



EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AUGUST 2025

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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ABBREVIATIONS

3G	Third Generation (artificial turf)
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
ANOG	Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance
AP	Active Partnership
BC	Bowls Club
BCGBA	British Crown Green Bowling Association
CC	Cricket Club
CFA	County Football Association
ECB	England and Wales Cricket Board
EH	England Hockey
FA	Football Association
FC	Football Club
FE	Further Education
FF	Football Foundation
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GMA	Grounds Management Association
HE	Higher Education
HC	Hockey Club
HCCC	Hertfordshire County Cricket Club
IRB	International Rugby Board
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
LFFP	Local Football Facility Plan
LMS	Last Man Stands
LTA	Lawn Tennis Association
LP	Local Plan
NGB	National Governing Body
NTP	Non-Turf Pitch
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
PPOSS	Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sports Strategy
RFU	Rugby Football Union
RFL	Rugby Football League
RUFC	Rugby Union Football Club
S106	Section 106 agreement
EHDC	East Hertfordshire District Council
TC	Tennis Club
TGR	Team Generation Rate
U	Under
WR	World Rugby

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Knight Kavanagh & Page (KKP) has been jointly commissioned by Stevenage Borough Council (SBC), East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC) and North Hertfordshire Council (NHC) to develop a Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS) for each individual local authority area. Covering all formal playing pitch and outdoor sport facilities across the authority to assist it to strategically plan for the future.

Building upon the preceding Assessment Report, this Strategy and Action Plan for East Hertfordshire provides a clear, strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing playing pitch and accompanying ancillary facilities up to 2043 (in line with the Local Plan review). It has been developed to provide:

- ◀ A vision for the future improvement and prioritisation of playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities.
- ◀ A number of aims to help deliver the recommendations and actions.
- ◀ A series of strategic recommendations which provide a strategic framework for the improvement, maintenance, development and, as appropriate, rationalisation of the playing pitch and outdoor sport facility stock.
- ◀ A series of sport-by-sport recommendations which provide a strategic framework for sport led improvements to provision.
- ◀ A prioritised area-by-area Action Plan to address key issues on a site-by-site basis.

The Strategy is delivered in accordance with Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) Guidance (for playing pitch sports) and Sport England's Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (for "non-pitch" sports). Sport England's PPS Guidance details a stepped approach, separated into five distinct sections:

- ◀ Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach.
- ◀ Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision.
- ◀ Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views.
- ◀ Stage D: Develop the Strategy.
- ◀ Stage E: Deliver the Strategy and keep it robust and up-to-date.

This report represents Stage D of the process, with stages A-C covered in the preceding Assessment Report and Stage E ongoing once the study is complete. The lifespan of a PPOSS is considered to be three years, although this can be increased if it updated.

A PPOSS delivers the evidence required to ensure that sufficient land is available to meet existing and projected future outdoor sport requirements. Its robust evidence base should inform and be implemented into planning policy and other relevant corporate strategies to enable local policies, planning and sport development criteria to work efficiently and effectively. It is capable of:

- ◀ Providing a clear framework for all playing pitch and outdoor sport providers, including the public, private and third sectors.
- ◀ Clearly addressing the needs of all identified sports within the area, highlighting particular local demand issues.
- ◀ Addressing issues of population growth and major growth/regeneration areas.
- ◀ Addressing issues of cross boundary facility provision.
- ◀ Addressing issues of accessibility, quality and management with regard to facility provision.
- ◀ Standing up to scrutiny at a public inquiry as a robust study.
- ◀ Supporting funding applications.
- ◀ Providing realistic aspirations which are implementable within the local authority's budgetary position and procurement regime.

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The Strategy and Action Plan (Part 6) recommends a number of priority projects relating to sports provision which should be realised over the Local Plan period. It provides a framework for improvement and, although resources may not currently be in place to implement it, potential partners and possible sources of external funding.

Partner organisations in East Hertfordshire have a vested interest in ensuring that existing playing pitches, outdoor sports facilities and ancillary provision are protected and enhanced. As such, many of the objectives and actions within this document need to be delivered and implemented by a wide range of bodies such as national governing bodies of sport (NGBs), sports organisations, education establishments and parish/town councils. In many instances, East Hertfordshire District Council will not be the organisation which delivers these actions or recommendations as the PPOSS is not solely just for the Council to act upon. It applies to/for all the stakeholders and partners involved.

Most sports facilities within East Hertfordshire are owned by town/parish councils or sports clubs/organisations. Therefore, EHDC's role in the delivery of new/improved sports facilities is to provide a robust evidence and policy to support the securing of new on-site facilities or S106 contributions from housing development.

Scope

The PPOSS includes all outdoor sports facilities owned and operated by public, private and third sector organisations are within the scope:

- ◆ Football.
- ◆ Rugby union.
- ◆ Rugby league.
- ◆ Cricket.
- ◆ Bowls.
- ◆ Hockey.
- ◆ Netball.
- ◆ Tennis.
- ◆ Athletics.
- ◆ Golf.
- ◆ Water sports.

Study area

The study area comprises the whole of EHDC's administrative area which has been broken into smaller subsections known as analysis areas. Current population figures are based on ONS 2021 mid-year estimates as follows:

- ◆ Bishop's Stortford (total population 45,076).
- ◆ Buntingford (total population 23,695).
- ◆ Hertford, Ware (total population 58,423).
- ◆ Sawbridgeworth (total population 15,412).
- ◆ Watton-at-Stone (total population 7,530).

Cross boundary issues have also been explored to determine the level of imported and exported demand, recognising, for example, that people travel to and make use of strategic facilities irrespective of administrative boundaries.

The analysis areas and population density are shown in Figure 1.1.

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Figure 1.1: Analysis areas



Local context

The East Hertfordshire District Plan was adopted in 2018 and outlines the plan for housing, jobs, community facilities and infrastructure to 2033. The plan seeks to provide a minimum of 18,458 new homes up to 2033, alongside new jobs, community facilities and infrastructure. The Plan sets out the importance of implementing this growth sustainably, to protect the natural and historical environment and the quality of life of people who live, work and visit the district.

The District Plan directs development across the district including urban extensions to the main towns and strategic development to the east of Stevenage, east of Welwyn Garden City and in the Gilston Area. These developments are at various stages of implementation, with a number of the larger sites coming forward in phases. The Council's latest Annual Report (2023-24) outlines that 9518 dwellings have been completed in the plan period to date.

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The Gilston Area is a key component of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT), a large-scale development initiative designated as a Garden Town. Located north of Harlow and across the River Stort in East Hertfordshire, the Gilston area of the Garden Town will feature 10,000 homes and associated infrastructure for seven new villages. Gilston will also be connected to Harlow town centre by a new public travel route known as a Sustainable Transport Corridor, prioritising walking, cycling and high-quality public transport routes.

The District Plan has outlined the following objectives for the Authority to achieve:

- ◀ Reduce carbon dioxide emissions and greener energy options.
- ◀ Support mixed communities which provide the needs for old, young and vulnerable people.
- ◀ Provide a balanced housing market.
- ◀ Protect the district's landscape from inappropriate developments.
- ◀ Encourage entrepreneurialism and maximising existing employment opportunities.
- ◀ Improve the travel network to ease road congestion and reduce carbon footprint.
- ◀ Provide good quality facilities for arts, culture, community, leisure, entertainment, recreation, faith and health.
- ◀ Reduce health inequalities and improve the health and wellbeing of all residents.

To support the improvement of the health and well-being of the whole community, District Plan policies require the provision of open space, sport and recreation and new community facilities in conjunction with new development. Policy CFLR1- Open Space, Sport and Recreation expects provision on-site, or if appropriate, financial contributions towards new or enhanced off-site provision. Facilities should be provided in accordance with the Council's latest evidence and in consultation with Sport England and the Council's Leisure and Environment team. Policy CFLR7 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation requires that provision of adequate and appropriately located community facilities will be sought in conjunction with new development.

New District Plan

In October 2023 East Herts Council agreed to update the adopted District Plan (2018). The Council will commence formal work on the District Plan Review in early 2026 once the Government has published secondary legislation to implement the plan-making reforms.

Currently, the Council is updating the evidence base and undertaking other preparatory work needed to support the District Plan Review. The PPOSS is a key part of this evidence base and will ensure that existing facilities are the most appropriate in terms of quantity, quality and location and consider how best to meet the additional needs generated by the planned housing and economic growth.

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Supplementary Planning Document

The Council adopted an Open Space, Sport and Recreation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in 2020, following the publication of an open space and sports assessment in 2017. The SPD supplements policies in the District Plan, providing guidance on the type and scale of open space, sport and recreation required in, and funded by, new development.

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North East Central (NEC) Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan (JSP)

The ten Hertfordshire local authorities, together with Hertfordshire County Council, established the Hertfordshire Growth Board in 2019. The purpose behind the Growth Board is to collaborate on place-based working across Hertfordshire to address sustainable growth. This joint approach is the development of two Joint Strategic Plans (JSPs), for South West and NEC Hertfordshire.

The purpose of the JSPs is to provide a long-term growth strategy where future collaboration is needed to deliver strategic-scale growth. The polycentric geography of Hertfordshire, with no dominant town or city, together with a number of tightly constrained new towns lends itself to a strategic approach that considers growth needs across administrative boundaries. The plans will identify a joint vision, long-term development needs, strategic development locations and strategic transport infrastructure, green infrastructure and climate change issues and policy responses.

The authorities undertook a comprehensive scoping exercise to understand better some of the challenges and issues associated with the preparation of a JSP, including the issues where support was needed. These include the relationship of a JSP to local plans, the type of strategic plan that would best meet the area's needs and how its preparation would be resourced, as well as how long it would take.

The local authorities of Broxbourne, East Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire, Stevenage and Welwyn Hatfield, together with Hertfordshire County Council make up the group for North East Central (NEC) Hertfordshire. Part one of a growth study was completed in October 2022 to understand the strategic elements affecting these authorities. Following this, visioning work was undertaken throughout late 2023 and 2024 and after public consultation it is expected to be finalised in 2025.

National context

One of the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

Section eight of the NPPF deals specifically with the topic of healthy communities, with Paragraph 103 stating that “planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision.

Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.”

Paragraph 104 sets three criterion that ensures existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and formal play spaces, should not be built on unless:

- a) An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- b) 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
- c) The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

Paragraphs 105, 106, and 107 set the parameters for the designation of Local Green Space. Such spaces may include playing fields and outdoor sport facilities.

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An up-to-date PPS will form a key element of Local Authority's evidence base to support its emerging health and well-being policies and the Local Plan as a whole.

Headline findings

Table 1.1 below highlights the quantitative headline findings identified for all pitch and outdoor sports included within the scope of the preceding Assessment Report. MES stands for match equivalent sessions and has been used as the comparable unit for natural grass pitches. Converting both the amount of play a site can accommodate (its carrying capacity) and how much play takes place there (its current use) into the same unit of demand enables a comparison to be undertaken.

The position on future demand is established through ONS projections (2043) and information provided by the relevant national governing bodies of sport. Full details of this can be found in the preceding Assessment Report.

Pitches have a limit of how much play they can accommodate over a certain period of time before their quality, and in turn their use, is adversely affected. As the main usage of pitches is for matches, it is appropriate for the comparable unit to be match equivalent sessions.

Based on how they tend to be played, this unit for football and rugby union pitches relates to a typical week within the season for each sport. For cricket pitches it is appropriate to look at the number of match equivalent sessions over the course of a season. How much play a cricket pitch can accommodate is primarily determined by the number and quality of wickets on a pitch. Only one match is generally played per pitch per day. However, play is rotated across the wickets to reduce wear and allow for repair. Each wicket is able to accommodate a certain amount of play per season as opposed to a week.

The Sport England PPS guidance does not advocate the conversion of MES to pitches as there is not always a case for providing pitches to meet the demand/shortfalls expressed. As an oversimplified example, developing one community accessible, standard quality adult football pitch in the Bishop's Stortford Analysis Area would create one MES of actual spare capacity for adult pitches within Bishop's Stortford. This should be caveated that considerations must be made into the accessibility and quality of any provision provided.

For example, improving the quality of pitches can also increase the capacity of existing pitches to accommodate such demand. For qualitative findings and site-specific findings, please see Part 4: Sport Specific Recommendations and Scenarios, and Part 6: Action Plan.

For artificial surfaces (AGPs/3G pitches), how much play can be accommodated is primarily determined by availability, rather than how much play it can accommodate before its quality is adversely affected as with natural grass pitches. Therefore, whole pitches are used as the comparable unit. Similarly, for the other non-pitch sports (i.e., tennis, netball bowls etc) where it is not as easy to determine carrying capacity, whole facilities are used as the comparable unit.

Future demand in the Assessment report has been determined by using Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator which looks at population change over a predetermined period. For East Hertfordshire this has been set to forecasted population rates in 2043. Future demand has been broken down by analysis areas throughout. In the case of Rugby Union future demand is accounted for through club ambitions as ONS projections resulted in less growth than Club ambitions and less growth than would be anticipated.

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Table 1.1: Quantitative headline findings (pitch sports)

Sport	Analysis area	Pitch type	Current supply/ demand balance (MES ¹)	Future supply/ demand balance (MES)
Football (grass)	Bishop's Stortford	Adult	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 1
Football (grass)	Bishop's Stortford	Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 2.5	Shortfall of 3
Football (grass)	Bishop's Stortford	Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 4	Shortfall of 5
Football (grass)	Bishop's Stortford	Mini 7v7	Shortfall of 1.5	Shortfall of 2.5
Football (grass)	Bishop's Stortford	Mini 5v5	At capacity	At capacity
Football (grass)	Buntingford	Adult	Spare capacity of 2	Spare capacity of 2
Football (grass)	Buntingford	Youth 11v11	At capacity	Shortfall of 0.5
Football (grass)	Buntingford	Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 1.5	Shortfall of 2
Football (grass)	Buntingford	Mini 7v7	Spare capacity of 2.5	Spare capacity of 2
Football (grass)	Buntingford	Mini 5v5	Shortfall of 1	Shortfall of 1.5
Football (grass)	Hertford, Ware	Adult	Spare capacity of 1	Shortfall of 1
Football (grass)	Hertford, Ware	Youth 11v11	Spare capacity of 1	Shortfall of 1
Football (grass)	Hertford, Ware	Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 6	Shortfall of 7.5
Football (grass)	Hertford, Ware	Mini 7v7	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 2.5
Football (grass)	Hertford, Ware	Mini 5v5	At capacity	Shortfall of 1.5
Football (grass)	Sawbridgeworth	Adult	At capacity	At capacity
Football (grass)	Sawbridgeworth	Youth 11v11	At capacity	At capacity
Football (grass)	Sawbridgeworth	Youth 9v9	Spare capacity of 1	Spare capacity of 1
Football (grass)	Sawbridgeworth	Mini 7v7	At capacity	At capacity
Football (grass)	Sawbridgeworth	Mini 5v5	At capacity	At capacity
Football (grass)	Watton-at-Stone	Adult	At capacity	At capacity
Football (grass)	Watton-at-Stone	Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 0.5
Football (grass)	Watton-at-Stone	Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 0.5
Football (grass)	Watton-at-Stone	Mini 7v7	At capacity	At capacity
Football (grass)	Watton-at-Stone	Mini 5v5	Spare capacity of 1	Spare capacity of 1
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Adult	Spare capacity of 2.5	At capacity
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 2	Shortfall of 5
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 11	Shortfall of 14
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Mini 7v7	Spare capacity of 0.5	Shortfall of 3
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Mini 5v5	At capacity	Shortfall of 2
Football (3G) ²	Bishop's Stortford	11v11 ³	Shortfall of 0.25	Shortfall of 0.25
Football (3G)	Buntingford	11v11	Shortfall of 1.25	Shortfall of 1.5
Football (3G)	Hertford, Ware	11v11	Shortfall of 2.5	Shortfall of 3
Football (3G)	Sawbridgeworth	11v11	Oversupply of 0.5	Oversupply of 0.5
Football (3G)	Watton-at-Stone	11v11	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 0.5
Football (3G)	East Hertfordshire	11v11	Shortfall of 4	Shortfall of 4.75

¹ Per week for rugby and football, per season for cricket

²Based on accommodating 38 teams on one full size pitch.

³ Sport England view minimum dimensions for a full size pitch to be 100 x 64m, however, for the purposes of this report, full size pitches refer to 91 x 55m due to meeting minimum dimensions for adult football.

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Sport	Analysis area	Pitch type	Current supply/ demand balance (MES ¹)	Future supply/ demand balance (MES)
Cricket ⁴	Bishop's Stortford	Saturday	Spare capacity of 1	Spare capacity of 1
Cricket	Bishop's Stortford	Sunday	Spare capacity of 13	Spare capacity of 13
Cricket	Bishop's Stortford	Midweek	Spare capacity of 43	Spare capacity of 37
Cricket	Buntingford	Saturday	Spare capacity of 2	Spare capacity of 2
Cricket	Buntingford	Sunday	Spare capacity of 14	Spare capacity of 14
Cricket	Buntingford	Midweek	Spare capacity of 38	Spare capacity of 38
Cricket	Hertford, Ware	Saturday	Overplay of 10 MES	Overplay of 22 MES
Cricket	Hertford, Ware	Sunday	Spare capacity of 14	Spare capacity of 14
Cricket	Hertford, Ware	Midweek	Spare capacity of 44	Spare capacity of 44
Cricket	Sawbridgeworth	Saturday	Overplay of 28 MES	Overplay of 28 MES
Cricket	Sawbridgeworth	Sunday	Overplay of 4 MES	Overplay of 4 MES
Cricket	Sawbridgeworth	Midweek	Spare capacity of 8	Spare capacity of 8
Cricket	Watton-at-Stone	Saturday	Spare capacity of 6	Spare capacity of 6
Cricket	Watton-at-Stone	Sunday	Spare capacity of 30	Spare capacity of 30
Cricket	Watton-at-Stone	Midweek	Spare capacity of 42	Spare capacity of 42
Cricket	East Hertfordshire	Saturday	Overplay of 29	Overplay of 41
Cricket	East Hertfordshire	Sunday	Spare capacity of 67	Spare capacity of 67
Cricket	East Hertfordshire	Midweek	Spare capacity of 175	Spare capacity of 163
Rugby union	Bishop's Stortford	Senior	Shortfall of 11.25	Shortfall of 11.75
Rugby union	Buntingford	Senior	Shortfall of 8.5	Shortfall of 8.5
Rugby union	Hertford, Ware	Senior	Shortfall of 1	Shortfall of 1.5
Rugby union	Sawbridgeworth	Senior	At capacity	At capacity
Rugby union	Watton-at-Stone	Senior	At capacity	At capacity
Rugby union	East Hertfordshire	Senior	Shortfall of 20.75	Shortfall of 21.75
Rugby league	East Hertfordshire	Senior	No demand so no provision required	No demand so no provision required
Hockey (sand AGPs)	East Hertfordshire	Full size	Current supply is at capacity. There is a need to develop a new full sized hockey pitch to service the strategic need from East Hertfordshire, Stevenage and North Hertfordshire.	There is a need to develop a new full sized hockey pitch to service the strategic need from East Hertfordshire, Stevenage and North Hertfordshire.

