score of 67% but quality in Sub Area C is much lower
 - Reflecting the higher number of courts found in Area A, membership of clubs is also highest in this area. LTA analysis demonstrates that the highest latent demand is found in the South East of the Borough.
- 4.4 The general priorities of the strategy are therefore;
- Increase the tennis court supply and quality in Sub area C (South East Haringey)
 - Proactive improvements to the quality of other facilities
 - Review and improve access policies to Council owned and managed outdoor tennis sites
 - Increasing capacity – e.g. through floodlighting and court quality.
- 4.5 There are no recommendations to increase the number of tennis courts within Area A, and indeed a recognition that provision in this area is higher than in other parts of the Borough.
- 4.6 Site specific recommendations and analysis within the document confirm that Fortis Green LTC was (at the time of the assessment) poor quality, with the site achieving a score of only 48%. Fortis Green scored 48% overall with the quality of courts and clubhouse scoring 2/5 each. The changing facilities only scored 1/5. The quality of facilities has declined further since the 2017 assessment was carried out.

- 4.7 With the exception of Stationers Park, all remaining facilities in the area were of higher quality than Fortis Green LTC, and the majority achieved good quality scores.

5.0 Local Needs Assessment – Fortis Green Tennis Club

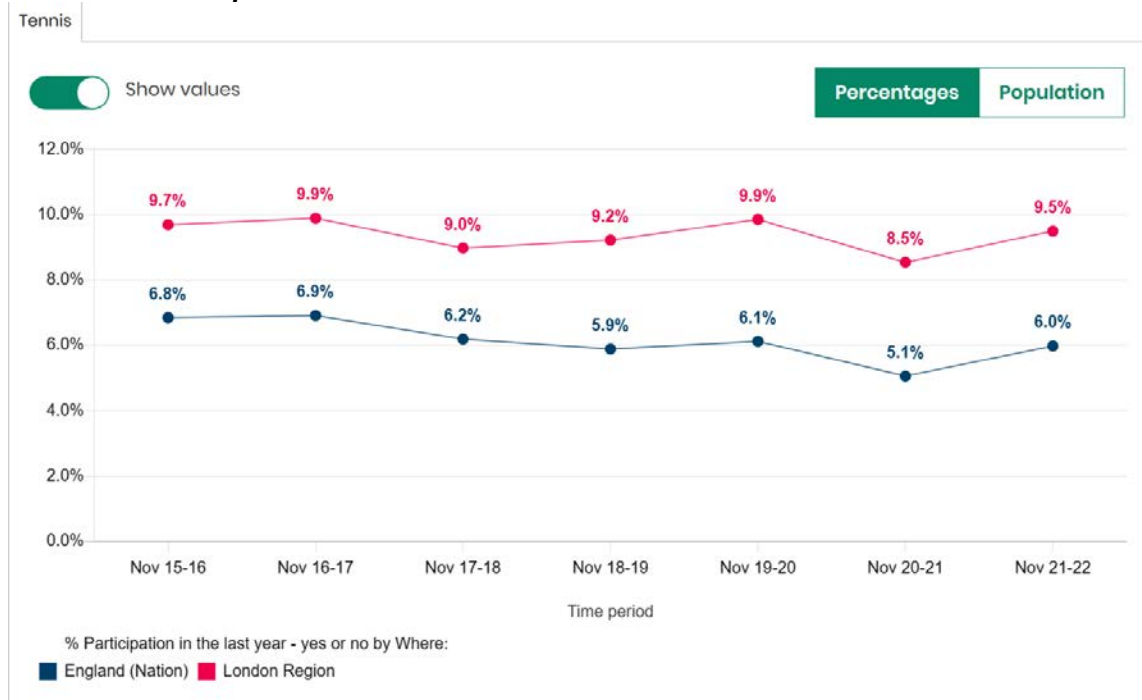
Introduction

- 5.0 This section sets out the findings of the updated local needs assessment and provides further context for the proposed developments at the Fortis Green Tennis Club site.
- 5.1 In order to present a robust picture, we have sought to understand the adequacy of provision by;
- ☐ Considering changes in tennis participation
 - ☐ Provided an updated picture of tennis within Sub Area A of LB Haringey
 - ☐ Evaluating the adequacy of provision within a 3km catchment of Fortis Green Tennis Club.
- 5.2 The analysis draws upon the findings of research and assessment work as well as consultations with key stakeholders. Specifically it considers;
- ☐ The current provision – key issues and priorities
 - ☐ LTA and Haringey Council view
 - ☐ Implications for Proposals at Fortis Green LTC.

