

Kesgrave Leisure and Community Facilities: Technical Evidence Summary

Kesgrave Town Council

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1. Suffolk Coastal Built Facilities Assessment: *Ploszajski Lynch* (2014)

- 1.1. This assessment identifies the built sporting and recreational infrastructure that will be required to serve existing and new development in Suffolk, covering both the demand for facilities and whether there is a deficiency or surplus. Five sub-areas of Suffolk Coastal are identified, of which the Kesgrave ward falls under the Kesgrave and district sub-area.
- 1.2. Built facilities include sports halls, swimming pools, health and fitness, indoor tennis, indoor bowls, squash courts and village and community halls.
- 1.3. The text summary below directly reflects the findings and recommendations of the Built Facilities Assessment.

Local supply in Kesgrave

- 1.4. Although there is better access to health and fitness club in the south of the Suffolk Coastal area where Kesgrave is located, there are lower levels of village and community halls in the south, so there is a comparative lack of informal venues in Kesgrave.
- 1.5. The only indoor tennis provision in the authority area is the Ipswich David Lloyd club, a private members club, which is around 5 miles by road from Kesgrave.
- 1.6. There is a single indoor bowls facility in Felixstowe, which is approximately 12 miles from Kesgrave.
- 1.7. There is no swimming provision in Kesgrave, the nearest pool being Crown Pools in Ipswich, approximately 6 miles away. This has recently undergone refurbishment.
- 1.8. The Built Facilities Assessments concludes that, current levels of provision of facilities for the most part are adequate to meet the existing need, however, disabled changing facilities need improvements, including disabled access. There is a need to improve the quality of these facilities, which will increase their capacity for use.
- 1.9. From the engagement with the local community, it is considered that this summary assessment is not an accurate reflection of the quality of facilities in Kesgrave. Many of these facilities are now below the standards required of modern sports. This is particularly the case given that many of Kesgrave's sports teams have risen up their respective leagues which require better quality facilities for matches and events.

Emerging Opportunities

- 1.10. There is a good range of facilities provision at Kesgrave Community Sports Centre, which is run by an independent trust. The quality of this sports centre was assessed as 'very good' in terms of the playing area, maintenance and cleanliness and general access. Changing and disability access were rated 'good'.
- 1.11. Kesgrave is compact and therefore centrally located facilities cater for and reach a large audience.
- 1.12. However, it is the view of some in the community that this range of facilities is not as good as it should be for a population the size of Kesgrave and for a location that reaches such a large audience. Moreover, the range of facilities are spread therefore, whilst some facilities are easily accessible by the large majority of the population, others are less so. For example, the Millennium

Playing Field and Jubilee Hall are located at the extreme south-eastern corner of Kesgrave. During the Neighbourhood Plan engagement with young people in June 2018, many stated that the facilities were good for those living south of Ropes Drive but otherwise were some distance from the centre and were generally considered to be in the 'wrong place'.

- 1.13. The Kesgrave Neighborhood Plan Group notes that Suffolk Police is planning to dispose of its Martlesham headquarters and it is understood that it would like to sell the land for development. The site is 400 metres from the eastern boundary of Kesgrave. The Police headquarters feature buildings and land that could be used by both Kesgrave and Martlesham parishes for sport and leisure, potentially with minimal financial outlay.

Emerging Issues

- 1.14. Some commercial leisure facilities in the area such as Martlesham Leisure Club are too expensive for many local residents to access.
- 1.15. There are six village and community halls in Kesgrave - All Saints Church Hall, Kesgrave British Legion Hall, Kesgrave Scout Hut, Kesgrave Social Club, Kesgrave Community Centre, and Kesgrave Millennium Pavilion. Only the latter two are available for informal activities or exercise classes.