⁴Future demand for cricket has been applied on a district wide level and is not allocated to specific analysis areas.. It anticipates a growth of seven senior men's cricket teams putting additional pressure on the Saturday peak time period.

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Table 1.2: Quantitative headline findings (non-pitch sports)

Sport	Current picture	Future picture
Tennis	Overall, current demand is being met other than the shortfalls identified at Aston Tennis Club, Much Hadham Tennis Club and Tewin Tennis Club. There is also a need to improve the recreational tennis offer at recreational sites such as Bramfield Playing Field.	Aston Tennis Club, Much Hadham Tennis Club, Braughing Tennis Club and Tewin Tennis Club shall be operating above LTA recommended guidelines if future demand ambitions are realised. There is a planning application to at Hartham Leisure Centre to convert a small sided 3G pitch into Padel courts.
Netball	Demand for netball is high in the Authority as both the Bishop's Stortford District Netball League and Hertford and District League are successfully delivered leagues. Demand within the Authority is met with the existing provision at Herts and Essex Sports Centre and Presdales School.	There will be a future need to resurface the courts at Herts and Essex Sports Centre to support the Hertford and District League.
Lawn Bowls	Overall demand is being met with no clubs operating below the Bowls England capacity guidelines. There are, however, four bowling greens potentially operating above Bowls England capacity guidelines, located at Buntingford Bowls Club, Datchworth Bowls Club, Hertford Castle Bowls Club and Shire Park Bowls Club.	If future demand through club ambitions is achieved Shire Park Bowls will continue to be operating above Bowls England capacity guidelines. ONS projections identify that the number of persons aged 65 and over living in East Hertfordshire is forecasted to increase by 40%.
Athletics	Demand in the district is adequately met by the 400m track at Wodson Park Sports Centre and the 40m straight track at Hockerill Anglo-European College.	Demand met by the existing track. The Wodson Park Sports Centre track is estimated to require a respray in 2026 following an ANOG report completed in January 2025.
Golf	Demand for golf in the district is adequately met by the eight 18-hole golf courses and two par 3 courses provided. Membership levels are much higher than the national average meaning there is the need to protect provision to ensure demand is catered for.	Demand for golf in the district is adequately met by the eight 18-hole golf courses and two par 3 courses provided. Membership levels should be monitored to ensure clubs can continue to accommodate demand.
Water sports	Outdoor water sports are well catered for within East Hertfordshire for a landlocked Authority. There are four clubs in East Hertfordshire that undertakes outdoor water sports, none of which reference any unmet or latent demand.	The outdoor water sports facilities should be protected for the continued use during and beyond the lifespan of the PPOSS.
Padel	There is a shortfall of padel provision within East Hertfordshire. The LTA Padel Provision Calculator indicates there is demand for 12 courts and there are currently two courts in the Authority located The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust.	Look to support the development of padel courts at sites such as Hartham Leisure Centre and Bishop's Stortford FC.

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Conclusions

The existing position for most sports is that there is a mixture of shortfalls, spare capacity and sufficient capacity. The future position shows the exacerbation of current shortfalls and the creation of shortfalls for some sports and in some areas where demand is currently being met.

3G pitch shortfalls are present in four of the five analysis areas, with shortfalls most apparent in the Buntingford and Hertford, Ware analysis areas. The need for 3G pitches is only met in the Sawbridgeworth Analysis Area. As such efforts should be made to increase the number of 3G pitches as to better support football demand.

Rugby union has shortfalls apparent at Bishop's Stortford RFC, Hertford RFC and Datchworth RFC. Bishop's Stortford RFC is in the process of developing new changing rooms to facilitate its growth in women's and girls' demand. Both Hertford RFC and Datchworth RFC have been granted planning permission to extend the respective ancillary provisions at each site.

Hockey demand within East Hertfordshire is currently at capacity as all accessible pitches are operating either at or above England Hockey capacity guidelines. Demand for hockey in North Hertfordshire and Stevenage is also operating at capacity. There is therefore the need to develop an additional pitch in either East Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire or Stevenage to service the need across all three authorities.

Where demand is being met, this does not equate to a surplus of provision, with any spare capacity instead considered a potential solution to overcoming shortfalls. As such, there is a clear need to protect all existing provision until all demand is met, or there is a requirement to replace provision to an equal or better quantity and quality before it is lost, in line with NPPF and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. In addition, there remain some area and site specific issues that need resolving despite no overall capacity issues, such as those relating to quality and security of tenure.

Where shortfalls are present, for the most part, they can be met by better utilising current provision, such as through improving quality, installing additional sports lighting, improving ancillary facilities, and enabling access to existing unused provision, such as at unavailable school sites. However, there is an overall shortfall of 11v11 size 3G pitches and padel courts identified across East Hertfordshire, and these shortfalls cannot be addressed unless this type of pitch or court is approved and constructed. Localised rugby union shortfalls at club sites are also too great to be removed through quality improvements. Therefore, either additional senior pitches, improved access to nearby provision, or agreeing access to existing WR22 3G provision for East Hertfordshire based clubs should be considered to address rugby union shortfalls.

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PART 2: VISION

Vision

A vision has been set out to provide a clear focus with desired outcomes for the PPOSS.

“To work with key local partners to ensure the East Herts is serviced by high quality sports facilities to meet the needs of its residents and improve their health and wellbeing.”

The strategy is expected to address and respond to the following key objectives:

- ◆ Provide a clear strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities.
- ◆ Ensure that all valuable facilities are protected for the long-term benefit of sport.
- ◆ Providing evidence of need for capital funding. As well as proving the need for developer contributions towards pitch and facilities.
- ◆ To gather an up-to-date understanding for the need for investment into outdoor sport through a thorough consultation process as to better enable the capturing Section 106 funding.
- ◆ Ensure that all clubs have access to facilities of appropriate quality to meet current needs and longer-term aspirations.
- ◆ Identify any cross-boundary issues specific to each local authority and its neighbouring local authorities.
- ◆ Undertake analysis using the findings of the study to present a picture of the current and future use of provision based on need, demand and quantity of pitches.

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PART 3: AIMS

The following overarching aims are based on the three Sport England planning objectives. It is recommended that they are adopted by the Council and partners to enable delivery of the overall PPOSS vision and Sport England planning objectives.

AIM 1

To **protect** the existing supply of outdoor sport facilities where it is needed to meet current and future needs.

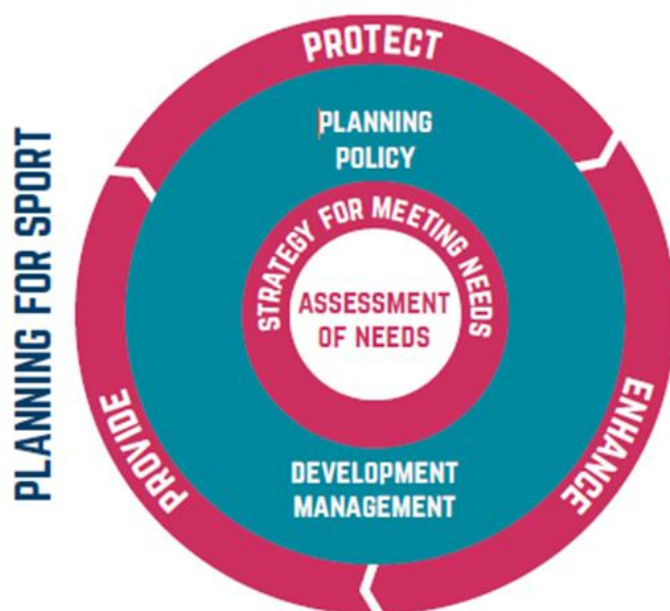
AIM 2

To **enhance** outdoor sport facilities and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites.

AIM 3

To **provide** new outdoor sport facilities where there is current or future demand to do so.

Figure 3.1: Sport England planning objectives



Source: Sport England, Planning for Sport Guidance (April 2024)

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PART 4: SPORT SPECIFIC ISSUES SCENARIOS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, in order to help develop recommendations and actions for each sport, and to understand their potential impact, a number of relevant scenario questions are tested against the key issues identified in the preceding Assessment Report for each sport. This then informs sport specific recommendations.

4.1: Football – grass pitches

Assessment Report summary

Football – grass pitch summary

- ▶ The current supply of football provision is broadly sufficient in accommodating football demand on adult, 7v7 and 5v5 pitches.
- ▶ Comparatively, youth 11v11 and 9v9 pitches are showing a combined shortfall of 13 match equivalent sessions.
- ▶ Future demand through population increases creates a further 14 match equivalent sessions of demand which exacerbates existing shortfalls on youth 11v11 and 9v9 pitches whilst making mini 7v7, 5v5 overplayed and adult pitches played at capacity. This could be impacted further should growth scenarios in the forthcoming strategy demonstrate that higher future demand may be experienced.
- ▶ The audit identifies a total of 184 grass football pitches across 70 sites. Of these, 178 are available, at some level, for community use across 66 sites. All unavailable pitches are located at education sites other than Albury Football Ground where community access was removed by the parish council due to noise complaints.
- ▶ Of the 96 pitches which offer community use, 28 pitches are assessed as good quality, 94 as standard quality and 56 as poor quality. The unavailable pitches are all of standard quality.
- ▶ Through the audit and assessment, 511 teams from 58 clubs are identified as playing in East Hertfordshire. This consists of 75 adult men's, nine adult women's, 194 youth boys', 35 youth girls' and 198 mini mixed teams.
- ▶ Since the previous PPS was developed in 2017 football teams in East Hertfordshire have increase by 104 teams. Alongside this, women's and girls' demand has increased by 21 teams.
- ▶ Future demand equates to the growth of six adult teams, 12 youth boys, two youth girls and 14 mini teams based on team generation rates. Club growth ambitions of 25 teams have been discounted.
- ▶ The PPOSS has not taken into account future demand generated through housing growth as the scale and location of new development is not yet know. As the new District Plan emerges, the Council can use Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator to explore the pitch requirements of housing growth scenarios.
- ▶ Of the 28 ancillary facilities, four are rated good (14%), 19 are rated standard (68%) and five are rated poor (18%) quality.
- ▶ Currently, there are only four sites (14%) which have dedicated female changing rooms to support women's and girls' participation in football, which are, Grange Paddocks, Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC, The Bury and Ware FC.
- ▶ There is a sufficient supply of provision in East Hertfordshire to accommodate current demand on adult, mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 pitch types.
- ▶ There are existing shortfalls on youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches.
- ▶ Future demand exacerbates shortfalls on youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 and makes adult pitches played to capacity and mini 7v7 and 5v5 pitches overplayed, to give an overall picture of 24 match session per week of overplay in the District.
- ▶ There are shortfalls for grass pitches in four of the five analysis areas. Only the Sawbridgeworth Analysis Area is not showing any shortfalls in provision for any pitch type. Comparatively, the Bishop's Stortford Analysis Area has a shortfall of 8.5 match equivalent sessions across all pitch types which makes it the most overplayed analysis area within East Hertfordshire.

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Scenarios

Alleviating overplay/improving pitch quality

In total there are 22 pitches overplayed in East Hertfordshire across 13 sites, equating to 26 match equivalent sessions per week. Improving quality of these pitches (i.e., through increased maintenance or improved drainage) will increase capacity at the sites and consequently reduce both current and future shortfalls.

To illustrate the above, Table 4.1 highlights the current levels of overplay that would be alleviated if quality improved to good at each site. As a reminder, the capacity rating for each type and quality rating as detailed in the table below:

Adult pitch quality	Adult matches per week	Youth pitch quality	Youth matches per week	Mini pitch quality	Mini matches per week
Good	3	Good	4	Good	6
Standard	2	Standard	2	Standard	4
Poor	1	Poor	1	Poor	2

Table 4.1: Overplay if all pitches were good quality (match equivalent sessions per week)

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Current quality	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Current capacity rating (MES)	Good quality rating (MES)
12	Bengeo Sports Ground	Hertford, Ware	Poor	Adult	1	1.5	0.5
16	Bishop's Stortford College	Bishop's Stortford	Poor	Adult	1	0.5	1.5
16	Bishop's Stortford College	Bishop's Stortford	Poor	Youth 11v11	1	1.5	1.5
16	Bishop's Stortford College	Bishop's Stortford	Poor	Youth 9v9	1	0.5	2.5
35	Crouchfields	Watton-at-Stone	Standard	Youth 11v11	1	0.5	1.5
41	Friedberg Playing Fields	Bishop's Stortford	Poor	Mini 7v7	1	2.5	1.5
41	Friedberg Playing Fields	Bishop's Stortford	Poor	Youth 11v11	1	1.5	1.5
41	Friedberg Playing Fields	Bishop's Stortford	Poor	Youth 9v9	1	2.5	0.5
65	London Road Playing Fields	Buntingford	Poor	Youth 9v9	1	1	2
75	Presdales School	Hertford, Ware	Standard	Youth 9v9	1	4	2
118	Ware Lions FC	Buntingford	Poor	Mini 5v5	1	1	3

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Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Current quality	Pitch type	No. of pitches	Current capacity rating (MES)	Good quality rating (MES)
118	Ware Lions FC	Buntingford	Standard	Youth 9v9	1	0.5	1.5
119	Ware Youth Football Club	Hertford, Ware	Poor	Mini 7v7	1	1	3
119	Ware Youth Football Club	Hertford, Ware	Poor	Mini 7v7	1	0.5	3.5
119	Ware Youth Football Club	Hertford, Ware	Standard	Youth 9v9	1	1	1
120	Watton-At-Stone Primary School	Watton-at-Stone	Poor	Youth 9v9	1	0.5	2.5
127	Walkern Sports & Community Centre	Buntingford	Poor	Adult	1	0.5	1.5
131	Hartham Common & Kingsmead	Hertford, Ware	Poor	Youth 11v11	1	1	2
131	Hartham Common & Kingsmead	Hertford, Ware	Poor	Youth 9v9	1	1	2
132	Hertfordshire & Essex High School Sports Centre	Bishop's Stortford	Poor	Youth 11v11	1	0.5	2.5
139	Pearce House Playing Fields	Bishop's Stortford	Poor	Youth 9v9	1	1	2
139	Pearce House Playing Fields	Bishop's Stortford	Poor	Youth 9v9	1	1	2

The impact of improving overplayed pitches to good quality is shown in the table above. Overplay would be alleviated at all but one site, Presdales School which would still have a two match equivalent sessions per week of overplay remaining across its overplayed pitch. This is because the pitch receives high demand of six match equivalent sessions. The Authority wide impact results in overplay reducing from 26 match equivalent sessions per week to two.

It should be noted that sites such as Crouchfields, Friedberg Playing Fields, Ware Lions FC, Hartham Common & Kingshead and Pearce House Playing Fields are all accessible open space, meaning the potential to improve the pitches to good quality is much more difficult than sites such as Bishop's Stortford College with secured access due to the added recreational use and risk of damage to the pitches.

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Table 4.2: Impact of improving pitch quality on overall supply and demand

Pitch type	Current actual spare capacity	Current overplay	Current total	Potential overplay	Potential total if improvements undertaken
Adult	5	2.5	2.5	-	5
Youth 11v11	3	5	2	-	3
Youth 9v9	2	13	11	2	-
Mini 7v7	4.5	4	0.5	-	4.5
Mini 5v5	1	1	-	-	1

The overplay at Presdales School would remain, but spare capacity at other sites across the district would balance out the overall position. Table 4.2, highlights that most pitch formats would be showing actual spare capacity if the overplayed pitches were improved to good quality. Only 9v9 youth pitches would be played to capacity after overplayed pitches were improved to good quality. This would significantly change the outlook on football demand in East Hertfordshire.

Table 4.3 below analyses how the future demand capacity balance would be impacted if all overplayed pitches were to be improved to good quality.

Future demand from population projections equate to 17 match equivalent sessions per week across all pitch types. If all overplayed pitches were improved to good quality, only youth 9v9 and mini 5v5 pitches would be overplayed. Adult, and mini 7v7 pitches would have spare capacity whilst youth 11v11 pitches would be played to capacity.

Table 4.3: Impact of improving pitch quality on overall future supply and demand

Pitch type	Current capacity balance	Future demand	Future demand capacity balance	Potential overplay	Potential total if improvements are undertaken
Adult	2.5	2.5	-	-	2.5
Youth 11v11	2	3	5	-	-
Youth 9v9	11	3	14	2	3
Mini 7v7	0.5	3.5	3	-	1
Mini 5v5	-	2	2	-	1

Future demand

This scenario explores the impact that future demand from club ambitions, identified via consultation, would have. Please note that the Assessment Report only considered future demand derived from population projection growth.