Tennis Participation in 2023

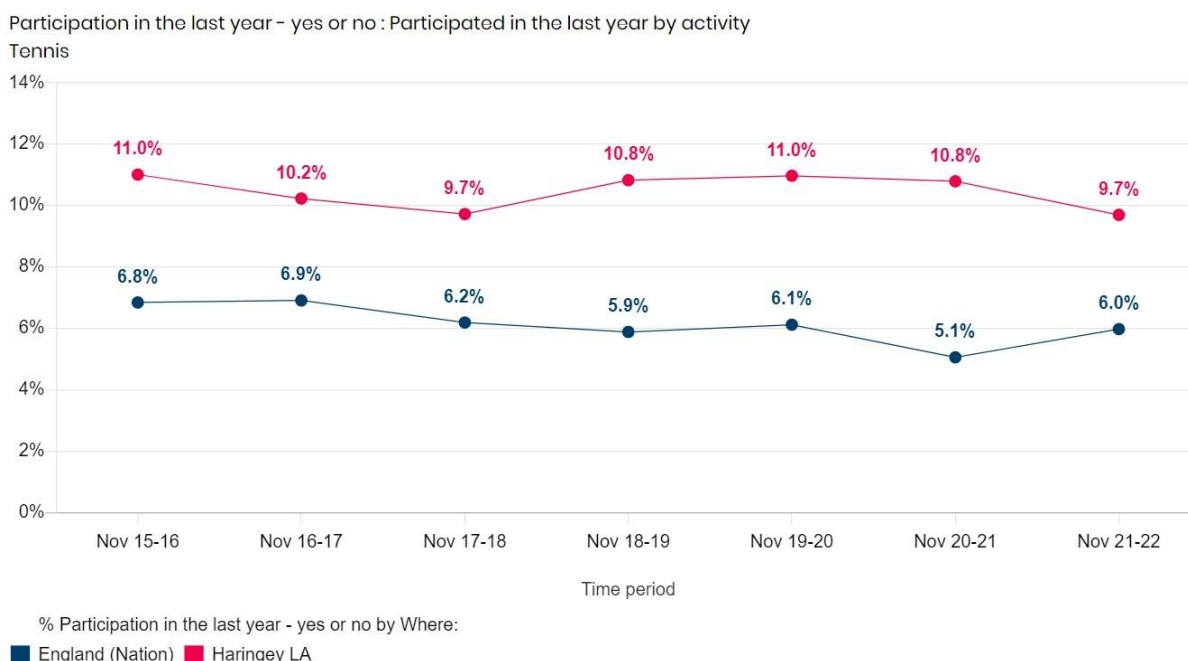
- 5.3 Chart 5.1, extracted from the Sport England Active Lives Survey demonstrates that participation in tennis in London is high compared to the national average. Demand has fluctuated since 2015 both nationally in London, but current levels are slightly below 2016 levels in London, having seen an increase just after covid (when tennis was one of the first sports to open).

Chart 5.1 – Participation in Tennis – London and National



- 5.4 Chart 5.2 demonstrates that more locally in London Borough of Haringey, participation is significantly above national levels but is also above the levels outlined in London in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.2 – Tennis Participation in Haringey



- 5.5 It is clear therefore that demand is higher for tennis in London than in England as a whole, and this must therefore be taken into account in facility planning.
- 5.6 We have therefore undertaken a desk based research exercise, during which we have sought to contact clubs in order to update the membership numbers at the site and to understand any changes that have taken place. This ensures that the local needs assessments are based upon actual participation in London, rather than on national trends.

Updated Picture within Sub Area A of London Borough of Haringey

- 5.7 Consultation was undertaken with Andrea Keeble, Commissioning Manager for Active Communities, Haringey Council.
- 5.8 Andrea confirmed that the December 2015 Tennis Assessment still presents an accurate picture of tennis supply across the borough. Little has changed in terms of supply since the Assessment. Fortis Green LTC was identified as poor and in need of investment and this remains the case.
- 5.9 The west area, where Fortis Green LTC is located, still has the majority of tennis provision at 64% and is considered to be well served for tennis. In line with the strategy document, the priority area for the Council remains Area C where recent investment has been put into Finsbury Park.
- 5.10 The Council highlight that there is significant investment proposed in tennis through the LTA Parks Investment Strategy, which is supporting facility improvements in public parks at;
- ☐ Priory Park
 - ☐ Stationers Park
 - ☐ Chapmans Green
 - ☐ Chestnuts Park
 - ☐ Downhill Park.