Conclusions on Technical Evidence

- 1.16. The nature of built facilities are that, for sports in particular, they are usually major facilities serving a specific need, e.g. swimming pools. As such, they are expensive and need significant areas of land to accommodate them. This partly explains the growth of private provision, e.g. the David Llyod Centres. The exception is community halls that can be provided in smaller spaces, depending on what the intended use is.
- 1.17. The Built Facilities Assessment does not make any clear recommendations for new built facilities to serve Kesgrave. It suggests that the provision of major facilities in Ipswich is sufficient to meet the needs of Kesgrave residents.
- 1.18. One opportunity may be to provide more community hall space for informal activities. This should be reviewed in light of the outputs from the community survey to see whether there is a clear need for additional facilities.

2. Suffolk Coastal Playing Pitch and Non-Pitch Facilities Assessment: *Ploszajski Lynch (2014)*

- 2.1. This assessment identifies the existing quantitative and qualitative provision of pitches and outdoor sports facilities and to identify areas with a deficiency or surplus of provision including the existing quantity, quality and accessibility.
- 2.2. These facilities include pitches for football, cricket, rugby, hockey and 'third generation' (3G) football turf pitches, athletic tracks, bowling greens, cycle facilities, multi-use games areas, netball courts, petanque pistes, skate parks, tennis courts and water sports facilities.
- 2.3. The text summary below directly reflects the findings and recommendations of the Playing Pitch and Non-Pitch Assessment.

Local Supply and Demand in Kesgrave

- 2.4. Kesgrave has two youth football clubs, a cricket club, a bowls club, a tennis club, a netball club and cycling club (with its own cycle speedway track).
- 2.5. In terms of outdoor playing space and specifically the provision for children's play and sports grounds, the Assessment cited the 2012 Outdoor Playing Space Parish Schedule, prepared by Suffolk Coastal District Council, which identified that Kesgrave has the lowest provision in the Suffolk Coastal area. It has a deficit of -7.27ha.
- 2.6. Per capita levels of provision of outdoor tennis courts and skate parks in Kesgrave are the poorest in the Suffolk Coastal area. This may be due in part to its large population of 14,000 residents.
- 2.7. There is one 3G football turf pitch in Kesgrave which is available for community use, at Kesgrave High School. This is rated as 'standard' (as opposed to 'good' or 'poor'). There is demand for further provision in both Kesgrave and in neighbouring Martlesham and the study identified 'east Ipswich' as a locational priority for new provision. The study considered that this need could be addressed by further provision at Kesgrave High School.
- 2.8. Whilst further provision at Kesgrave High School may address quantitative needs, one particular issue is that any such provision would be under the control of the school academy, as opposed to Suffolk County Council as education authority. In theory therefore, access to such provision could be withdrawn at any time. Whilst there is no suggestion that this could be likely – either for existing or any further provision – the ownership and management of facilities is important in ensuring sufficient provision is made.
- 2.9. Kesgrave Community Sports Centre has a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) and a cricket pitch. These facilities were assessed as 'good' for the condition of cricket wickets, non-turf, changing and practice nets. Whilst it has no formal football pitches, Kesgrave Kestrels have been given permission by the owners to use the cricket pitch for football matches in the 2018/19 season.
- 2.10. As well as a 3G pitch, Kesgrave High School has 4 tennis courts, 6 netball courts, a cricket pitch and a MUGA. All were assessed to be of an acceptable standard although the tennis courts scored 'below average' in a quality inspection in respect of its changing facilities.
- 2.11. Kesgrave bowls club scores well in quality inspections, with 'average' playing surface, changing facilities and above average disabled access and car parking/ general access.

- 2.12. Kesgrave has good provision for good quality cycling facilities, with Kesgrave Cycle Speedway Track scoring 'High Quality' in visual inspections in terms of its facilities and parking.

Emerging Issues

- 2.13. Some school sports facilities in the area are currently unavailable for community use. Whilst there is a dual use arrangement with Kesgrave High School for the use of the football pitches, this arrangement does not extend to the rugby or hockey pitches.
- 2.14. Access to the outdoor facilities at Adastral Park and Suffolk Police is restrictive.