Table 4.4: Summary of participation growth by analysis area

Analysis area	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
Bishop's Stortford	1	2	5	3	5	16
Buntingford	-	-	1	1	-	2
Hertford, Ware	-	1	-	3	3	7
Sawbridgeworth	-	-	-	-	-	-
Watton-at-Stone	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1	3	6	7	8	25

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Future demand from club ambitions totals 25 teams from eight clubs and the table below shows the potential impact on the supply/demand balance by analysis area.

Table 4.5: Impact of future demand from club ambitions

Pitch type	Current supply/demand balance	Potential future demand (club aspirations)	Potential future supply/demand balance
Adult	2.5	1	1.5
Youth 11v11	2	3	5
Youth 9v9	11	6	17
Mini 7v7	0.5	7	6.5
Mini 5v5	-	8	8

The impact of growth, via club aspiration, equates to exacerbated shortfalls on youth 11v11 and 9v9 pitches whilst the spare capacity for mini 7v7 and the at capacity mini 5v5 pitches become overplayed. Spare capacity of one match equivalent session remains on adult pitches.

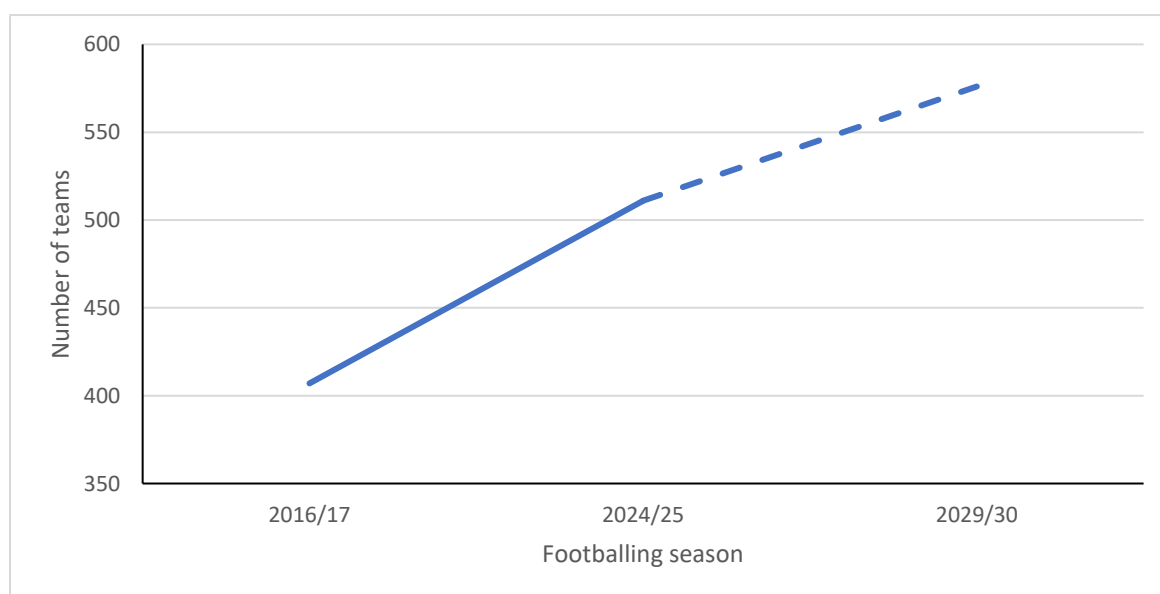
Participation trends

This scenario examines the effect of future demand based on forecasted growth from historical FA affiliation data. Please note that the Assessment Report only considered future demand from ONS population growth.

Using the previous East Hertfordshire Playing Pitch Strategy, the below graph plots the forecasted growth for affiliated football demand in 2030.

- 2016/17 – 407 teams affiliated to East Hertfordshire.
- 2024/25 - 511 teams affiliated to East Hertfordshire.

Figure 4.1: Forecasted annual growth in football teams across East Hertfordshire (2015-2030)



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With an increase in 104 teams demonstrated from 2017 to 2025 across the Authority at a growth rate of 13 teams per season. Trend forecasting therefore predicts the growth of 65 teams by the year 2030. Table 4.6 below outlines the projected analysis area breakdown in 2030 if demand increases at the same rate that it is currently distributed across the Authority. This would give a total of 576 teams affiliated to East Hertfordshire, equating to a further 32.5 match equivalent sessions per week across the Authority.

Given the current shortfalls identified for grass football pitches this further evidences the need to improve pitch quality at priority sites and develop more pitches (which could include 3G pitches) to better support this anticipated growth in demand.

Table 4.6: Forecasted annual growth to 2030 by analysis area

Analysis area	Current demand	Percentage increase	2030 projected demand
Bishop's Stortford	107	13%	121
Buntingford	90	13%	104
Hertford, Ware	277	13%	311
Sawbridgeworth	22	13%	23
Watton-at-Stone	15	13%	17
Total	511	13%	576

The table below outlines the potential breakdown by pitch scale using the same forecasted growth applied in tables 4.5 and 4.6. This has applied the assumption that the future demand figure will have the same distribution by the five age brackets as is currently taking place.

Table 4.7: Forecasted annual growth to 2030 by pitch scale

Total	Adult	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Total
Current demand	84	128	101	108	90	511
2030 projected demand	92	144	115	121	104	576

If the forecasted growth were to take place the supply and demand balance below shows that all five pitch types will be overplayed, with youth 9v9 pitches showing the greatest amount of overplay.

Table 4.8: Supply and demand analysis of forecasted annual growth to 2030

Pitch format	Actual spare capacity ⁵	Overplay	Current total	2030 projected new demand	Potential future supply/demand balance
Adult	5	2.5	2.5	4	1.5
Youth 11v11	3	5	2	8	10
Youth 9v9	2	13	11	7	18
Mini 7v7	4.5	4	0.5	6.5	6
Mini 5v5	1	1	-	7	7

⁵ In match equivalent sessions

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Priority pitch improvement sites

As improving the quality of all overplayed sites may not be feasible from an investment point of view, an alternative approach is to focus on improving specific strategic sites. Consequently, the report identifies five sites for grass pitch improvements that need investment and that are key to the development of football across East Hertfordshire. This improvement is led by the County FA and FF with local clubs playing a role in the activation of projects. As the Friedberg Playing Fields, Ware Lions FC and Hartham Common & Kingshead pitches are all accessible open space it will be difficult to improve these pitches to good quality.

The impact of improving these pitches is shown in the below table.

Table 4.9: Impact of quality improvements

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Current quality	Pitch type	Current pitch capacity	Capacity rating (MES)	New pitch capacity (MES)	Good quality rating (MES)
16	Bishop's Stortford College	Bishop's Stortford	Poor	Adult	1	1.5	3	1.5
16	Bishop's Stortford College	Bishop's Stortford	Poor	Youth 11v11	1	1.5	4	1.5
16	Bishop's Stortford College	Bishop's Stortford	Poor	Youth 9v9	1	0.5	4	2.5
16	Bishop's Stortford College	Bishop's Stortford	Poor	Youth 9v9	1	-	4	3
16	Bishop's Stortford College	Bishop's Stortford	Poor	Mini 7v7	2	-	6	4
16	Bishop's Stortford College	Bishop's Stortford	Poor	Mini 7v7	2	-	6	4
16	Bishop's Stortford College	Bishop's Stortford	Poor	Mini 7v7	2	-	6	4
41	Friedberg Playing Fields	Bishop's Stortford	Poor	Mini 5v5	2	-	6	4
41	Friedberg Playing Fields	Bishop's Stortford	Poor	Mini 7v7	2	2.5	6	1.5
41	Friedberg Playing Fields	Bishop's Stortford	Poor	Youth 11v11	1	1.5	4	1.5
41	Friedberg Playing Fields	Bishop's Stortford	Poor	Youth 9v9	1	2.5	4	0.5
118	Ware Lions FC	Buntingford	Poor	Mini 5v5	2	1	6	3
118	Ware Lions FC	Buntingford	Poor	Mini 7v7	4	1.5	6	3.5

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Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Current quality	Pitch type	Current pitch capacity	Capacity rating (MES)	New pitch capacity (MES)	Good quality rating (MES)
118	Ware Lions FC	Buntingford	Poor	Youth 11v11	2	-	4	2
118	Ware Lions FC	Buntingford	Standard	Youth 9v9	2	0.5	4	1.5
119	Ware Youth Football Club	Hertford, Ware	Poor	Mini 7v7	2	1	6	3
119	Ware Youth Football Club	Hertford, Ware	Poor	Mini 7v7	2	0.5	6	3.5
119	Ware Youth Football Club	Hertford, Ware	Standard	Youth 9v9	2	1	4	1
119	Ware Youth Football Club	Hertford, Ware	Standard	Youth 9v9	2	-	4	2
119	Ware Youth Football Club	Hertford, Ware	Poor	Adult	1	-	3	2
119	Ware Youth Football Club	Hertford, Ware	Poor	Adult	1	-	3	2
119	Ware Youth Football Club	Hertford, Ware	Poor	Mini 5v5	2	-	6	4
119	Ware Youth Football Club	Hertford, Ware	Good	Mini 5v5	6	-	6	-
131	Hartham Common & Kingsmead	Hertford, Ware	Poor	Adult	1	1	3	3
131	Hartham Common & Kingsmead	Hertford, Ware	Poor	Adult	1	0.5	3	2.5
131	Hartham Common & Kingsmead	Hertford, Ware	Poor	Youth 11v11	1	1	4	2
131	Hartham Common & Kingsmead	Hertford, Ware	Poor	Youth 9v9	1	1	4	2

The impact the improvements would have on the overall supply and demand balance is shown in the Table 4.7. Note the table below is presented on a peak time model, and therefore, improving sites in the table above, may not generate capacity within the peak periods, albeit it will create an improved match day experience for users.

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Based on improvements, shortfalls for youth 11v11 would be removed and create spare capacity whilst, youth 9v9 shortfalls would be decreased. Adult and 7v7 pitches spare capacity would be increased and 5v5 pitches would gain spare capacity.

Table 4.10: Impact on current supply and demand if quality improved at priority sites (in match equivalent sessions per week)

Pitch type	Current capacity	Potential capacity with improvements
Adult	2.5	4.5
Youth 11v11	2	2
Youth 9v9	11	5.5
Mini 7v7	0.5	4.5
Mini 5v5	-	1

The impact is similar when factoring in future demand as can be seen in the table below.

Table 4.11 below analyses how the future demand capacity balance would be impacted if all overplayed pitches were to be improved to good quality.

Future demand from population projections equates to 14 match equivalent sessions per week across all pitch types. Taking this into consideration, If all overplayed pitches were improved to good quality, only adult pitches would still have spare capacity. Youth 11v11 pitches would be played to capacity whilst youth 9v9, mini 7v7 and 5v5 pitches would be overplayed. Youth 9v9 pitches having the most overplay with 10.5 MES.

Table 4.11: Impact on future supply and demand if quality improved at priority sites (in match equivalent sessions per week)

Pitch type	Current capacity balance	Potential capacity with improvements	Future demand	Future demand capacity balance	Potential overplay	Potential total if improvements are undertaken
Adult	2.5	4.5	2.5	2	-	2.5
Youth 11v11	2	2	3	1	-	-
Youth 9v9	11	5.5	3	8.5	2	10.5
Mini 7v7	0.5	4.5	3.5	1	-	1
Mini 5v5	-	1	2	1	-	1

Loss of tenure at education sites

Table 4.12 outlines the 19 education sites in East Hertfordshire accessed by community clubs.

Table 4.12: Demand taking place on grass pitches at education sites

Site ID	Site	Clubs accessing site	Number of teams	Tenure position
8	Aston St Mary's VA School	Watton YFC	2	The Club pays a donation toward the school to use the football pitches and has a good relationship.
15	Birchwood High School	BSC FC	8	The Club part funded the 3G pitch and is a partner club. It has an annual agreement in place for this and the two 9v9 pitches it accesses.

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Site ID	Site	Clubs accessing site	Number of teams	Tenure position
16	Bishop's Stortford College	BSC FC Thorley Manor	25	BSC FC pays an annual fee toward the school for use of its pitches.
36	Datchworth All Saints C Of Primary School	Watton YFC	4	The Club pays a monthly fee to the school for use of the pitches. There is no official agreement in place.
40	Freman College	Buntingford Cougars	3	The Club pays an annual fee toward the school for use of its pitches.
62	Leventhorpe School	Sawbridgeworth Town	3	Sawbridgeworth Town FC is the partner Club for the site and has historically maintained the grass pitches.
66	Manor Fields Primary School	Thorley Manor	5	The Club rents the pitch from the school with no long-term agreement in place.
68	Morgans Field	Bury Rangers	24	Position unknown.
75	Presdales School	Hertford Town Bury Rangers	31	Bury Rangers FC is the partner Club for the site.
76	Ralph Sadleir School	Standon & Puckeridge Hares FC	8	Position unknown.
78	Reedings Junior School	Sawbridgeworth Town	1	Position unknown.
90	St Edmunds College & Prep School	Bully's Crusaders Watton YFC	4	Watton YFC pays a monthly fee to the school for use of the pitches. There is no official agreement in place. Bully's Crusaders position is unknown.
102	The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood)	Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC BSC FC	6	BSC FC pays an annual fee toward the school for use of its pitches.
105	The Chauncy School	Deaconsfield Vets Hartham United FC	2	Positions unknown.
108	The Sele School	Bengeo Tigers	26	The Club has a rolling two-year agreement with the school and have been there for over 25 years.
113	Walkern School	AFC Walkern	1	Position unknown.
120	Watton-At-Stone Primary School	Watton YFC	3	The Club pays a monthly fee to the school for use of the pitches. There is no official agreement in place.
132	Hertfordshire & Essex High School Sports Centre	Thorley Manor	3	The Club rents the pitch from the school with no long-term agreement in place.
166	Layston C of E First School	Buntingford Cougars	4	The Club pays an annual fee toward the school for use of its pitches.

In instances where clubs do not have formal tenure agreements in place, clubs could theoretically be asked to vacate at any time which would result in each requiring alternate provision to service existing levels of demand.

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There are 163 teams from nine clubs accessing 14 education sites. The impact on removal of these sites for community access is highlighted in the table below. Please note the total does not include the three teams accessing 3G pitches at education sites.

As can be seen, if all access to education sites was to be lost, shortfalls would be created on all pitch formats and significant in most cases. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure the grass pitches at education sites continue to stay open to community use, given the reliance upon school sites across East Hertfordshire. Clubs should also be encouraged and supported to formalise longer term lease agreements with providers to further secure long-term access.

Table 4.13: Impact of loss of access to sites without secure tenure on supply and demand balance (in match equivalent sessions per week)

Pitch format	Actual spare capacity ⁶	Overplay	Current total	New overplay	Current total if education sites become unavailable
Adult	5	2.5	2.5	6	1
Youth 11v11	3	5	2	21	20
Youth 9v9	2	13	11	32.5	30.5
Mini 7v7	4.5	4	0.5	24	19.5
Mini 5v5	1	1	-	21.5	20.5

Improving ancillary provisions

The accompanying assessment report presents the quality ratings and potential ancillary provision development plans of clubs in the Authority.

The ancillary provision provided at Richard Hale School has been identified as in need of improvement. Consultation with Bury Rangers FC confirms the Club has plans to develop a classroom and kitchen at the site to deliver educational lessons to its players to support their development.

Watton-at-Stone YFC also has ambitions to develop a new ancillary provision as part of its plans to develop a new site to the South East of the town. If developed this will give the Club a new home to operate from and support its plans to increase in teams. It is therefore a recommendation to support the development of new build ancillary provision projects at Richard Hale School and the potential new site within Watton-at-Stone to support Bury Rangers FC and Watton-at-Stone YFC.

Re-introducing disused sites

There are seven unused/disused former football sites in East Hertfordshire located at the following sites:

- ♦ Albury Football Ground (formerly provided one adult and one mini 7v7 pitch).
- ♦ County Hall (formerly provided two youth 9v9 and two mini 7v7 pitches).
- ♦ Horseman's Meadow (formerly provided one adult pitch).
- ♦ Much Hadham Recreation Ground (formerly provided one adult pitch).
- ♦ Norfolk Road Playing Fields (formerly provided one adult pitch).
- ♦ The Meads (formerly provided one adult, one youth 11v11, one youth 9v9, two mini 7v7 and one mini 5v5 pitch).
- ♦ Widford Playing Field (formerly provided one adult pitch).

⁶ In match equivalent sessions

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Horseman's Meadow has no ancillary provision, however, the space could still be re-instated as playing provision. The remaining five sites have a form of ancillary provision servicing the pitches.

Albury Football Ground has a standard quality ancillary provision, Much Hadham Recreation Ground has a useable building and also accessed by Much Hadham Bowls Club and Much Tennis Club. Norfolk Road Playing Fields has a good quality ancillary provision and accommodates cricket demand.

The Meads has a basic metal container building which formerly serviced teams using the site. Widford Playing Field has no ancillary provision but directly borders Ware Cricket Club which has a standard quality ancillary provision.

if the seven sites were to be brought back into use this would create six adult, one youth 11v11, one youth 9v9, three mini 7v7 and one mini 5v5 pitch into use. If all pitches were re-instated to a standard quality, it would have the following impact upon the supply and demand balance:

Table 4.14: Impact of re-instating disused and un-used provision (in match equivalent sessions per week)

Pitch format	Actual spare capacity ⁷	Overplay	Current total	New capacity created	New capacity position
Adult	5	2.5	2.5	12	14.5
Youth 11v11	3	5	2	2	-
Youth 9v9	2	13	11	6	5
Mini 7v7	4.5	4	0.5	20	20.5
Mini 5v5	1	1	-	4	4

As can be seen the overplay for youth 11v11 pitches would be removed and youth 9v9 overplay would be reduced. Actual spare capacity would be created for mini 5v5 pitches and increased for adult and mini 7v7 pitches.