- 5.11 Priory Park and Stationers Park are both located in the west (Sub Area A), Priory Park is the closest to Fortis Green and its investment will provide enhanced pay and play opportunities in the area, via the parks investment programme, which will see the courts re-marked, re-surfaced and the nets improved, alongside new access and booking arrangements.
- 5.12 Alongside the LTA investment, the Council are committed to investing in floodlights at Priory Park, which will further improve capacity at the site and tennis opportunities in the Fortis Green area.
- 5.13 Improvements to parks (which are scheduled to be undertaken before the end of 2023) will therefore significantly improve the capacity in the Borough.
- 5.14 Table 5.1 therefore provides a summary of the known changes that have taken place to supply and demand in Sub Area A of London Borough Haringey since the 2015 Tennis Assessment was prepared. Some changes result in amendments to the capacity of tennis courts. This is recorded in the changes column where relevant. It should be noted that in some instances, we believe capacity to be higher than is recorded in the 2015 assessment table (based upon LTA parameters). For accurate comparison however, unless the position is confirmed to have changed we have not adjusted the figures.

Table 5.1 – Tennis provision across Sub Area A – Updated Picture

- 5.15 Table 5.1 above therefore reveals that there remains adequate capacity for tennis in Sub Area A of London Borough of Haringey in 2023.
- 5.16 Even if the parks / school sites are removed from the analysis (as they are counted as 0 demand as they do not have members), there is enough capacity (supply / demand balance of 200). This confirms the views of the Council that the 2015 needs assessment continues to present an accurate picture of the current position.
- 5.17 It is also clear that many of the clubs have invested in their provision since the 2015 position statement, and that the stock of facilities has improved in qualitative terms. Clubs continue to invest, as the high membership numbers ensure that clubs remain sustainable.
- 5.18 Critically, the capacity of Fortis Green LTC is currently listed as 80 members, presumably due to the quality constraints that are experienced. The proposed improvements would see this increase to 120 members (alongside other benefits) and would therefore have a positive impact on the position set out in Table 5.1. The club has experienced decline since the 2015 position statement, and in part this may be due to the challenges retaining members when other clubs provide such comparably high facilities.

Adequacy of Provision within a 3km Catchment of Fortis Green Tennis Club

- 5.19 To further verify that this remains the case, we have also carried out an assessment of the adequacy of supply / demand within a 3km catchment. Consultation with Fortis Green Tennis Club suggests that whilst most members travel on foot to reach the facility, some do travel from further afield and this catchment therefore represents a reasonable travel distance. The use of a catchment area takes into account that whilst use of the Local Authority boundaries is a useful tool, tennis players are not bound by local authority boundaries and will therefore travel to tennis clubs that are geographically best placed for them.
- 5.20 The 3km catchment has been derived using the demographic profile tool on the Sport England Active Places website. For reference, the area covered within the 3km catchment is set out in figure 5.1 overleaf.

Legend

Catchment Centre Point

Walk Distance Catchment Boundary

Dark Red	2.5-3 km
Red	2-2.5 km
Orange	1.5-2 km
Yellow	1-1.5 km
Light Green	0.75-1 km
Green	0.5-0.75 km
Light Blue	0.25-0.5 km
Dark Blue	0-0.25 km

Boundary Data:

Administrative Regions

Local Authority

0 0.5 1mi

Contains Ordnance Survey data. © Crown copyright and database right 2023. Sport England 100025111.