Conclusions on Technical Evidence

- 2.15. There is a significant overall shortage of play space and outdoor sports facilities, although the Assessment does not look in more detail at play space needs. Whilst the range of facilities currently available are reasonable, it appears that the shortfalls have come about as a result of new provision not keeping pace with the growth of the population. Whilst the 2012 Outdoor Playing Space Parish Schedule suggests a very high shortfall, the Playing Pitch and Non-Pitch Facilities Assessment considers this should be lower based on expected participation rates. This evidence should therefore be supplemented with direct evidence from local sports teams regarding access to facilities to undertake formal sporting activities and the quality of that provision. This could both be teams within the Kesgrave area or, for sports with no current team activities in Kesgrave such as swimming and rugby, teams in the neighbouring areas.
- 2.16. Partly this could be resolved by making certain facilities that are currently restricted, available to sports teams. It should be noted that, for the most popular sports such as football, community facilities such as those at Kesgrave High School, are already in community use.

3. Suffolk Coastal Outdoor Playing Space Parish Schedule 2012: *Suffolk Coastal District Council*

- 3.1. This assessment considered that in 2012 Kesgrave parish had a shortfall in play space provision of 1.55 hectares against the 2011 Census population. As a guidance, this could be made up by the provision of a MUGA (typically 0.8 hectares) and either one Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP, typically 0.8 hectares) or two Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP, typically 0.4 hectares each).
- 3.2. The key points that the assessment made were as follows:
- Whilst there appears to be sufficient land in terms of meeting the standard, there are very few equipped play areas. This has been exacerbated by the removal of play areas located either side of the Community Centre because of vandalism.
 - Provision for teenagers at the Community Centre (possibly including a MUGA) would be welcome.
 - The NEAP at Ashdale Walk needs refurbishment and further provision for teenagers and young children.
 - The assessment 'hoped' that Grange Farm would be provided with equipped play areas and provision for teenagers.
 - Bell Lane acts as a barrier for younger children, therefore the area west of Bell Lane has provision below the LEAP standard. New equipment to a LEAP or preferably NEAP standard should be provided to the west of Bell Lane.
 - Kesgrave and Martlesham Youth Forum identified a need for facilities targeted at teenagers, including skateboard facilities, BMX facilities and kickabout areas. It was considered that, in the right location, a single facility could serve both communities¹. In 2012, a BMX track was opened in Martlesham, adjacent to the Jubilee play space. This could address some of these needs.
 - It is desirable to provide play equipment on the Millennium Sports Ground to NEAP standard.
- 3.3. As part of the Neighbourhood Plan engagement with young people it was observed that the existing MUGA adjacent to Cedarwood School is not popular with young people aged 13 to 16 because it is frequented by older youths which makes it an intimidating environment. The clear preference was for a more centrally located MUGA.

Conclusions on Technical Evidence

- 3.4. There is a clear need for further children's play and youth facilities, as well as improvements to existing facilities. It is important to review the evidence from the community survey to ascertain the most pressing needs and the preferred locations.

¹ Whilst not the only potential vehicle for delivering a new facility, it should be noted that the 2018 Martlesham Neighbourhood Plan does not designate any areas for new teenage facilities.

4. Suffolk Coastal Open Spaces Assessment: *Ploszajski Lynch (2014)*

- 4.1. This assessment considers the open space and recreational areas that are required to serve existing and new development, covering the demand, deficiency or surplus of land.
- 4.2. This assessment covers publicly accessible open space including parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural greenspace, informal amenity open space, allotments, play provision for children and young people, cemeteries, Rights of Way and public footpaths.

Local supply and demand in Kesgrave

- 4.3. Kesgrave has the poorest per capita levels of provision of allotments and children's play areas in the Suffolk Coastal area. This could be due to its large population of 14,000 residents. A new Local Area for Play (LAP) for younger children was opened in 2018 on the edge of the Kesgrave Community Centre Sports Field. This was a joint venture between Kesgrave Town Council and the Community Centre, funded by SPARK (Sport and Recreation in Kesgrave).
- 4.4. One of the issues with allotment provision in Kesgrave is the sand and gravel soil base which provides poor growing conditions. A private organisation (KALGA) exists and offers over 80 plots at a site in Playford Lane approximately one mile north of Kesgrave. This is on a clay soil which provides better growing conditions.
- 4.5. There is no formal park provision in the Kesgrave sub-area, with a deficiency of 2.94ha.
- 4.6. Amenity green space and churchyard and cemetery provisions are low.