Recommendations

- Protect the existing quantity of pitches (unless replacement provision meets NPPF and Sport England Playing Field Policy requirements and is agreed upon and provided).
- Where pitches are overplayed and assessed as poor or standard quality, prioritise investment and review maintenance regimes to ensure it is of an appropriate standard to sustain use and improve quality.
- Utilise the Football Foundation's PitchPower app to assist in the improvement and ongoing maintenance of provision.
- Work to accommodate future demand at sites which are not operating at capacity.
- Seek to regain access to Albury Football Ground where access was removed from BSC FC, mid-season.
- Improve ancillary facilities where there is a demand to do so and where it can benefit the wider footballing offer, such as Hertford Heath Playing Fields (Hertford Heath FC) where the Club is looking to use its pitch for non-league football; Richard Hale School to support Bury Rangers FC and Watton-at-Stone FC with developing a new site.
- Where appropriate, help to facilitate partnerships and/or lease arrangements with large, sustainable, development-minded clubs to manage its own sites.
- Work to obtain more formal community use agreements at education sites listed in table 4.12 so clubs can have longer security of tenure.

⁷ In match equivalent sessions

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4.2: Third generation turf (3G) pitches

Assessment Report summary

3G summary

Supply:

- There are eight 11v11 3G pitches within East Hertfordshire, located at as many sites. All eight pitches are serviced by floodlights and open to community use.
- There are also two small sided 3G pitches, both of which are open to community use.
- All eight 11v11 3G pitches in the Authority are on the FA Register and the Leventhorpe School, Richard Hale School, Ware Football Club and Presdales School pitches are on the FIFA register.
- The pitches at Richard Hale School, Hertingfordbury Park, Ware Football Club and Wodson Park Sports and Leisure Centre have been tested in June 2025 and have retained their FA or FIFA accreditations.
- Two new 11v11 3G pitches at Freman College and Bishop's Stortford High School are outlined to be operational for the 2025/26 season.
- The Bishop's Stortford High School 11v11 3G pitch will have a World Rugby compliant shock pad once delivered. This will be the only World Rugby 3G pitch in East Hertfordshire.

Quality:

- There are four full-size pitches located within East Hertfordshire that are of a good quality, three standard quality and one poor quality pitch. Of the small sided provision, both pitches are of a poor quality.

Supply vs demand analysis:

- With 511 football teams currently affiliated to East Hertfordshire, there is a need for 13.5 11v11 pitch equivalents to service current levels of demand. Future demand from ONS projections increases this requirement to 14.25 pitches.
- With the equivalent of 9.5 11v11 pitches within East Hertfordshire, there is the need for a further 4 of such pitch equivalents to be built. This shortfall does not include the small sided provision within the district as they are too small in scale to play a meaningful role in meeting the 3G training need. It does include the two pitches in the process of being developed at Freman College and Bishop's Stortford High School.
- When studying demand by analysis area, shortfalls are apparent in four of the five PPS analysis areas, with the Sawbridgeworth Analysis Area adequately catered for. The Hertford, Ware has a shortfall of 2.5 pitches, Buntingford has a shortfall of 1.25 pitches, Watton-at-Stone has a shortfall of 0.5 of a pitch and Bishop's Stortford has a shortfall of 0.25 of a pitch.
- Once future demand from ONS projections is considered, shortfalls in the Buntingford and Hertford, Ware analysis areas increase.

Scenarios

Accommodating football training demand

In order to satisfy current football training demand (based on the FA's scenario of one 11v11 3G pitch equivalent being able to cater for 38 community football teams) there is a need for 13.5 full size equivalent 3G pitches to accommodate all training demand in East Hertfordshire as seen below.

Table 4.15: Current demand for 11v11 3G pitches by analysis area

Analysis area	Current number of teams	11v11 3G requirement	Current number of 3G pitches	Theoretical shortfall
Bishop's Stortford	107	3	2.75	0.25
Buntingford	90	2.25	1	1.25
Hertford, Ware	277	7.25	4.75	2.5
Sawbridgeworth	22	0.5	1	0.5

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Analysis area	Current number of teams	11v11 3G requirement	Current number of 3G pitches	Theoretical shortfall
Watton-at-Stone	15	0.5	0	0.5
Total	511	13.5	9.5	4

With 511 teams currently accessing pitches in East Hertfordshire there is a need for 13.5 11v11 3G pitches. With 9.5 pitches currently provided this leaves a shortfall of 4 3G pitches. The highest need for 3G provision is in the Hertford, Ware Analysis Area where there is a shortfall of 2.5 11v11 3G pitches. Important to note that both pitches at Freman College and Bishop's Stortford High School which are currently being built have been added to Table 4.15.

When considering future demand of 28 additional teams (defined by population projections to 2043) the shortfall increases by 0.75 to give a total shortfall of 4.75 11v11 pitches. As population growth has been used, need cannot be broken down by analysis areas.

The East Hertfordshire Local Football Facility Plan (2025) identifies projects to provide four 11v11 3G pitches and one smaller sided 3G pitch as follows:

- ✦ The Bury (Buntingford) - One 11v11 3G pitch.
- ✦ The Sele School (Hertford, Ware) – One 11v11 3G pitch.
- ✦ Watton YFC New site (Watton-at-Stone) – One small sided (73m x 46m) 3G pitch.
- ✦ Ware YFC (Hertford, Ware) – One 11v11 3G pitch.
- ✦ The Chauncy School (Hertford, Ware) – One 11v11 3G pitch.

As the LFFP is a live document to be informed by an up-to-date PPS, the priority project list should be revisited following this study and updated/amended based on the findings. As such, the aforementioned project list has been matched against the table below to see how it services against existing shortfalls.

Table 4.16: Impact of delivering current LFFP 3G projects on PPS shortfalls

Analysis area	Potential 3G requirement	Current number of 3G pitches	Potential shortfall	No. of proposed pitches	Remaining shortfall
Bishop's Stortford	3	2.75	0.25	-	0.25
Buntingford	2.25	1	1.25	1	0.25
Hertford, Ware	7.25	4.75	2.5	3	0.5
Sawbridgeworth	0.5	1	0.5	-	0.5
Watton-at-Stone	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	-
Total	13.5	9.5	4	4.5	0.5

Based on the existing portfolio of projects identified in the LFFP, if all projects were to be delivered there would be a theoretical oversupply of 0.5 of a pitch remaining. There would still be a shortfall of 0.25 of a pitch in the Bishop's Stortford and Buntingford analysis areas.

The amount of time it would take to deliver the number of pitches outlined in the LFFP it is anticipated that demand will have increased, meaning the Authority wide oversupply would likely be removed.

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New site options

The table below identifies potential sites which could, in theory, may be suitable for future development to meet known shortfalls for 3G pitches. Each of these sites will require a full feasibility to be undertaken to determine if they are suitable in meeting known need. Such a full feasibility would include a range of matters including site characteristics, sports, financial, planning and other issues. This should be done in consultation with Hertfordshire FA, RFU and the Football Foundation as well as Sport England and other relevant NGBs. It is crucial to recognise that this list is a starting point for discussion and should be updated as part of the Stage – E process.

For the development of any 3G pitch at the sites below (and any other suggested sites in the future) there is a need to ensure that Sport England's Playing Field Policy is adhered to.

Table 4.17: Additional site options for new 3G pitches

Analysis area	Current shortfall	Site ID	Site name	Included in LFFP?
Bishop's Stortford	0.25	-	BSCFC (site bordering new Avanti Grange Secondary School pitches).	No
Bishop's Stortford	0.25	-	Hoggates Park (a new stadia site accessed by Bishop's Stortford Swifts which aspire to convert the new grass pitch to 3G).	No
Buntingford	1.25	72	Norfolk Road Playing Fields (small sided)	No
Hertford, Ware	2.5	94	St Margaretsbury FC	No
Hertford, Ware	2.5	108	The Sele School	Yes
Sawbridgeworth	0.5	84	Sawbridgeworth Town FC	No
Watton-at-Stone	0.5	-	New site, Watton at Stone YFC	Yes

The recommended dimensions for an 11v11 3G artificial grass pitch for football are 100 x 64 metres. This extends to an area of 106 x 70 metres with the recommended minimum three metre run off area included. These dimensions allow for all age group match play to take place including adults, youth under 17/18 and younger age groups via overmarked pitches, e.g., the marking out of two 9v9 pitches for under 11/12s.

If a new pitch is proposed to measure below the recommended dimensions, then justification must be provided for this in relation to the identified needs it will provide for and/or site constraints. In doing so, the impacts of a reduced pitch size in meeting current and future needs must be considered, e.g., a pitch not providing the recommended dimensions for adult match play and/or only being able to accommodate one rather than two overmarked 9v9 pitches. This justification needs to be included in the planning application details submitted to the relevant Local Planning Authority for the new pitch.

Unless otherwise stated and justified for an individual pitch, proposals in this PPS for any new 3G artificial grass pitches are based on providing them to the recommended dimensions.

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Moving football mini match play demand to 3G pitches (based on minimum dimension of 91 x 55m)

To further the use of 3G pitches for matches, the FA is particularly keen to work with local authorities and providers within local authorities to understand the potential demand for 11v11 floodlit 3G pitches to cater for different formats of match play.

The FA has an ambition to transfer 50% of mini play on to 3G pitches nationally. Thus, a programme of play has been created for East Hertfordshire to determine how many 3G pitches would be required to accommodate this, given that peak time for both mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 football is Sunday mornings.

Table 4.18: Moving all mini matches to 3G pitches

Time	AGP	Total games/teams
9.30am – 10.30am	4 x 5v5	4/8
10.30am – 11.30am	2 x 7v7	2/4
11.30am – 12.30pm	2 x 7v7	2/4
12.30pm – 1.30pm	2 x 7v7	2/4

Based on the above programming and separate start times for mini 5v5 and mini 7v7 matches, the overall need is for seven 11v11 3G pitches to accommodate all current mini match play demand. This is calculated based on 72 teams playing 5v5 football and 78 teams playing 7v7 football at peak time.

Therefore, with ten 11v11 pitches in East Hertfordshire, this scenario can be achieved if programming to enable this can be agreed.

Below tests a similar scenario for youth 9v9 football.

Table 4.19: Moving all 9v9 matches to 3G pitches

Time	AGP	Total games/teams
10am – Noon	1 x 9v9	1/2
Noon – 2pm	1 x 9v9	1/2
2pm – 4pm	1 x 9v9	1/2

This demand could be accommodated on five 11v11 pitches based on 62 teams currently playing this format within East Hertfordshire at peak time.

Based on the local landscape of football and its more traditional home vs away format, it is unlikely the above approach is viable and the development of 3G pitches provide more so to aid the need for recreational play and training requirements.

Future demand through club ambitions

The Assessment Report explores the impact of future demand through team generation rates upon the future need for 3G pitches. Population projections create a further 28 teams which increases the shortfall from 4 11v11 3G pitches to 5.

Future demand ambitions expressed by eight clubs equates to the growth of 25 teams. Combining both population and club growth gives a total potential future demand of 53 teams. If both were to be achieved there would be a total of 564 teams within East Hertfordshire. This would lead to a theoretical shortfall of 5.75 11v11 3G pitches.

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Table 4.20: Future demand for 3G pitches in East Hertfordshire (based on 38 teams per pitch)

East Hertfordshire	Future number of teams ⁸	11v11 3G requirement ⁹	Current number of 3G pitches	Theoretical shortfall
Total	564	15	9.5	5.5

Future demand from participation trends

The grass pitch section explored future demand based on forecasted growth from historical FA affiliation data. Trend forecasting therefore predicts the growth of 65 teams by the year 2030. This would give a total of 576 teams affiliated to East Hertfordshire and the need for 1.75 additional 3G pitches.

4.21: Future 3G need using forecasted annual growth to 2030

Analysis area	2030 projected demand	11v11 3G requirement	Current number of 3G pitches	Theoretical shortfall
Bishop's Stortford	121	3.25	2.75	0.5
Buntingford	104	2.75	1	1.75
Hertford, Ware	311	8.25	4.75	3.5
Sawbridgeworth	23	0.5	1	0.5
Watton-at-Stone	17	0.5	0	0.5
Total	576	15.25	9.5	5.75

If the forecasted growth were to take place the shortfalls for 3G pitches in the Bishop's Stortford, Buntingford and Hertford, Ware analysis areas would increase. The position in the Sawbridgeworth and Watton-at-Stone analysis areas would be unchanged. This scenario assumes that the growth in demand will remain consistent with the current analysis area breakdown.

World Rugby (WR) compliant 3G pitches

WR produced the 'performance specification for artificial grass pitches for rugby', more commonly known as 'Regulation 22' that provides the necessary technical detail to produce pitch systems that are appropriate for rugby union.

The RFU generally support the development of 3G pitches which support rugby union where grass rugby pitches are over capacity and where a pitch would support the growth of the game at the host site and for the local rugby partnership, including local clubs and education establishments.

Locally, shortfalls are identified for rugby union pitches. These are, however, localised at heavily accessed club sites due to concentrated training demand.

In East Hertfordshire The Bishop's Stortford High School provides a WR Compliant 3G pitch, however that will be available for the 25/26 season.

⁸ Future demand based on participation increases and TGRs as per the football section of the report.

⁹ Figure rounded up to the nearest whole number.

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Bishop's Stortford RFC is the most heavily overplayed of the rugby clubs, with two of its pitches showing current overplay of 11 match equivalent sessions per week whilst the other two are at capacity. The Club has three sports lit pitches at its site which it accesses for midweek training. It also accesses one senior pitch at Bishop's Stortford College for mini training. Given that the new WR complaint pitch will be based close to the Club it makes sense to partner with the school to reduce its overplay by transferring its training demand to the new 3G pitch.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect current stock of 3G pitches.
- ◀ Work with relevant partners to deliver additional 3G pitches in the district to cater for football training demand and reduce shortfalls.
- ◀ Work with partners such as the FA, FF, the RFU, Sport England and other NGBs as applicable to identify the most suitable locations to build new 3G pitches to alleviate known shortfalls.
- ◀ Ensure that any new 3G pitches have community use agreements in place.
- ◀ Ensure that all other 11v11 and larger smaller sized pitches remain on the FA register and are re-tested every three years to sustain certification.
- ◀ Ensure all current and future providers have in place a sinking fund to ensure long-term sustainability.
- ◀ Ensure that all new 3G pitches are constructed to meet FA recommended dimensions and quality performance standards.
- ◀ Monitor supply and demand via Stage E meetings, to better understand the impact on the future 3G need enabling partners to clarify whether the shortfall position is being addressed or increasing.
- ◀ Look to increase the number of 3G pitches within East Hertfordshire at relevant sites by using the findings from the PPOSS and the 2025 LFFP, with priority sites such as Watton YFC new site, The Bury and The Sele School.
- ◀ Look to transfer mini demand from grass pitches to 3G in line with the FA ambition for 50% of all mini match play to take place on 3G pitches.

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4.3: Cricket pitches

Assessment Report summary

Cricket – supply and demand summary

- ▶ The broad position in East Hertfordshire is there is an insufficient stock of supply for peak time senior men's cricket, with all remaining formats able to be accommodated.
- ▶ Overplay of 29 match equivalent sessions per season is present on a Saturday. This is exacerbated to 41 match equivalent sessions of actual spare capacity per season when considering future demand from population growth.
- ▶ There is currently spare capacity for both midweek and Sunday cricket and there will continue to be should future midweek demand be realised.
- ▶ Seven squares across six sites are overplayed: Bramfield Playing Field, Datchworth Sports Club, Hertford Cricket Club, Leventhorpe School, The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust (two squares) and Allenburys Sport & Social Club. Total overplay equates to 113 match equivalent sessions per season.

Cricket – supply summary

- ▶ In total, there are 46 grass wicket squares in East Hertfordshire all of which are open to community use other than the squares at Heath Mount School, Haileybury Sports Complex, Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields and St Edmunds College & Prep School.
- ▶ There are 46 grass wicket squares across 30 sites of which, 38 are available for community use across 26 sites.
- ▶ There are NTPs accompanying grass wicket squares at six sites, all available for community use other than Heath Mount School. Additionally, there are eight standalone NTP's identified, all of which are at school sites, unavailable for community use other than Presdales Recreation Ground which is available for community use and not a school site.
- ▶ Three clubs in East Hertfordshire have freehold ownership of its sites, 11 have lease agreements in place and five rent sites. The tenure position of the four unresponsive clubs is unknown.
- ▶ Of community available grass wicket cricket squares, 14 are good quality, 20 are standard quality and four are poor quality. Poor quality squares are located at Bramfield Playing Field, Datchworth Sports Club, Leventhorpe School and Allenburys Sport & Social Club.
- ▶ Aston CC, Little Berkhamsted Sahibs CC, Little Munden CC, Thorley CC, Thundridge Sports Ground and Aspenden Standon & Puckeridge CC access poor quality ancillary facilities.
- ▶ Datchworth CC have recently had planning permission granted to extend and refurbish its Clubhouse.
- ▶ Six clubs identify need for additional training facilities at respective home sites.
- ▶ There are five disused squares (former grass pitch) within East Hertfordshire, those being County Hall, The Meads, Cottered Playing Fields, Little Hadham CC and Albury Sports Ground.

Cricket – demand summary

- ▶ There are 23 clubs in East Hertfordshire which collectively provide 50 senior men's, four senior women's, 48 junior boys' and six junior girls' team.
- ▶ Eight clubs within East Hertfordshire currently offer the All-Stars program, whilst four clubs deliver Dynamos sessions.
- ▶ None of the consulted Clubs discussed running any women's and girls' softball sessions.
- ▶ Through population growth, future demand equating to the growth of one senior men's and two junior boys' teams is identified by 2043.
- ▶ Club aspirations equate to the potential growth of two senior men's, four junior boys' and two junior girls' team.
- ▶ There is currently no exported demand into neighbouring authorities. However, Reed CC, a Club from North Hertfordshire is currently accessing the pitch at Freman College forming imported demand.