- Page 17

Table 5.2 – Facilities within 3km Catchment of Fortis Green LTC

Site Name	Number of Courts	Floodlights	Ownership	Strategy Recommendations / Recent Improvements	Number of Members	Capacity	Supply Demand Balance
Fortis Green LTC	4	0	Club	Investigate potential to upgrade shale courts to make them suitable for year round use. Options for clubhouse refurbishment / replacement	104	80	-24
Cherry Tree Wood Park	2	No	LB Haringey	Parks Refurb Programme – quality improvement	0	80	80
Archer Academy	2	No	Education	None	0	80	80
Fortismere School	4	No	Education	Maintain quality level – no known changes	0	160	160
Lyttelton Playing Fields	3	No	LB Barnet	Parks Refurbishment and Gate Access Programme 2023 – quality improvement	0	120	120
Stormont Lawn Tennis & Squash Racquets Club	1	No	Sports Club	Additional provision available to club in Woodside.	40	40	0
Stormont Lawn Tennis & Squash Racquets Club	2	Yes	Sports Club		188	120	-68
Bishop Douglass School	6	No	Education	Not available for community use.	0	0	0
Chandos Lawn Tennis Club	8	Indoor, floodlit 4	Sports Club	Protect. No issues identified.	913	1080	167
Georgians Tennis Club	8	Yes	Sports Club	High quality facility – to be maintained.	400	480	80
Halliwick Recreation Ground	2	No	Sports Club	Parks Refurbishment and Gate Access Programme 2023 – improved quality	0	80	80
Muswell Hill Methodist Lawn Tennis Club	4	Yes	Sports Club		269	240	-29
Northway Lawn Tennis Club	4	No	LB Barnet	Parks Refurbishment Programme – qualitative improvements	49	160	111
Wood Vale Lawn Tennis Club	6	2 Floodlit	Sports Club	New floodlights 2017, refurbish 2019. Clubhouse refurbishment ongoing	259	280	21
Hanley Tennis Club	4	2 floodlit	Sports Club	Upgrade courts and improve ancillary facilities -	100	200	120
Highgate Tennis Club (Includes	12	9 floodlit	LB Haringey	Maintain quality level	880	660	-220

Site Name	Number of Courts	Floodlights	Ownership	Strategy Recommendations / Recent Improvements	Number of Members	Capacity	Supply Demand Balance
Highgate Wood Secondary School)							
The Avenue Tennis Club	3		LB Barnet	Addition of lights and potential new court longer term	222	180	-42
Total					3424	4040	

5.27 Table 5.2 therefore demonstrates that there are 75 courts within a 3km radius of Fortis Green LTC, offering capacity for 4040 players. There are currently 3424 registered members at clubs in the same area. This suggests that there is some scope to increase membership.

5.28 When excluding the parks courts, there remains a small amount of spare capacity within the existing club based infrastructure. Whilst it is important to ensure that there is spare capacity, the fact that clubs are close to capacity also represents a positive position. High membership numbers ensure that clubs remain sustainable and are able to invest in their facilities. Fortis Green LTC have been struggling in recent years to invest in facilities, an issue which was not helped by the falling membership that was derived from the poor quality facilities.

5.29 Redevelopment / improvement works have taken place at 5 of the clubs within the last 6 years. Redevelopment included improvements to clubhouse facilities and courts either being resurfaced and the addition of floodlights. This shows that clubs close to Fortis Green are actively improving their facilities which in turn means they can attract new members.

5.30 In addition to the investment in the club sector, both LB Barnet and LB Haringey are engaged with the LTA's Parks and Refurbishment and Gate Access Programme 2023, with multiple sites awarded investment. This will see a further improvement in the infrastructure in this part of London.

5.31 All this means that within a 20-minute catchment of Fortis Green, there are already significant resources for tennis, with further resources becoming available in the near future.

LTA Consultation

5.32 *Consultation was undertaken with representatives of the LTA, specifically Shane McCullough, Participation Development Partner and Tanya Woodward Participation Development Manager.*

5.33 The LTA have made it clear that they are cautious about the removal of any tennis courts so will need to assess the impact in detail.

5.34 The needs assessment set out in Section 4 and the first part of this section provide the context to evaluate the potential impact of the proposed loss of one court. What is clear from the assessment is that;

- ☐ There is a good supply of tennis courts in the west of London Borough of Haringey and capacity is adequate to meet demand
- ☐ There is also a strong supply of courts within a 3km catchment, again capacity is adequate to meet demand
- ☐ The quality of courts at Fortis Green LTC is below that at other clubs, and is also of sufficiently low quality that capacity is reduced at the club (due to the amount of time that the courts are out of action).