Emerging Issues

- 4.7. Although there are many footpaths and cycle ways in the area that are well used these are often fragmented and are not designed for wheelchair/pushchair access.
- 4.8. Further promotion and physical signage of footpaths and cycle ways would increase awareness of the networks available.
- 4.9. There are development threats to a number of open space sites in the area.
- 4.10. Kesgrave has the lowest per capita provision of allotments and children's play areas in the Suffolk Coastal area, which must be addressed (in respect of play spaces, see the assessment in Section 3 of the Suffolk Coastal Outdoor Playing Space Parish Schedule).
- 4.11. Greenspace provision is low. There are 11 sites that provide natural and semi-natural greenspace. This is 306.2ha of greenspace, which equates to 8.91 ha per 1,000 people. There are 17 sites that provide amenity greenspace, which 11.7ha and equates to 0.33ha per 1,000 people.
- 4.12. Kesgrave and district (which includes the surrounding areas of Martlesham and the rural hinterland) has the second lowest per capita levels of provision for churchyards and cemeteries in the Suffolk Coastal area. There are nine churches, totaling 6.50ha. In Kesgrave itself there are four churches.

Conclusion on Technical Evidence

- 4.13. The assessment supports the Parish Schedule regarding the need for more play spaces for children

and young people.

- 4.14. The assessment also identifies a shortage of allotment provision, which should be compared with the responses from residents to the community survey.
- 4.15. Addressing green space provision is likely to be more difficult, given the lack of new development which is expected to come forward in Kesgrave.

5. Brightwell Lakes

- 5.1. This Technical Evidence Summary has also included consideration of the proposals for development at Brightwell Lakes (previously known as ‘Austral Park’). This is because the proposed development is in close proximity to Kesgrave and is expected to provide a significant range of leisure and community facilities as part of the development. Some of these facilities may be suitable to address the shortfall in provision currently experienced by Kesgrave residents.
- 5.2. Suffolk Coastal District Council granted outline planning permission in April 2018 for the Brightwell Lakes development. Brightwell Lakes will be a new community to the east of the A12 at Martlesham and east and south of the existing BT facility at Austral Park. It will be approximately 3 miles by road away from the centre of Kesgrave, and therefore certain of its facilities will be able to serve the needs of Kesgrave residents.
- 5.3. Following a public consultation in 2016, a concept masterplan for the site has been prepared. This takes into account the site features and builds on the design principles on design, character and placemaking. This includes a range of up to 2,000 new homes around two local centres.
- 5.4. Possible key leisure facilities that are proposed in the masterplan includes:
- A community centre.
 - 34 hectares of accessible green space, including playing pitches, woodland, grassland, heathland, beach and picnic area, play areas for all ages and trim trail.
 - Allotments / community orchards.
 - A variety of walking and cycling routes including those for dog walkers.
- 5.5. Access to such facilities will be an important consideration and, at the current time, it is not clear whether there will be improved access for pedestrians and cyclists coming from Kesgrave across the A12. Currently the access doesn’t bring users into the site and the route is not one likely to encourage increased use. If such improved provision is not made then the ability to access such facilities will be reduced.
- 5.6. In summary, Brightwell Lakes could increase the provision of certain key leisure facilities that Kesgrave is lacking. Whilst this could include community centres, green spaces and play areas, it is reasonable to expect these facilities to be provided within the community they are serving. However, in the case of sports pitches and possibly to a lesser degree, allotments, it may be reasonable to assume that some needs can be met by the Brightwell Lakes facility, even if this requires travelling outside Kesgrave to access them. It will be important to be aware of this when determining any needs which are to be included in the Kesgrave Neighbourhood Plan.



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