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Scenarios

Addressing overplay

Although a regular, sufficient maintenance regime can sustain sites with minimal levels of overplay a reduction in play is recommended to ensure there is no detrimental effect on quality of cricket squares over time.

In East Hertfordshire, overplay is identified at seven squares across six sites. The scenario below looks at the impacts of quality improvements as a solution to reducing or alleviating overplay. As a reminder, for good quality squares, capacity is five matches per grass wicket per season, whilst for a standard quality square, capacity is four matches per wicket per season. For poor quality squares, no capacity is considered to exist as such provision is not deemed safe for play.

Of the overplayed squares, four are poor quality. The impact of improving quality at all these sites, to good, where each wicket has a theoretical capacity of five match equivalent session per season is considered in the table below.

Table 4.22: Impact on overplay if all overplayed squares were improved to good quality

Site ID	Site name	Club	No. of squares	Square quality	No. of wickets	Current overplay (matches per season)	Potential position (matches per season)
21	Bramfield Playing Field	Bramfield CC	1	Poor	6	6	24
38	Datchworth Sports Club	Datchworth CC	1	Poor	14	46	24
48	Hertford Cricket Club	Hertford, Ware	1 (2 nd square)	Standard	8	6	2
62	Leventhorpe School	Sawbridgeworth CC	1	Poor	9	28	17
103	The Bishops Stortford Sports Trust	Bishop's Stortford CC	1	Standard	6	6	-
103	The Bishops Stortford Sports Trust	Bishop's Stortford CC	1	Good	13	5	5
126	Allenburys Sport & Social Club	Allenbury's and County Hall CC	1	Poor	11	16	39

As outlined in Table 4.22 if all squares were improved to good quality, overplay across the district disappears other than one square at The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust, due to it already being good quality. Poor quality squares across East Hertfordshire account for 96 match equivalent sessions of overplay per season which would be removed if quality was improved. Even if the squares were to be improved to a standard quality, overplay would be reduced. However, Hertford CC and The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust would still be overplayed. It is worth noting that improving a pitch to standard rather than good would be more realistic for Bramfield Playing Field, Datchworth Sports Club, Leventhorpe School and Allenburys Sport & Social club. This is largely due to the associated cost, time and expertise taken to improve and maintain a good quality pitch.

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Hybrid wickets

Although not readily available within grassroots cricket, there may be potential in the future to address overplay through the installation of hybrid wicket/s on competitive senior squares. The ECB has been working with SIS Pitches on the installation of hybrid cricket wickets at county cricket clubs (2019) and more recently recreational squares in Hertfordshire such as Radlett Cricket Club and Broxbourne Cricket Club. Due to already good standing provision at The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust there is scope to potentially explore the opportunity to install hybrid wickets in the future.

A hybrid wicket combines natural turf grass with less the 5% of uniquely engineered, soft polyethylene yarn, which has already been used to improve golf tees, tennis courts and pitch surrounds. These wickets are to offer a greater capacity in addition to reducing time on repair works with a faster recovery time. Reports found that hybrid wickets improve surface stability, reduced wear, reduced bowler foot holes and significantly extended hours of playing time.

Ideally, once these become more readily available for community cricket clubs and have gone through the required testing, they could act as a way to increase levels of playing capacity on overplayed squares. This would be particularly beneficial for those sites which are limited on space and cannot create additional wickets due to restrictions things such as boundary length or ball strike.

Although it is difficult at this stage to understand what impact hybrid wickets could have on each site's capacity, it is suggested that it could potentially alleviate all the overplay at Bishop's Stortford CC in East Hertfordshire. This assumes that more senior demand can take place on the hybrid wickets allowing for the outer senior wickets to be used/converted for junior demand. It should also be noted that this approach is currently a rather expensive means of reducing overplay.

Accommodating future demand

Population growth over the Local Plan period to 2043 is expected to see the population of the district rise from 150,136 to 162,871. This will lead to the creation of one senior men's teams and two junior boys' teams.

This future demand cannot be attributed to any one analysis area or club but is important to understand how this can be accommodated across East Hertfordshire.

The preceding Assessment Report shows that for men's Sunday cricket, senior women's and all formats of junior cricket there is sufficient capacity (notwithstanding specific club overplay issues).

For senior men's cricket on Saturdays, however, there is a current shortfall of 29 match equivalent sessions per week across seven sites. This will be exacerbated to a shortfall of 41 match equivalent sessions per season if all future demand is realised. However, dependent on where demand aligns itself to (i.e. club specific and analysis area specific) they may well be instances of pressure at certain clubs which have high levels of existing demand (i.e. Bishop's Stortford CC).

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Where increases in demand are causing capacity issues for Saturday cricket, the PPOSS Assessment Report identifies that the sites listed below can accommodate for an increase in demand within the peak period and if ground sharing agreements can be fostered then demand could be accommodated for at these sites on Saturday afternoons (based on 2024 season data):

- ◆ Braughing Playing Fields.
- ◆ Freman College.
- ◆ Hertingfordbury CC.
- ◆ Thundridge Sports Ground.
- ◆ Walkern Sports & Community Centre.
- ◆ Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground.

That being said, it is not always realistic for clubs to access other club sites as secondary venues due to either increases in demand, changing the availability of provision, clubs wishing to protect the quality of provision for their existing teams or not wanting to permit access altogether. On this basis, it is important to note the role disused provision can play in accommodating demand for cricket in the future.

Unused/disused sites

There are seven unused/disused cricket squares in East Hertfordshire located at the following sites:

- ◆ Albury Football Ground, disused (Bishop's Stortford).
- ◆ Birchwood High School, disused (Bishop's Stortford).
- ◆ Cottered Playing Field, unused (Buntingford).
- ◆ County Hall, unused (Hertford, Ware).
- ◆ Hertford Rugby Football Club, disused (Hertford, Ware).
- ◆ Little Hadham CC, unused (Bishop's Stortford).
- ◆ The Meads (Lower Field), unused (Buntingford).

Albury Football Ground has not accommodated cricket for some time, however, does still have two football pitches marked out. It is also important to note that community access was removed by the football club due to noise complaints from neighbours. Meaning the site as a whole is currently unused for any sport.

County Hall no longer accommodates any sport but used to host football and cricket with a grass square and accompanying NTP.

Bengeo CC has approached the County Council to potentially start using the site as a second ground due to its rapidly growing expansion. The Council has shown interest in the Club taking on the ground, however, given that there is no pavilion servicing the site (due to fire damage) it's not ideal. This would, however, be an option to reinstate a cricket square to help reduce the overplay in Hertford, Ware Analysis Area depending on the requirement for onsite changing provision.

Birchwood High School previously accommodated a standalone NTP which has since been removed from the school fields. These fields are not currently open for community use and have four senior rugby pitches on for curricular use. Hertford Rugby Football Club is similar in that it previously had a standalone NTP which is now disused.

Cottered Playing Field previously accommodated a grass cricket square, however, now only services football demand in the form of two pitches.

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The Meads is an open space that used to have both cricket and football pitches available for community use that now has no sports provision and is used solely as a public open space.

Little Hadham CC, just off Hoecroft Lane previously accommodated a grass cricket square. The Club now accesses Thorley CC for its games.

As there are current isolated shortfalls identified at The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust due to servicing such high demand. If an unused/disused site could once again become available that is in the Bishop's Stortford Analysis Area, it could serve as a second site and allow the Club to continue to grow.

As an example, The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust is an overplayed site located 4.8 miles from the unused pitch at The Albury Football Ground. Re-introducing this square and granting access to the Club could provide a possible solution to resolving its capacity issues.

The table below outlines the potential capacity created if the seven above listed sites were to be brought back into use with a standard quality five wicket square.

4.23: Potential Saturday capacity if disused and un-used provision is reinstated

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Overplay	Current total	Capacity created	Total
Bishop's Stortford	12	11	1	60	59
Buntingford	48	46	2	40	42
Hertford, Ware	12	22	10	40	30
Sawbridgeworth	-	28	28	0	28
Watton-at-Stone	12	6	6	0	6
East Hertfordshire	84	113	29	140	111

As can be seen if the six above sites were to be reinstated with standard quality five wicket squares there would be 111 sessions of actual spare capacity for Saturday demand. Overplay would only be present in the Sawbridgeworth Analysis Area.

Improving ancillary provision

Club consultations raised several ancillary provision development plans as seen in Table 4.24. The most notable development is at Datchworth CC. The Club accesses poor quality provision containing five changing rooms and an official's room, with a communal shower room to service all. It has had planning permission granted and is fundraising for this project.

Table 4.24: Ancillary provision development plans

Site ID	Site name	Club	Consultation feedback
22	Braughing Playing Fields	Braughing CC	Braughing playing fields offers good quality ancillary provision with a large brick building and ample parking on site. The building has a kitchen, changing rooms and showers. However, the Club highlights it would like to have a clubhouse with a bar.
38	Datchworth Sports Club	Datchworth CC	The Club accesses poor quality provision at its home site, Datchworth Sports Club. It contains five changing rooms and an official's room, with a communal shower room to service all.

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Site ID	Site name	Club	Consultation feedback
			Consultation with the Club confirms that the building is very dated and needs refurbishing and it has had planning permission accepted to do this. The Club is currently still fundraising to enable this project to go ahead.
55	Hertingfordbury Recreation Ground	Hertingfordbury CC	Hertingfordbury CC has standard facilities including a clubhouse with two changing rooms with very small showers, male and female toilets, a kitchen area, and a social room. The Club has no licence for a bar on the premises. It aspires to either build changing rooms at the back or develop the existing garage into a larger changing area and acquire a container for storage.
97	St. Margaretsbury Sport & Social Club	St Margaretsbury CC	St Margaretsbury CC confirms that out of its three sets of changing rooms changing rooms two are in poor condition due to being very old and the other is standard. The ladies' toilets and main changing room showers have recently been refurbished; however, the Club expresses that this is just papering over the cracks. The changing rooms are shared between the football and cricket so will get extra usage. The facilities also include a bar and social area.
109	Thorley Cricket Club	Thorley CC	Thorley CC has a poor-quality ancillary provision. The Club highlights poor changing and toilet facilities as well as the general condition of the pavilion. There are separate changing rooms for each team although communal showers only. There are no changing facilities for umpires or women and girls. HCCC has since confirmed that work has begun building a new clubhouse to service the site.
112	Town Fields	Sawbridgeworth CC	The Club confirms it has two buildings, which includes two changing rooms, a club room, and showers. It aspires to replace the changing rooms with more inclusive spaces to include provision for umpires and women and girls. This plan would also include a new patio to allow for socialising.
129	Aspenden Standon & Puckeridge Cricket Club	Aspenden, Standon & Puckeridge CC	The Club confirms that it provides poor ancillary facilities. There are no separate facilities for officials or for women and girls.

Accommodating girls' demand

The Assessment Report has accounted for future demand by using team generation rates applying population projections to 2043. It identifies that there shall be the growth of one senior men's and two junior boys' teams. As demand figures are not currently as high for women's and girls, the team generation rate method of measuring future demand does not capture the anticipated growth that is expected to take place over the next five years.

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The ECB confirms that there are 93 girls teams within Hertfordshire. If East Hertfordshire is to increase in demand in line with its neighbouring authorities, there will be the growth of four junior girls teams during the lifespan of the PPOSS.

Another means of predicting the potential growth is that the five larger clubs with several senior mens and junior boys teams in the Authority will all field one senior women's and one junior girls team by 2027. The five largest clubs in East Hertfordshire are Bishop's Stortford CC, Datchworth CC, Hertford CC, Sawbridgeworth CC and St Margaretsbury CC. For all five clubs to field at least one senior women's and one junior girls team there will be the growth of two senior women's and two junior girls teams.

This will place further pressure on the shortfalls, particularly for Sunday cricket and a shortfall for midweek could be established, as this is when girl's demand commonly takes place. Therefore, without improvements to existing provision or via the establishment of new provision this level of demand cannot currently be accommodated.

Recommendations

- ◆ Protect existing quantity of cricket squares.
- ◆ Retain a supply of disused sites to serve as a strategic reserve for future demand.
- ◆ Improve quality at sites assessed as poor and standard quality and ensure quality is sustained at sites assessed as good through partnership working with HCCC.
- ◆ Address overplay via quality improvements and consideration of hybrid wickets in the future.
- ◆ Pursue improved security of tenure for clubs without ownership or a long-term lease arrangement in place, particularly those engaging in lease renewals.
- ◆ Improve the changing and ancillary facilities where there is a need to do so, with priorities placed Thorley CC, St Margaretsbury CC, and Town Fields (Sawbridgeworth CC).
- ◆ Consider options to increase and improve stock of suitable practice facilities, as six clubs raise the need for additional training facilities at its home sites.
- ◆ Continue to support ECB initiatives such as All Stars and Dynamos and ensure unaffiliated demand and recreational cricket is provided for.
- ◆ Undertake PitchPower assessments at sites to support clubs in accessing ECB Grass Pitch Improvement Fund.
- ◆ Look to reinstate disused and un-used provision as a means of increasing the total number of squares in the Authority.

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4.4: Rugby union - grass pitches

Assessment Report summary

Rugby union summary

- There is insufficient level of senior rugby union provision in East Hertfordshire to accommodate current and future demand with a current overplay of 20.75 match equivalent sessions on senior rugby pitches open to community use.

Pitch supply:

- There is a total of 53 rugby union pitches in East Hertfordshire across 17 sites. This consists of 35 senior pitches and 18 junior pitches. Of these, 25 senior pitches and 17 junior pitches are open to community use.
- There are no WR compliant 3G pitches located within East Hertfordshire. However, there will be one in Bishop's Stortford at the Bishop's Stortford High School for the 25/26 season.

Pitch quality:

- In terms of quality of senior pitches available for community use, five are good quality, 12 are standard and eight are poor quality pitches. Of the community available junior pitches, 14 are poor quality and three are standard quality.
- From a community club perspective, poor quality pitch provision is an issue for Datchworth RFC with on one of its pitches.

Ancillary provision quality:

- Of the three clubs in the district with sites, Bishop's Stortford RFC and Hertford RFC access standard quality ancillary provision, whilst Datchworth RFC access poor ancillary provision. All Clubs are in the process of upgrading current ancillary offerings to bring the facilities in line with RFU specifications, to encourage inclusivity and promote the women's and girls' game.
- Datchworth RFC has plans to rebuild and enhance its ancillary offering and has been granted planning permission to do. The Club is currently fundraising to enable this project.
- Hertford RFC has had planning permission to extend and rebuild its changing rooms whilst Bishop's Stortford have built foundations for its new changing rooms.

Demand:

- There are four rugby union clubs in East Hertfordshire which in total generate demand equating to 63 teams. As a breakdown, this consists of 12 senior men's, two senior women's, four boy's colts, 17 junior boys, nine junior girls and 19 mixed age grade teams.
- Future demand from club ambitions equates to two senior ladies' teams.

Supply and demand analysis:

- There is an overall insufficient supply of provision to cater for both current and future demand.

Scenarios

Improving pitch maintenance and drainage

Maintenance and drainage solutions are an integral method in improving pitch quality at rugby union sites, ensuring that pitches can accommodate demand throughout the season. Locally, there are two sites which are identified as being overplayed and the following scenario explores what impact improving both the level of maintenance and installation of drainage solutions would have on the capacity of provision.

The table below illustrates the RFU pitch quality scoring methodology which ascertains the capacity of pitches based on the scoring criteria.

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Table 4.25: Pitch capacity (matches per week) based on quality assessments

Drainage	Maintenance Poor (M0)	Maintenance Adequate (M1)	Maintenance Good (M2)
Natural Inadequate (D0)	0.5	1.5	2
Natural Adequate or Pipe Drained (D1)	1.5	2	3
Pipe Drained (D2)	1.75	2.5	3.25
Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	2	3	3.5

The table below looks at what capacity benefits would be ascertained through improvement of both maintenance and drainage solutions in one increment on the above technical criteria. It further looks at the benefit of maximum improvements to both drainage and maintenance to explore maximum benefits.

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Table 4.26: Improving maintenance on all sites/senior pitches by one increment (based on RFU technical criteria)

Site ID	Site name	Number of senior pitches	Current technical score	Quality*	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Current pitch capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Improved technical score	Improved quality score	Improved capacity	Improved capacity rating
18	Bishops Stortford RFC	1	M1/D1	Standard	7	2	5	M2/D1	Good	3	4
18	Bishops Stortford RFC	1	M1/D1	Standard	8	2	6	M2/D1	Good	3	5
38	Datchworth Sports Club	1	M1/D1	Standard	3.5	2	1.5	M2/D1	Good	3	0.5
38	Datchworth Sports Club	1	M1/D0	Poor	3	1.5	1.5	M2/D0	Standard	2	1
51	Hertford Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D1	Standard	3	2	1	M2/D1	Good	3	-
51	Hertford Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D1	Standard	2.5	2	0.5	M2/D1	Good	3	0.5
51	Hertford Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D1	Standard	2	2	-	M2/D1	Good	3	1
51	Hertford Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D1	Standard	2	2	-	M2/D1	Good	3	1
51	Hertford Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D1	Standard	1.5	2	0.5	M2/D1	Good	3	1.5
170	Datchworth Village Hall	1	M1/D1	Standard	7.5	2	5.5	M2/D1	Good	3	4.5

Improving the maintenance of senior pitches at all sites accessed by community clubs would have a theoretical capacity benefit for Hertford RFC as it would give the club spare capacity instead of being overplayed across four of its pitches and reduce its last pitch to being at capacity. For East Hertfordshire, the improvement of the maintenance by one increment would reduce total overplay from 21 match equivalent sessions per week to 15. It would also remove overplay at Hertford RFC altogether and leave it with spare capacity.

It is important to note that two pitches at Bishop's Stortford RFC and one at Datchworth RFC have been omitted from the table as the pitches are already good quality and maintenance scores cannot improve further.