- 5.35 At a basic level, it is possible to conclude that the removal of one court would not create unmet demand, specifically;
- ☐ Within the west of LB Haringey, there is capacity for 600 members (200 if excluding parks courts)
 - ☐ Within a 3km catchment, there is capacity for 614 members (94 if excluding parks courts)
 - ☐ Removal of one court would reduce capacity by only 20 members at Fortis Green LTC (capacity considered to be equivalent to only 20 per court in the Haringey Tennis Needs Assessment due to quality).
- 5.36 Crucially, the improvements to the other three courts could see capacity at the site increase from 80 members in the Haringey Tennis Needs Assessment, to 120 members following qualitative improvements. Capacity would therefore continue to meet demand. Added to this, the club will be better able to attract and retain new members, and the enhanced clubhouse, would benefit the clubs' ethos, which revolves around the social element of tennis. Whilst one court will be lost therefore, the overall picture is positive for tennis and would certainly not be detrimental when assessed against the wider benefits of the overall scheme.
- 5.37 The LTA contend that London has had significant growth in participation, a 50% increase in Adult Annual participation from last year and a 76% increase in Adult Monthly participation. The Active Lives appraisals do not reflect this increase, although it is clear that tennis participation remains high. That said, our consultation with clubs does reflect recent increase in participation, with messages arising being;
- ☐ Some clubs have experienced increased participation (including Muswell Hill, Hanley, Wood Vale)
 - ☐ Others are fluctuating or demonstrating recent decline (including Fortis Green).
- 5.38 The assessment takes into account the current participation levels at key clubs and therefore represents an accurate baseline position of current demand, taking into account the growth that has been experienced. It should also be noted that the LTA estimate that 32% of grassroots participation takes place in the parks settings. It is therefore likely that much of the participation growth is experienced in this setting. These players may transition into the club environment as they experience more tennis.
- 5.39 The LTA also expressed concern that the church has not guaranteed a legal tenancy will be in place post the proposed developments and that there is nothing to prevent the church evicting the club in the future. The LTA would want to see a guarantee that the church would commit to their proposition of providing a long-term lease and redeveloping the courts to the specifications laid out.
- 5.40 The Church have made it very clear to the Tennis Club throughout the process that they will receive a brand new 125 year lease on the courts and clubhouse at the same rent that they are currently paying. A 3 way agreement has been put together between the developer, the Church and the Tennis Club. Previously the club had been unwilling to consider the agreement until the scheme had progressed. A meeting was held in October 2023, where the agreement was tabled again. Various meetings have been held with the Club and Church and agreements have been put in writing, throughout the process the Church has sought to make changes to the scheme to respond to the Club comments.

- 5.41 If planning permission is approved, the intention is that a new 125 year lease will be granted to the tennis club, at the same rent as currently paid, to ensure the longevity of the club. The developer will cover the cost of the construction of the new courts and the clubhouse. As freeholders of the site, URC Thames North Trust is fully committed to ensuring that the tennis club remains as a sports facility for use of the whole community. The preference is for the current operators of the tennis club to sign the new lease that will be available to them, and discussions are ongoing in that regard between the parties.
- 5.42 Ultimately the lease guarantee will be secured by the section 106 and the residential development will not be able to brought into use until the longevity of the club is secured. This could even be a pre-commencement condition requiring a signed lease before any development. The secure terms that have been offered to the club will therefore guarantee that the club will provide capacity for 120 players for the next 125 years.
- 5.43 It is expected that the detail of this agreement will be secured in a section 106 agreement attached to any grant of planning permission. The proposals for the redevelopment of the site is therefore planned to secure the long term future of the club on the site. A new 125 year lease will be granted to the club. This will be delivered through a S106 agreement, which will include a pre-commencement condition of a signed lease. Should this not proceed tennis will be protected.
- 5.44 However, in the event the tennis club decline to sign the lease, URC is committed to either running the improved facility themselves, or working to find an alternative operator, thus securing the improved tennis provision for the wider benefit of the community.

6.0 Summary and Conclusions

Introduction

- 6.0 This report has set out the current and proposed position at Fortis Green LTC, the key policies that need to be considered in relation to the proposals and the wider context for tennis in the area.
- 6.1 It has outlined how, despite the loss of one court, the proposals will benefit Fortis Green LTC and tennis in the area. It concludes that;
- ☐ The existing shale courts at Fortis Green are poor and usage is restricted as a result. This was confirmed in the 2015 LB Haringey needs assessment and quality has not been improved since. There is no real prospect of qualitative improvement without intervention. Facilities do not meet LTA guidelines.
 - ☐ The accompanying ancillary facilities are also of limited quality and again, do not meet LTA specifications;
 - ☐ The club have unsecure tenure, currently operating on an annual rolling lease. There is a real concern that tennis will no longer be provided at the site if action is not taken to improve the courts. The courts require immediate refurbishment if they are to remain playable;
 - ☐ Participation in tennis in London, and more specifically in Haringey, particularly the west of the Borough, is high. As a consequence, there is a strong supply of tennis courts in the immediate vicinity of Fortis Green Tennis Club. The quality of most other club sites is good and work is also underway to improve the quality and increase the capacity of parks sites;
 - ☐ The LB Haringey Tennis Needs Assessment 2015 demonstrated that there was a small amount of remaining spare capacity. Priority was placed on providing additional capacity in the east, and on maintaining and improving existing facilities elsewhere;
 - ☐ The updated assessment of need for both LB Haringey west area and a 3km catchment from Fortis Green Tennis Club suggest that the findings of this assessment remain valid.
- 6.2 The proposed loss of one court will therefore not create a deficit in the provision of tennis courts in the area. Indeed, in contrast, the benefits of the proposed redevelopment which will deliver significant investment in both the courts and ancillary facilities, will clearly outweigh any loss.
- 6.3 The 2015 Needs Assessment recommends the following actions at Fortis Green Tennis Club;
- ☐ Upgrade of existing shale courts to synthetic clay
 - ☐ Upgrade of ancillary provision.
- 6.4 Proposals by Fortis Green LLP deliver directly on these recommendations. Most importantly however, proposals to provide the club with a new 125 lease (which it is accepted will be a condition of any planning permission) will future proof and protect the site for tennis.
- 6.5 The benefits to tennis are therefore clear.
- 6.6 Section 3 of this assessment however reported that national and local policy seek to protect sports facilities and playing fields unless a series of exception criteria are met.
- 6.7 Local Plan Policy SP15, London Borough of Haringey DM Policy 49 and London Plan Policy S5 are the key local policies, which cover sport and recreation facilities, and they require that existing sports facilities should be retained, unless it has been demonstrated that the facility is either surplus to requirements, or the loss would be offset by equivalent or better provision or is for alternative sports use.

6.8 National Planning Policy Paragraph 103 indicates that;

'Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- ☐ *an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- ☐ *the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- ☐ *the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use'*

6.9 Proposals must therefore be considered in this context

6.10 In the case of Fortis Green the proposal would result in the loss of one tennis court. This assessment has sought to demonstrate that whilst a court for tennis will be lost, the capacity of the site will actually be increased (through qualitative improvements). This was confirmed through analysis of the Haringey Borough Council Tennis Needs Assessment, which records the capacity of Fortis Green Tennis Club to be only 80 members (assumingly due to the poor condition of courts).

6.11 The scheme would provide long-term security of tenure for tennis on the site and result in a qualitative improvement to the three courts to be retained / replaced. Proposals would also secure the future of the clubhouse and deliver significantly enhanced facilities overall.

6.12 As the needs assessment illustrates that there is no significant deficit of outdoor tennis courts in this area, the loss would not generate any deficiency in provision, and instead, the qualitative improvements to the courts including the new clubhouse would mitigate against the loss of one court and provide a better facility in the round. The improvements to the facility enable the long-term stability of the tennis club and guarantee their presence at the site into the future with a new 125 year lease granted to the tennis club if the improvements can be secured. This is supported by Haringey Council and is in-line with PPS policy.

6.13 Whilst the needs analysis clearly demonstrates that the proposals will not result in a deficit of tennis in the area.

6.14 The multiple benefits of the scheme will therefore clearly outweigh the harm arising from the loss of one poor quality court in line with Paragraph 103.

6.15 So, whilst the courts may not be surplus to requirements in that participation is high, it is clear that the proposed mitigation is of greater value to sport in this case.

6.16 The proposed approach links with the priorities of the Haringey Tennis Assessment and delivers wide ranging benefits.

6.17 To summarise, the applicant therefore proposes to;

- ☐ Safeguard the future of tennis at the site through the retention of three courts to service the local community
- ☐ Improve the quality of the remaining three courts (one new court and two refurbished courts). The specification of the new courts will be significantly higher than the existing facilities, with new courts designed to closer meet LTA specification and with a synthetic clay surface

- ☐ Create a new larger purpose built clubhouse, conforming to NGB specification and meeting modern day standards. The new facility will provide significant betterment and will contain accessible toilets, showers, kitchen facilities and lockers. The clubhouse will also enable viewing of all three courts
 - ☐ Guarantee long term tennis at the site through agreement of a 125 lease with the club in the first instance.
 - ☐ Improved site access.
- 6.18 The above improvements will enable in the first instance, the club to grow its members and bring wider benefits to tennis in the area, encouraging new people into the game.
- 6.19 The applicant believe this mitigation strategy provides significant local benefit and is in line with clear evidence and local needs.