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Table 4.27: Improving drainage on all sites/senior pitches by 1 increment (based on RFU technical criteria)

Site ID	Site name	Number of senior pitches	Current technical score	Quality*	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Current Pitch Capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Improved technical score	Improved quality score	Improved capacity	Improved capacity rating
18	Bishops Stortford RFC	1	M2/D1	Good	3	3	-	M2/D2	Good	3.25	0.25
18	Bishops Stortford RFC	1	M2/D1	Good	3	3	-	M2/D2	Good	3.25	0.25
18	Bishops Stortford RFC	1	M1/D1	Standard	7	2	5	M1/D2	Standard	2.5	4.5
18	Bishops Stortford RFC	1	M1/D1	Standard	8	2	6	M1/D2	Standard	2.5	5.5
38	Datchworth Sports Club	1	M2/D1	Good	2	3	1	M2/D2	Good	3.25	1.25
38	Datchworth Sports Club	1	M1/D1	Standard	3.5	2	1.5	M1/D2	Standard	2.5	1
38	Datchworth Sports Club	1	M1/D0	Poor	3	1.5	1.5	M1/D1	Standard	2	1
51	Hertford Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D1	Standard	3	2	1	M1/D2	Standard	2.5	0.5
51	Hertford Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D1	Standard	2.5	2	0.5	M1/D2	Standard	2.5	-
51	Hertford Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D1	Standard	2	2	-	M1/D2	Standard	2.5	0.5
51	Hertford Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D1	Standard	2	2	-	M1/D2	Standard	2.5	0.5
51	Hertford Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D1	Standard	1.5	2	0.5	M1/D2	Standard	2.5	1
170	Datchworth Village Hall	1	M1/D1	Standard	7.5	2	5.5	M1/D2	Standard	2.5	5

A similar approach to improving maintenance has been undertaken in the table above for drainage installation (through improvement to pitches by one increment on the RFU technical criteria). Installing pipe drainage to senior pitches at all sites accessed by community clubs would have a theoretical capacity benefit by reducing total overplay from 21 to 17.5 match equivalent sessions per week. However, other than one pitch at Hertford RFC which becomes played at capacity, the overplayed pitches still remain overplayed, just slightly reduced. The pitches would remain more overplayed than when compared to improving the maintenance of pitches.

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Table 4.28: Improving both maintenance and drainage to M2/D3 at all sites/senior pitches (based on RFU technical criteria)

Site ID	Site name	Number of senior pitches	Current technical score	Quality*	Match equivalent sessions (per week)	Current Pitch Capacity (sessions per week)	Capacity rating	Improved technical score	Improved quality score	Improved capacity	Improved capacity rating
18	Bishops Stortford RFC	1	M2/D1	Good	3	3	-	M2/D3	Good	3.5	0.5
18	Bishops Stortford RFC	1	M2/D1	Good	3	3	-	M2/D3	Good	3.5	0.5
18	Bishops Stortford RFC	1	M1/D1	Standard	7	2	5	M2/D3	Good	3.5	3.5
18	Bishops Stortford RFC	1	M1/D1	Standard	8	2	6	M2/D3	Good	3.5	4.5
38	Datchworth Sports Club	1	M2/D1	Good	2	3	1	M2/D3	Good	3.5	1.5
38	Datchworth Sports Club	1	M1/D1	Standard	3.5	2	1.5	M2/D3	Good	3.5	-
38	Datchworth Sports Club	1	M1/D0	Poor	3	1.5	1.5	M2/D3	Good	3.5	0.5
51	Hertford Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D1	Standard	3	2	1	M2/D3	Good	3.5	0.5
51	Hertford Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D1	Standard	2.5	2	0.5	M2/D3	Good	3.5	1
51	Hertford Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D1	Standard	2	2	-	M2/D3	Good	3.5	1.5
51	Hertford Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D1	Standard	2	2	-	M2/D3	Good	3.5	1.5
51	Hertford Rugby Football Club	1	M1/D1	Standard	1.5	2	0.5	M2/D3	Good	3.5	2
170	Datchworth Village Hall	1	M1/D1	Standard	7.5	2	5.5	M2/D3	Good	3.5	4

This table above illustrates the position if all senior pitches in East Hertfordshire, which are accessed by community clubs, were improved to an M2/D3 quality. This is the highest threshold a pitch can score based on the RFU technical criteria. As can be seen, overplay would be noticeably reduced but would remain at Bishop's Stortford RFC and Datchworth Village Hall in varying amounts due to high demand.

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The table below illustrates how such improvements would impact the current supply analysis of the pitches. Overplay would be significantly reduced but still present in both the Bishop's Stortford and Buntingford analysis area's if improvements took place. The Hertford, Ware Analysis Area would show actual spare capacity of 6.5 match equivalent sessions per week, which is a massive shift from being overplayed by one match equivalent session. Overall, East Hertfordshire would remain overplayed; however, shortfalls would be reduced to 2.75 match equivalent sessions per week. It is worth stressing that an M2/D3 quality rating is very difficult for a community club to achieve and rarely seen nationally. Therefore, there is the justification for an alternative approach to reduce overplay at the site.

Table 4.29: Impact of rugby union pitch improvements on overall supply and demand balance (senior pitches) in match equivalent sessions per week

Analysis area	Actual spare capacity	Current overplay	Current capacity balance	Overplay after maximum maintenance and drainage improvements	Capacity balance after pitch improvements
Bishop's Stortford	-	11.25	11.25	8.25	7.25
Buntingford	-	8.5	8.5	4	2
Hertford, Ware	0.5	1.5	1	-	6.5
Sawbridgeworth	-	-	-	-	-
Watton-at-Stone	-	-	-	-	-
East Hertfordshire	0.5	21.25	20.75	12.25	2.75

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Providing additional sports lighting

An alternative method of addressing capacity issues is through increasing the number of sports lit pitches. Hertford RFC has an ambition to install sports lights to more of its pitches to enable training to be spread better. It currently has two sports lit pitches that are overplayed by 1.5 match equivalent sessions per week and three non-sports lit pitches, two of which that are played to capacity and one that has 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week of actual spare capacity. If the Club was able to increase the number of sports lit pitches it can more evenly distribute training demand across its site. It does have a dedicated training area that it uses portable sports lights on to accommodate junior and mini training.

World Rugby (WR) 3G pitches in East Hertfordshire

There is one WR 3G pitch in East Hertfordshire provided at Bishop's Stortford High School which will only become operational for the 2025/26 season. None of the four clubs use a WR22 3G pitch for its regular midweek training due to having a preference towards utilising their respective home pitches for training sessions due to the associated financial and social benefits in doing so (and associated travel distances between sites).

As the Bishop's Stortford High School 3G pitch will be available to use for the 25/26 season, it could be accessed by Bishop's Stortford RFC for its midweek training. This would remove all overplay in the Analysis Area and reduce the districts overplay by 11.25 match equivalent sessions per week. The new 3G pitch is only 3.1 miles away from the club's home site and this would reduce the Authority wide overplay to 10 match equivalent sessions per week. Consultation with the Football Foundation and the RFU confirms the programme of use has outlined Harlow RFC and Saracens RFC to use the pitch rather than Bishop's Stortford RFC. Given its location, considerations should be made in the future for the pitch to be used by Bishop's Stortford RFC to service demand in the Authority and reduce the overplay identified.

Use of provision at education sites

The PPOSS Assessment Report identifies Bishop's Stortford College as providing community accessible senior rugby provision. As shortfalls are apparent in the Bishop's Stortford Analysis Area the site may provide a possible solution to reducing the identified shortfalls for rugby. Bishop's Stortford RFC currently access it for its mini teams training; however, the site could further provide provision for its senior teams to help reduce overplay at its own site. As both Hertford RFC and Datchworth RFC are over 15 miles from the Bishop's Stortford College access to the site for either club to use it for mini and junior demand would not be recommended.

St Edmunds College & Prep School offers two good senior rugby pitches and is placed just over eight miles from both Hertford and Datchworth RFC. If the clubs were willing, this could serve as a good second venue if a suitable arrangement was sought with the School. This would further help to reduce the overplay in both the Buntingford and Hertford, Ware analysis areas. If a community use agreement was reached it could provide four match equivalent sessions per week.

Ancillary provision improvements

The ancillary provision across the three clubs with clubhouses range from poor to standard. Bishop's Stortford RFC, Datchworth RFC and Hertford RFC are all planning to refurbish respective clubhouses in varying ways. The main driver for this Bishop's Stortford RFC is to obtain self-contained showers and toilets in the new changing rooms. The new facility will also cater for officials changing rooms. Whilst Datchworth RFC has had planning permission accepted to refurbish its clubhouse which is very dated. Hertford RFC has also had planning permission granted to extend and rebuild its changing rooms.

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If the three clubs all implemented RFU specification changing rooms and improved the social space options at the respective clubs, it would greatly encourage the growth of the women's and girl's game.

The steering group should seek alternative options to support the clubs in the efforts to enhance ancillary provision.

Recommendations

- ◆ Protect the existing quantity of rugby union pitches including those used for curricular and extra-curricular demand.
- ◆ Support clubs in taking part in the GMA pitch advisory service to explore technical requirements to improve pitch quality to address overplay.
- ◆ Work with clubs to improve its ancillary offering.
- ◆ Look to increase the number of sports lit pitches with priority placed on a further sports lit senior pitch at Hertford RFC.
- ◆ Ensure that any residential development considers potential increases in demand for the sport and that new provision or contributions are properly sought through utilisation of the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator.
- ◆ Support Bishop's Stortford RFC, Hertford RFC and Datchworth RFC in improving the ancillary provisions provided.
- ◆ Ensure once the WR compliant 3G pitch is open for use, that community use is utilised to its full potential, with Bishop's Stortford RFC making the most sense to be a partner club.
- ◆ Explore options at education sites such as St Edmunds College & Prep School and the Bishop's Stortford College to utilise senior rugby pitches to reduce overall shortfalls across the district.

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4.5: Artificial grass pitches (sand/water-based AGPs)

Assessment Report summary

Hockey summary

- There is no spare capacity at any of the pitches available for weekend match play and there are currently teams exporting to play home games.
- Regarding future demand, both Hertford HC and Bishop's Stortford HC realise that growth cannot happen without more pitch space. Despite this, Hertford HC is looking to add a fifth women's senior team.
- With the AGPs provided at the Simon Balle School and Bishop's Stortford College having surpassed end of life, there is the need to provide a pitch replacement at each site in order to accommodate existing and future hockey demand.

Pitch supply:

- There are eight full size hockey suitable AGPs in East Hertfordshire located across six sites. Seven of these pitches are open to community use on, with only three available to hire at peak time on weekends.

Pitch quality:

- The full-size pitch at Herts & Essex Sports Centre resembles the only good quality playing provision within the district, with the AGP being built in 2019.
- Provision found at Bishop's Stortford School and Simon Balle School is poor quality with both having surpassed the suggested lifespan of an AGP. The condition of the pitches is now at a point where a replacement surface shall be required during the lifespan of the PPS.
- Finally, the pitch at Hockerill Anglo-European College is standard, however, the accompanying ancillary facilities are poor and need enhancing to continue to host external bookings.

Affiliated demand:

- There are two hockey clubs within East Hertfordshire, those being Hertford HC and Bishop's Stortford HC.
- Bishop's Stortford Hockey Club has seven adult men's teams, 10 adult women's teams, three junior girl's teams, three junior boy's teams, six mixed junior teams and one mini under eight team. Additionally, there are over 35s and over 45's men's and women's teams.
- Hertford Hockey Club currently has seven men's teams, four ladies' teams, seven junior boys' teams and 10 junior girls' teams. Alongside both a men's over 35 and over 45 team and women's over 35 team.
- Hertford HC would like to add a fifth women's team however both it and Bishop's Stortford HC raise that there is a lack of peak time pitch space and would struggle to add teams.

Supply and demand analysis conclusions:

- Based on high levels of demand there is an insufficient supply of provision to accommodate existing demand and should pitch replacements not be undertaken, both clubs will struggle to field current number of teams.
- Future demand cannot be accommodated with existing provision and would require an additional pitch.

Scenarios

Meeting demand for hockey suitable AGPs

The PPOSS Guidance suggests that a pitch with sports lighting can accommodate four match equivalent sessions on a Saturday. With teams playing on a home and away format, this equates to one AGP being able to cater for eight 'home' teams (one team requires 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week on its 'home' AGP).

Table 4.30 below outlines the position for usage across hockey sites in East Hertfordshire.

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The three pitches used for peak hockey demand on Saturdays are at capacity with both Hockerill Anglo-European College and Simon Balle School accommodating four MES and Herts & Essex Centre hosting five MES. Both Hertford HC and Bishop's Stortford HC aspire to grow and want to add more Saturday teams, however, realise currently there is not enough pitch space in East Hertfordshire. Hertford HC is already exporting teams outside of the district to play its fixtures.

With the AGPs provided at the Simon Balle School and Bishop's Stortford College having surpassed end of life, there is the need to provide a pitch replacement at each site to accommodate existing and future hockey demand.

Table 4.30: Hockey usage and spare capacity

Site ID	Site name	Site user	Current use in peak period (MES)	Spare capacity?
56	Herts & Essex Sports Centre	Bishop's Stortford HC	5 MES	No
58	Hockerill Anglo-European College	Bishop's Stortford HC	4 MES	No
89	Simon Balle School	Hertford HC	4 MES	No

Table 4.31: Quality of existing hockey suitable artificial grass pitches

Site ID	Site name	Surface type	Saturday use	Quality rating	Built/resurfaced
16	Bishop's Stortford College	Sand dressed	-	Standard	2016
16	Bishop's Stortford College	Sand dressed	-	Poor	2012
56	Herts & Essex Sports Centre	Sand dressed	Bishop Stortford Hockey Club	Good	2019
58	Hockerill Anglo-European College	Sand filled	Bishop Stortford Hockey Club	Standard	1993 / 2017
89	Simon Balle School	Sand filled	Hertford Hockey Club	Poor	1965 / 2012
90	St Edmunds College & Prep School	Sand filled	-	Standard	2001
163	Haileybury College	Sand filled	-	Standard	1989 / 2013
163	Haileybury College	Sand filled	-	Standard	2014

Based on the above, it can be determined that the quantity of provision for East Hertfordshire is no longer sufficient to accommodate the existing demand. There is the need to replace the existing surfaces at Simon Balle School and Bishop's Stortford College to ensure the long term survival of hockey in East Hertfordshire.

Access being granted to the St Edmunds College & Prep School would give the Authority another useable pitch on a Saturday. As the site is located 9.7 miles from Simon Balle School and 10.1 miles from Herts & Essex Sports Centre it could be used by both Bishop's Stortford HC and Hertford HC as a means of accommodating future demand.

A scenario below discusses the need for additional provision within Hertfordshire to manage current demand and prepare for future demand.

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Converting sand-based AGPs to 3G pitches

Since the introduction of 3G pitches and given their popularity for football, providers have seen this as a way of replacing their tired sand-based carpet and generating money from hiring out a 3G pitch to football clubs and commercial football providers. This has come at the expense of hockey, with players now travelling further distances to gain access to a suitable pitch and many teams being displaced from their preferred geographical area.

Due to its impact on hockey, it is appropriate to ensure that sufficient sand-based AGPs are retained for the playing development of the sport. Therefore, a change of surface should require a planning application and, as part of that, the applicants should have to show that there is sufficient provision available for hockey in the locality. Opportunities to incorporate this into planning policy should therefore be explored, and advice from Sport England and EH should also be sought prior to any planning application being submitted. It should also be noted that, if a surface is changed, it could require the existing floodlighting to be changed and, in some instances, noise attenuation measures may need to be put in place.

Buntingford Town Council is considering the conversion of its small sided AGP at Norfolk Road Playing Fields to 3G. The site is small sided, is not currently used for hockey and has passed its lifespan to be replaced. To caveat this, Freman College, which neighbours the site is already in the process of building 11v11 3G pitch.

The 3G surface is limited in the range of sport that can be played or taught on it. Those proposing a conversion should take advice from the appropriate sports' governing bodies or refer to Sport England guidance 'Selecting the Right Artificial Grass Surface which can be found on Sport England's website:

<https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/facility-cost-guidance>

Strategic need for additional hockey provision across the region

The assessments for East Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire and Stevenage present a comparable picture, with accessible sport-lit hockey facilities also operating at or near capacity. This indicates a broader regional issue, where existing provision across the three authorities is insufficient to support future growth in hockey participation.

The East Hertfordshire PPOSS assessment identifies a shortfall of hockey suitable AGPs within the District, particularly with no full size provision provided within the Watton-at-Stone or Sawbridgeworth analysis areas next to the Hertford, Ware Analysis Area. Hertford HC, which is based within the Hertford, Ware Analysis Area, has seven men's teams, four ladies' teams, seven junior boys' teams and 10 junior girls' teams. Alongside both a men's over 35 and over 45 team and women's over 35 team. Demand has seen a slight increase for senior women's numbers and the Club would like to add an extra senior women's team, however, cannot commit to this with the current lack of hockey suitable facilities. It is currently exporting two teams home fixtures into Welwyn Hatfield accessing the AGP at Queenswood School. There is potential for the Club to continue growing should appropriate facilities become available more locally.

Given the above context, there is a clear strategic need for the development of additional hockey provision across the three authorities. It is therefore recommended that at least one new sport-lit pitch be delivered within either of the three authorities, positioned to serve the combined demand from North Hertfordshire, East Hertfordshire and Stevenage.

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The exact location of this pitch is to be determined through a future feasibility study, conducted in partnership by all three councils in collaboration with hockey partners and supported through the Active Partnership and Sport England. This will require wider appropriate stakeholder involvement which could be supported through the Active Partnership.

As the North Hertfordshire PPOSS has proposed the need for a new full sized AGP to meet the need for Royston Hockey Club, the new pitch being proposed in this scenario to service the wider need across East Hertfordshire, Stevenage and North Hertfordshire should be delivered in addition to developing a pitch for Royston HC.

Recommendations

- ◆ Protect the sand based AGPs at Herts & Essex Sports Centre, Simon Balle School and Hockerill Anglo-European College for continued hockey use.
- ◆ Work with partners to provide replacement surfaces to the AGPs at Simon Balle School and Bishop's Stortford College.
- ◆ Ensure all hockey suitable AGPs have a sinking fund in place for its eventual refurbishment.
- ◆ Consider an additional hockey suitable AGP in East Hertfordshire as the current stock is at capacity for peak time usage and is inhibiting hockey growth in the District.
- ◆ Explore a community use agreement at St Edmunds College & Prep School which is only 8 miles away from Simon Balle School and could provide a good option to increase affiliated hockey participation in East Hertfordshire. If the school has spare capacity at peak time on Saturday's it could be more feasible than a new pitch.
- ◆ The steering group will explore a feasibility study comparing options for a new sports lit hockey suitable AGP.
- ◆ Enhance the changing rooms at Hockerill Anglo-European College which are of a poor quality and highlighted as in need of improving. This will support both Bishop's Stortford Hockey Club and curricular use.

4.6: Rugby league – grass pitches

Assessment Report summary

Rugby league – supply and demand summary

- ◆ Demand for rugby league is met outside of East Hertfordshire, with opportunities in North Hertfordshire and St Albans.

Rugby league – supply summary

- ◆ There are no rugby league pitches in East Hertfordshire.

Rugby league – demand summary

- ◆ No demand has been identified for rugby league in East Hertfordshire.
- ◆ Individuals from East Hertfordshire likely travel to form part of North Herts Crusaders which are based at Hitchin rugby club in North Hertfordshire or St Albans Centurions based in neighbouring city of St Albans.
- ◆ Any residual need is unlikely to be sufficient for a club to be created, with individuals instead likely to travel to form part of the clubs outside of the District.

Recommendations

- ◆ If any demand does exist for rugby league in East Hertfordshire, if not already, it should be signposted to North Herts Crusaders and St Albans Centurions.

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4.7: Tennis courts

Assessment Report summary

Tennis – supply and demand summary

- There are three tennis clubs within East Hertfordshire currently operating with potential capacity issues, those being Tewin Tennis Club, Much Hadham Tennis Club and Aston Tennis Club. Tewin Tennis Club are currently 107 members over the LTA recommended guidelines whilst Aston Tennis Club are 43 over and Much Hadham Tennis Club are 12 over.
- If future growth ambitions are achieved, Braughing Tennis Club will be three members over capacity.
- When pairing the findings from the supply and demand analysis for club courts with the large number of community park courts available, it can be considered that East Hertfordshire is serviced by sufficient provision to accommodate both the current and future demand. However, club-based capacity pressures are still present at some of the smaller yet heavily accessed sites such as Tewin Tennis Club, Much Hadham Tennis Club and Aston LTC.
- The LTA facility calculator estimates there is a need for 12 padel courts within East Hertfordshire. As there are currently two courts located at Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust there is the need to develop additional courts to address this shortfall.

Tennis – supply summary

- There is a total of 135 tennis courts identified in East Hertfordshire across 31 sites, with 116 courts categorised as being available for community use at 28 sites.
- Most community available tennis courts in East Hertfordshire are operated by sports clubs with 56 (41%) the rest are split between parish/town council sites with eight (6%), education sites, 51 (38%) or 'other' with one (1%). There are also 19 (14%) courts unavailable to use at education sites.
- The most common outdoor tennis court surface in East Hertfordshire is macadam, with 42 courts (31%) identified across 13 sites. Artificial turf surfaces are the next most prominent surface with 31 courts (23%) across seven sites, followed by, shale surfaces, 34 (25%), polymeric, 20 (15%), grass, six (4%) and clay with two courts (1%) across 11 sites.
- In East Hertfordshire, 83 of the 135 tennis courts are serviced by sports lighting, representing 61% of the provision.
- Of the 116 community available courts, 77 are assessed as good quality (66%), 28 as standard quality (24%) and 11 as poor quality (9%).
- There are two sites situated in East Hertfordshire that currently have air domed courts, Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust and Legends Tennis Centre. The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust site also has two padel courts, built in 2024 and used by Bishop's Stortford LTC.
- Six clubs currently provide good quality ancillary provision, seven provide standard and none provide poor provision.
- Datchworth Tennis Club express plans to rebuild the shared clubhouse and resurface its courts in the next five years. Whilst Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club want to upgrade its Clubhouse and replace floodlights.
- There is a planning application in place for the development of eight padel courts at RDA Stadium, home of Bishop's Stortford FC.

Tennis – demand summary

- There are 13 tennis clubs in East Hertfordshire which collectively cater for 2,252 members, consisting of 1,432 senior and 820 junior members.
- Four clubs report future growth aspirations, with total future demand amounting to 155 potential additional members (70 senior and 85 junior).
- Away from clubs, it is considered that all local authority courts available for community use in East Hertfordshire have spare capacity for a growth in demand, although this is difficult to quantify as use is not always recorded due to the open access nature of many sites.

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Scenarios

Meeting demand for informal tennis

The LTA has developed a package of support for LAs to grow the use of park tennis courts by removing key barriers to participation. The products are ClubSpark, LTA Play, Local Tennis Leagues and Gate Access and can be used individually or in combination. The products are used to provide a remote booking and access system.

Instead of providing free access, some local authorities are now securing their courts as per a membership scheme that allows members access through the use of a fob system following payment of a small yearly fee.

Not only does this deter unofficial use of courts but it also allows official use to be tracked, thus providing data on how well and how often courts are being accessed. In addition, it provides income generation that can go towards ongoing maintenance of the courts.

Informal tennis courts across the district are generally in a good condition, courts such as Castle Park tennis courts have had recent investment, including a new LTA funded pay and play gate.

Satisfying club demand

The LTA suggests that a non-sports lit hard court can accommodate 40 members whereas a hard court with sports lighting can accommodate 60 members. A grass court has a capacity of 20 regardless of the lighting position and courts covered with an air dome can also accommodate 100 members.

In line with this, within East Hertfordshire there are currently three sites operating above the LTA capacity guidelines, Aston Tennis Courts, Much Hadham Tennis Club and Tewin Recreation Ground. When accounting for future demand Braughing Playing Fields, in addition to the aforementioned clubs, operates over the guidelines.

In the case of Aston Tennis Courts, should the Club add sports lighting to the courts it would increase its capacity to 120 and would only be three members over capacity. It should be noted that some clubs can comfortably operate over capacity guidance, whilst others may have pressures without theoretically being over capacity.

The same approach could be suggested for Tewin Recreation Ground, however, would still leave an excess of 67 members. Much Hadham Tennis Club already has sports lit provision and is 12 members over the guidelines.

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Table 4.32: Capacity analysis for tennis clubs at risk of capacity issues

Site ID	Site	Club users	Current demand (members)	Future demand (members)	No. of courts	Sports lighting?	Capacity (members)	Current capacity balance (members)	Future capacity balance (members)
9	Aston Tennis Courts	Aston Lawn Tennis Club	123	-	2	No	80	43	43
22	Braughing Playing Fields	Braughing Tennis Club	98	25	2	Yes	120	22	3
71	Much Hadham Tennis Club	Much Hadham Tennis Club	192	-	3	Yes	180	12	12
100	Tewin Recreation Ground	Tewin Tennis Club	187	-	2	No	80	107	107

As Table 4.32 outlines, Tewin Recreation Ground has the highest amount of overplay at its site and with only two non-sports lit courts has the smallest scope to grow. Even if the site added sports lighting it would still be over the recommended LTA capacity guidelines by 67 members.

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Padel

A padel court is 20m long and 10m wide with a combination of glass and weld mesh rebound wall and fence panels supported of steel posts fixed to a concrete foundation with a synthetic turf playing surface.

As of the end of 2023, 129,000 people reportedly play padel more than once a year in England, which represents a significant increase compared to 2021 data when the number was 15,000. This exemplifies the continued growth of the sport and the need to ensure that such demand is being adequately catered for. One of the LTAs key strategies is to find new ways to grow participation and padel is an innovative format of tennis that is fun, flexible, easy to play and extremely sociable.

The LTA Padel Provision Calculator indicates demand for 12 padel courts within East Hertfordshire to meet local needs. With two courts already available this would mean the creation of 10 new courts would increase padel play across the district, provided the courts are well located and advertised. The two courts are located at The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust and are accessed by Bishop's Stortford LTC. The Club reports that it has 120 members currently using the courts and that they will cap capacity at 150.

During consultation with Hartham Leisure Centre the conversion of a tennis court and small sided 3G football pitches to padel courts was highlighted. There is currently a planning application in place to convert the 3G pitches into padel provision. A planning application is also in place at the RDA Stadium for the potential development of eight padel courts. The site is the home of Bishop's Stortford FC which competes at Step 3 in the National League System. If developed this will significantly increase the number of courts in the Authority.

Given the rapid growth of padel as a sport and the identified demand, strategic investment in padel provision should be considered to enhance local access and support East Hertfordshire residents' participation in this emerging sport.

Recommendations

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of courts.
- ◀ Improve court quality at sites assessed as poor or standard quality and sustain quality at sites assessed as good, especially at sites in use by clubs or that are (or could be) well used for recreational demand.
- ◀ Sustain park courts quality as a priority to create a year-round recreational tennis option to meet local demand.
- ◀ Explore options to further improve the recreational tennis offer via utilisation of technology provided by the LTA (e.g., ClubSpark) to support the customer journey and through investment into facilities and accompanying ancillary provision.
- ◀ Ensure sinking funds are put into place by providers for long-term sustainability.
- ◀ Explore installation of additional sports lighting at club-based venues, such as Aston Tennis Club and Datchworth Tennis Club. Tewin Tennis Club currently uses portable sports lighting and would like to upgrade. Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club would also like to upgrade its lighting to LED.
- ◀ Support the development of new Padel courts as a means of addressing the shortfall of Padel provision in the Authority.

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4.8: Lawn bowls

Assessment Report summary

Bowls – supply and demand summary

- There is a sufficient supply of bowling greens in East Hertfordshire to accommodate current demand; however, some shortfalls may appear if future demand from club ambitions are to be realised. The current level of provision requires protection.

Bowls – supply summary

- There are 13 bowling greens in East Hertfordshire provided across 13 sites.
- All clubs that have responded to consultation attempts are deemed to have security of tenure.
- Sawbridgeworth CC is the only club in East Hertfordshire that is serviced by sports lighting.
- Of the 13 bowling greens in active use, six are good quality, seven are standard quality and none are of a poor quality.
- Ancillary provision ratings across East Hertfordshire, confirms eight clubs' access good quality clubhouses, five access standard quality and none are poor quality.

Bowls – demand summary

- There are 14 clubs using bowling greens in East Hertfordshire. Where membership is known, it equates to 560 members.
- The average membership across all of the identified clubs is 56 members.
- Due to a predicted increase in persons aged 65 and over (to 2043), demand is likely to increase for greens over the coming years.
- Five clubs report future demand to increase membership by a combined total of 62 members, with methods of increasing numbers such as recruitment via coaching, reduced first year fees, localised advertisement, and open days in line with Bowls England.
- Two clubs have suggested that there is latent or unmet demand. Hertford BC and Hertford Castle BC share a site and as such have previously had to turn would be members away. Should the clubs both need to use the green at peak times it would be at capacity.

Scenarios

Security of tenure

The broad picture in East Hertfordshire is that most clubs have secure tenure, in the form of long term leases or full ownership. The only exception to this is Datchworth BC which rent its site annually from the Parish Council. Allenburys Sport & Social Club has a long term lease in place and is currently renewing this with the landowner.

Ancillary provision improvements

Accompanying ancillary provision across the district is mostly of a good standard with no poor rated provision. Shire Park BC is rated standard however, states due to the age of the building requires some refurbishments. The Club currently carries out small renovation projects itself when urgent or when funding becomes available.

Hertford Castle Bowls Club has access to a small wooden building, providing standard provision. The Club use it to host social events with changing rooms, a kitchen and a bar. It states that it would like a better clubhouse, and that high heating costs are a main concern presently.

Sele Farm Bowls Club confirms that its ancillary provision is of standard quality with toilets and a social space. However, as the Club is based in Hartham Common Park there is no dedicated club parking, meaning members must pay to park which it states is an issue for some.

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Efforts should be made to support all three clubs, where possible, to enhance their ancillary facilities to improve the overall user experience and help sustain membership.

Future demand

For bowls it is more appropriate to consider population changes for persons aged 65 and over. Office of National Statistics population projections (2021-2043), identify that the number of persons aged 65 and over living in East Hertfordshire is likely to increase continuously from 26,528 in 2021 to 37,191 in 2043, representing an increase of 40.2%.

With three greens currently operating above BE recommended guidelines, and the forecasted growth of 40% of people aged 65 and over in East Hertfordshire, it can be anticipated that the existing shortfalls will be exacerbated.

As such, the capacity level of clubs should be monitored over the upcoming years, with Buntingford BC, Datchworth BC, Hertford Castle BC and Hertford BC (both share a green) and Shire Park BC being a priority.

Recommendations

- ◆ Protect existing quantity of currently used greens and, as a minimum, sustain quality.
- ◆ Ensure that any proposed development of currently used greens is mitigated in line with NPPF.
- ◆ Assist clubs, where possible, with any future ancillary provision improvements such as Shire Park BC, Hertford Castle BC and Sele Farm BC.
- ◆ Monitor capacity levels of highly supported clubs such as Buntingford BC and Hertford Castle BC to ensure they have sufficient capacity.
- ◆ Support clubs with plans to increase membership so that growth can be maximised.

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4.9: Athletics

Assessment Report summary

Athletics – supply and demand summary

- ▶ The supply of dedicated athletics facilities is sufficient to meet demand.
- ▶ A key priority is the resurfacing of the track at Wodson Park as it is now over 20 years old and reaching end of life.
- ▶ Priority should also be placed on supporting activity being accommodated by the various running clubs in East Hertfordshire and the events that are being held.

Athletics – supply summary

- ▶ There is one purpose-built athletics track in East Hertfordshire, provided at Wodson Park sports centre.
- ▶ Wodson Park provides a 400m track with eight lanes; it has a synthetic surface, is serviced by floodlighting and is open to community use.
- ▶ The track is of a standard quality but is reaching end of life having last been resurfaced in 2005.
- ▶ Wodson Park is serviced by good quality ancillary facilities.
- ▶ There is also a four lane 40 metre compact track at Hockerill Anglo-European College with associated long/triple jump runways/pit, High Jump fan and throws circle. The facility has no sports lighting.

Athletics – demand summary

- ▶ Five clubs have been identified that have a current focus on athletics and/or running activity, with only Hawcs AC, Herts Phoenix AC and Ware Joggers having a requirement for a purpose-built facility.
- ▶ None of the clubs consulted with have a waiting list in place and all clubs are open to gaining new members.
- ▶ There are six Parkrun events held each week at as many venues across East Hertfordshire.

Scenarios

Existing provision

The 400m sports lit community accessible Stuart Storey track at The Wodson Park Sport Centre provides the district with an adequate amount of formal athletic provision to cater for its current demand. The track was last resurfaced in 2005 and the non-technical assessment highlighted that the track had several areas patched up. The EA ANOG report outlines how it could use professional cleaning and minor repairs in the short term, before reaccreditation and will likely need respraying in 2026. This should be a priority to ensure that the track can continue to service East Hertfordshire athletics demand now and in the future.

England Athletics' latest approach to facility planning includes the play track, compact track, mini track and active track which present more affordable means of councils installing new athletics provision¹⁰. These facilities cater for a more recreational and informal offer for athletics and general health and wellbeing opportunities.

East Hertfordshire District Council could consider the installation of such provision in line with future housing developments as part of future master planning for its larger, more notable sites.

There is currently a four lane 40 metre non-sports lit, compact track at Hockerill Anglo-European College with associated long/triple jump runways/pit, high jump fan and throws circle. It currently solely services curricular demand at the School.

¹⁰ <https://www.englandathletics.org/clubs-and-facilities/facilities/newgen-tracks/>

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Recommendations

- ◆ Ensure the track and supporting facilities at the Wodson Park Sports Centre are retained with a priority placed on resurfacing the track to maintain UKA TrackMark accreditation.
- ◆ The compact track at Hockerill Anglo-European College is retained and remains in good condition for as long as possible.
- ◆ Support clubs, running groups, events and England Athletics initiatives such as Park Run and pursue increased participation, where possible.
- ◆ Continue to increase participation both within affiliated clubs and the wider running market, signposting potential club members from the likes of Parkrun events and other health initiatives.
- ◆ Consider the need to include 'Active Tracks' within strategic housing allocations to provide a health and wellbeing offer on site.

4.10: Netball courts

Assessment Report summary

Netball – supply and demand summary

- ◆ Given the demand for netball and that there are 33 sport lit community accessible courts it is determined that there is an adequate supply of netball provision in East Hertfordshire.

Netball – Supply summary:

- ◆ In total, there are 81 outdoor netball courts located across 32 sites in East Hertfordshire. Of this total provision, 55 courts across 17 sites are community accessible.
- ◆ Of the 55 community accessible courts, 23 are good quality, 23 are standard and nine are poor quality.
- ◆ Good quality provision located at Leventhorpe school is accessed by the Play Netball League.

Netball – Demand summary:

- ◆ Two leagues have been identified as offering competitive netball in East Hertfordshire, those being Bishop's Stortford District Netball League and the Hertford and District League.
- ◆ England Netball, and Sport England's Segmentation Tool outlines that there are somewhat low levels of unmet demand for East Hertfordshire with only 0.29% of the district identified as wanting to participate but not currently doing so.

Scenarios

Increasing the number of sports lit community accessible courts

Table 4.33 below outlines the available sports lit courts broken down by analysis area. As can be seen most sports lit accessible courts are provided in the Bishop's Stortford Analysis Area (21 courts). Of the 81 outdoor netball courts, 31 are both sports lit and community accessible (41%).

Table 4.33: Sports lit community accessible netball provision

Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use?	No. of courts	Sports lit?	Quality
16	Bishop's Stortford College	Bishop's Stortford	Yes	9	Yes (4)	Good
56	Herts & Essex Sports Centre	Bishop's Stortford	Yes	6	Yes	Standard
62	Leventhorpe School	Sawbridgeworth	Yes	3	Yes	Good
75	Presdales School	Hertford, Ware	Yes	4	Yes	Good
90	St Edmunds College & Prep School	Buntingford	No	3	Yes	Good

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Site ID	Site name	Analysis area	Community use?	No. of courts	Sports lit?	Quality
101	The Bishop's Stortford High School	Bishop's Stortford	Yes	3	Yes	Good
125	Wodson Park Sports Centre	Hertford, Ware	Yes	4	Yes	Good
126	Allenburys Sports & Social Club	Hertford, Ware	Yes	1	Yes	Standard
168	Avanti Grange Secondary School	Bishop's Stortford	Yes	3	Yes	Standard

Sites such as Birchwood High School and The Sele School could be prioritised for the installation of sports lighting, given that both already let out other facilities for community use. Both sites have standard rated shale netball courts that could benefit from sports lighting. This would create more community accessible, sports lit courts in the area for England Netball to establish a recreational programme of use.

Efforts should also be made to utilise sports lit community accessible courts for England Netball initiatives such as back to netball and walking netball to further develop Netball across East Hertfordshire.

Recommendations

- ◆ Protect quantity of courts.
- ◆ Seek to improve poor quality courts quality through resurfacing or improved maintenance.
- ◆ Explore options to increase sports lighting across East Hertfordshire.
- ◆ Open discussions with sites that already allow community use of other facilities to determine whether provision could be opened for community use, such as Birchwood High School and The Sele School.
- ◆ Look to continue and expand the use of courts for England Netball initiatives such as Back to Netball and Walking Netball.
- ◆ Facilitate improved engagement between England Netball and schools.
- ◆ Look to install sports lights to the provision at The Birchwood High School and The Sele School as a means of increasing the total number of sports lit courts.

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4.11: Golf

Assessment Report summary

Golf – supply and demand summary

- East Hertfordshire has a sufficient supply of provision to accommodate the identified high levels of golf demand within the Authority.
- In East Hertfordshire, golf remains more popular than the national averages by 7.1%. In 2023, 19.2% of the local population participated in the sport, reflecting a 6% increase over the previous two years. While East Hertfordshire has historically seen strong participation in golf, the current rate is the highest recorded for the authority since 2015.

Golf – supply summary

- There are nine golf facilities within East Hertfordshire, eight of which offer standard 18-hole courses, two offering par/short courses and four offering a driving range and a dedicated standalone driving range at Chadwell Springs Golf Centre.
- Six of the clubs are proprietary owned while three are members owned with no municipal owned courses.
- Quality across East Hertfordshire is good with no issues reported and members paying higher fees than the national average.

Golf – demand summary

- East Hertfordshire demand for golf is high with membership growing year on year
- Bishop's Stortford Golf Club currently have a waiting list in place suggesting unmet demand at the Club.
- Pay and play usage is unknown but clubs in East Hertfordshire provide green fee rates and pay and play is also available at four of the driving ranges.

Scenarios

N/A

Recommendations

- Protect and retain all existing golf provision unless separate needs assessments are completed that evidence that a facility can be lost or reduced without it impacting upon demand.
- Sustain course and ancillary facility quality and seek improvements where necessary.
- Support clubs in membership retention and potential growth and encourage clubs and providers to work more collaboratively in terms of creating pathways for players.

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4.12: Outdoor water sports

Assessment Report summary

Outdoor water sports – supply and demand summary

- ◆ East Hertfordshire is well provided for regarding outdoor water sport facilities given its location, enabling the district to cater for a range of activities.
- ◆ The clubs are adequately meeting demand levels, with no capacity issues evidenced.

Outdoor water sports – supply summary

- ◆ The River Stort runs through Hertfordshire and Essex providing the opportunity for various water sports.
- ◆ Abbots Lake offers 25 acres of open water, providing space for yachting and canoeing, forming part of the Lea Valley Regional Park.
- ◆ Ware Priority Lido has been servicing local residents since 1934 and is open all year round for both warm and cold-water swimming, depending on the season.
- ◆ Activities offered in the district include canoeing, kayaking, yachting, sailing and paddle boarding.

Outdoor water sports – demand summary

- ◆ There are currently four clubs in East Hertfordshire providing outdoor water sport activity.
- ◆ No clubs report any unmet or latent demand, although it could exist for activities that are not collectively offered by the clubs.

Recommendations

- ◆ Retain all existing provision.
- ◆ Support the development of emerging sports within the authority by providing access to current provision which is underutilised/not accessed.

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PART 5: STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The strategic recommendations for the Strategy have been developed via the combination of information gathered during consultation, site visits and analysis which culminated in the production of an assessment report, as well as key drivers identified for the Strategy. They reflect overarching and common areas to be addressed, which apply across playing pitch and outdoor sport facilities and may not be specific to just one sport.

AIM 1

To **protect** the existing supply of outdoor sport facilities and ancillary facilities where it is needed for meeting current and future needs.

Recommendations:

- a. Ensure, through the use of the PPOSS, that outdoor sport facilities are protected through the implementation of local planning policy.
- b. Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs, through a range of solutions and partnership agreements.
- c. Maximise community use of education facilities where needed.

Recommendation (a) – Ensure, through the use of the PPOSS, that outdoor sport facilities are protected through the implementation of local planning policy.

The PPOSS shows that all existing playing field and outdoor sport sites cannot be deemed surplus to requirements because of shortfalls now and in the future. As such, all provision requires protection or replacement until all identified shortfalls have been overcome. This includes disused (including any which may not have been identified in this document) underused and poor quality sites as there is a requirement for such provision to help meet and alleviate the identified shortfalls.

When shortfalls are evident, provision can only be permanently lost when the current picture changes to the extent that the site in question is no longer needed as a result of no shortfalls existing, or unless replacement provision is provided and agreed upon by all stakeholders. NPPF paragraph 104 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 needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

The PPOSS should be used to help inform development management decisions that affect existing or new playing pitch provision and accompanying ancillary facilities. All applications are assessed by the Local Planning Authority on a case-by-case basis taking into account site specific factors. In addition, Sport England is a statutory consultee on planning applications that affect or prejudice the use of playing field used within the last five years. They will use the PPOSS to help assess the planning application against its Playing Fields Policy.

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Policy Exception E1:

‘A carefully quantified and documented assessment of current and future needs has demonstrated to the satisfaction of Sport England that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment, and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport’.

Where the PPOSS cannot demonstrate that the site, or part of a site, is clearly surplus to requirements then replacement of the site, or part of a site, will be required to comply with the remaining Sport England policy exceptions.

Policy Exception E2

‘The proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field and does not affect the quantity and quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use’.

Policy Exception E3

‘The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:

- ◆ Reduce the size of any playing pitch;
- ◆ Result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas);
- ◆ Reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain quality;
- ◆ Result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site;
- ◆ Prejudice the use of any remaining areas of playing field on the site’.

Policy Exception E4:

‘The playing field or fields to be lost as a result of the proposed development would be replaced, prior to the commencement of development, by a new playing field site or sites:

- ◆ of equivalent or better quality and
- ◆ of equivalent or greater quantity;
- ◆ in a suitable location and;
- ◆ subject to equivalent or better management arrangements.

Policy Exception E5

‘The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice of use, of the area of playing field’.

Disused sites should also be protected from development or replaced in accordance with Sport England’s policy exceptions as they currently provide a solution to reducing identified shortfalls. Any disused playing fields are included within this Action Plan together with a recommendation in relation to bringing the site back into use or to mitigate the loss on a replacement site to address the shortfalls identified.

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It may be appropriate to consider rationalisation of certain low value playing pitch sites (i.e. one or two pitch sites with no changing provision) to generate investment and focus resources towards creating bigger and better quality venues (hub sites). Such sites could then be re-purposed to meet other recreational needs or, if appropriate and agreed could be developed for other uses. It is vital, however, that there is no net loss of facilities, and that replacement provision is in place and available for use prior to existing provision being lost.

Recommendation (b) – Secure tenure and access to sites through a range of solutions and partnership agreements.

Much like some authorities nationally, there is reliance on the education sector to provide for most of the demand for playing pitch and outdoor sport facilities. However, where this is the case, particularly for the likes of hockey, it is imperative that future opportunities to secure tenure for clubs is explored and progressed where possible. The following schools provide community use to clubs.

Table 5.1: Known use of education sites

School	Club	Sport
Aston St Marys VA School	Watton YFC	Football
Birchwood High School	BSC FC	Football
Bishop's Stortford College	BSC FC Thorley Manor FC Bishop's Stortford RFC	Football Rugby Union
Datchworth All Saints C of E Primary School	Watton YFC	Football
Freman College	Buntingford Cougars FC	Football
Hertfordshire and Essex High School	Thorley Manor FC	Football
Herts and Essex Sports Centre	Bishop's Stortford HC	Hockey
Hockerill Anglo European College	Bishop's Stortford HC	Hockey
Layston C of E First School	Buntingford Cougars FC	Football
Leventhorpe School	Sawbridgeworth CC Sawbridgeworth Town FC The Game Group FC	Cricket Football
Manor Fields Primary School	Thorley Manor FC	Football
Presdales School	Bury Rangers FC Hertford Town FC	Football
Ralph Sadlier School	Standon & Puckeridge Hares FC	Football
Reedings Junior School	Sawbridgeworth Town FC	Football
Richard Hale School	Bury Rangers FC	Football
Simon Balle School	Hertford HC	Hockey
St Edmunds College and Prep School	Watton YFC Bullys Crusaders FC	Football
The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood)	Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC BSC FC	Football
The Chauncy School	Deaconsfield Vets FC Hartham Utd FC	Football
The Sele School	Bengeo Tigers FC	Football
Walkern School	AFC Walkern	Football
Watton at Stone Primary School	Watton YFC Watton at Stone CC	Football Cricket

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Not having fully formalised usage presents a risk for those clubs using these sites as community use could technically be terminated at any time.

For unsecure sites, NGBs, Sport England and other appropriate bodies such as England Hockey, Herts Sport and Physical Activity Partnership and Hertfordshire FA can often help to negotiate and engage with providers where the local authority may not have direct influence. This is particularly the case at sites that have received funding from these bodies or are going to receive funding in the future as community access can be a condition of any agreement.

In the context of the [Comprehensive Spending Review](#) which announced significant public spending cuts, it is increasingly important for the Council to work with voluntary sector organisations to enable them to take greater levels of ownership and support the wider development and maintenance of facilities. To facilitate this, where practical, the Council should support and enable clubs to generate sufficient funds, providing this is to the benefit of sport.

The Council (including parish and town councils) and private landlords (as relevant) should further explore opportunities where security of tenure could be granted via lease agreements (minimum 25 years as recommended by Sport England and NGBs) so that clubs are in a position to apply for external funding. This is particularly the case at poor quality sites, possibly with inadequate or no ancillary facilities, so that quality can be improved and sites developed.

Local sports clubs should be supported by partners including the Council (where relevant), parish and town councils and NGBs to achieve sustainability across a range of areas including management, membership, funding, facilities, volunteers and partnership work. For example, club development should be supported and clubs should be encouraged to develop evidence of business and sports development plans to generate income via their facilities.

All clubs could be encouraged to look at different management models such as registering as Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC)¹¹. They should also be encouraged to work with partners locally, such as volunteer support agencies or local businesses.

Each club interested in leasing a council site (including those from parish and town councils) should be required to meet service and/or strategic recommendations. An additional set of criteria should also be considered, which takes into account club quality, aligned to its long-term development objectives and sustainability, as seen in the table below.

Table 5.2: Recommended criteria for lease of sport sites to clubs/organisations

Club	Site
Clubs should have NGB accreditation award. Clubs commit to meeting demonstrable local demand and show pro-active commitment to developing school-club links. Clubs are sustainable, both in a financial sense and via their internal management structures in relation to recruitment and retention policy for both players and volunteers. Ideally, clubs should have already identified (and received an agreement in principle) any match funding required for initial capital investment identified.	Sites should be those identified as 'Local Sites' (recommendation d) for new clubs (i.e. not those with a district-wide significance) but that offer development potential. For established clubs which have proven success in terms of self-management 'Key Centres' are also appropriate. Sites should acquire capital investment to improve or be leased with the intention that investment can be sourced to contribute towards improvement of the site.

¹¹ <http://www.cascinfo.co.uk/cascbenefits>

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Club	Site
Clubs have processes in place to ensure capacity to maintain sites to the existing, or better, standards.	

The Council (and likewise, parish and town councils) could establish core outcomes to derive from clubs taking on a lease arrangement to ensure that the most appropriate are assigned sites. Outcomes may, for example, include:

- ◆ Increasing participation.
- ◆ Supporting the development of coaches and volunteers.
- ◆ Commitment to quality standards.
- ◆ Improvements (where required) to facilities, or at minimum retaining existing standards.

In addition, clubs should be made fully aware of the associated responsibilities/liabilities when considering leases of multi-use public playing fields. It is important in these instances that the site, to some degree, remains available for other purposes or for other users.

For clubs with lease arrangements already in place, these should be reviewed when fewer than 25 years remain to improve security of tenure and aid the attraction of funding; clubs with fewer than 25 years remaining on a lease agreement are unlikely to be eligible for external funding.

Recommendation (c) - Maximise community use of education facilities where needed

To maximise community use of education facilities more coherent, structured relationship with schools is recommended. The ability to access good facilities within the local community is vital to any sports organisation, yet many clubs struggle to find good quality places to play and train.

A large number of sporting facilities are located on education sites and making these available to sports clubs can offer significant benefits to both the schools and local clubs, as well helping to reduce identified shortfalls. It is, however, common for school provision not to be fully maximised for community use, even on established community use sites.

Although there are a growing number of academies over which the Council has little or no control, it is still important to understand the significance of such sites and attempt to work with the schools where there are opportunities for community use. In addition, relevant NGBs have a role to play in supporting the Council to deliver upon this recommendation and communicating with schools where necessary to address shortfalls in provision.

Where new schools are provided in major new residential developments, they should be designed to facilitate community access, with opportunities for meeting the community's outdoor sports needs explored at the outset to maximise the potential for facility provision to be made within the developments, if appropriate.

As detailed earlier, NGBs, the Active Partnership and Sport England can often help to negotiate and engage with schools where the local authority may have limited direct influence. This is particularly the case at sites that have received funding from the relevant bodies or are going to receive funding in the future as community access can be a condition of the funding agreement.

The education sites in Table 5.3 below have playing fields with playing provision marked out that are not open to community use.

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Table 5.3: Non community accessible playing pitches:

School	Analysis Area	Sport	Pitches provided
Birchwood High School	Bishop's Stortford	Rugby Union	Four senior rugby union pitches.
Hockerhill Anglo-European College	Bishop's Stortford	Rugby Union	Two senior rugby union pitches.
Richard Whittington Primary School	Bishop's Stortford	Football	One mini 7v7 pitch.
Saint Mary's Catholic School	Bishop's Stortford	Football	Two mini 5v5 pitches.
Freman College	Buntingford	Rugby Union	Two senior rugby union pitches.
Saint Edmunds College & Prep School	Buntingford	Cricket	One grass wicket square.
Abel Smith Primary School	Hertford, Ware	Football	One mini 7v7 pitch.
Haileybury Sports Complex	Hertford, Ware	Cricket Rugby Union	Four grass wicket squares. Two senior rugby union pitches.
The Chauncy School	Hertford, Ware	Rugby Union	One senior rugby union pitch.
The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood)	Sawbridgeworth	Cricket	Two cricket squares.
Heath Mount School	Watton-at-Stone	Cricket	One grass wicket square.

If the sites listed above were to grant access to its grass provision this would increase the total supply of accessible playing pitches which would create additional spaces to accommodate all demand in the Authority. Therefore, it is a recommendation for school sites to open all playing pitches where they are not currently open to community use.

Table 5.1 above outlines the known use of education sites by sports clubs across the Authority. In an instance where a community use agreement is not already in place for these sites, it is also recommended that the steering group works towards establishing community use agreements to protect the long term use of the site.

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AIM 2

To **enhance** outdoor sports facilities and ancillary facilities through improving quality and management of sites.

Recommendations:

- d. Maintain quality and seek improvements where necessary
- e. Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites.
- f. Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding
- g. Secure developer contributions

Recommendation (d) – Improve quality

There are several ways in which it is possible to increase pitch quality and these are explored below.

Ground Management Association (GMA) Pitch Advisory Service

With quality of grass pitches becoming one of the biggest influences on participation, the Pitch Advisory Service (PAS, formerly the Grounds and Natural Turf Improvement Programme) was launched in 2014 and is funded by the GMA and its partners; the Football Foundation, Sport England, FA, ECB, RFU and RFL.

Its aim is to raise the standards of sports surfaces as well as the understanding of sports turf management practices among grassroots clubs across England and Wales. The PAS provides an enhanced network of support and expertise available to those maintaining natural turf pitches, particularly at a local level.

The service can be utilised by grassroots clubs, organisations and local authorities with the simple aim of improving the quality of grass pitches. The key principles behind the service are to provide members of the programme with advice/practical solutions via a report which will also identify the key enhanced maintenance works required along with machinery requirements.

Pitch providers are encouraged to complete a self-assessment of pitches using the Football Foundation PitchPower app. In August 2022, PitchPower was re-launched, with enhanced capability to support use beyond football pitches and is now accessible for the assessment of natural turf pitches for cricket, rugby league and rugby union.

In relation to cricket specifically, maintaining high pitch quality is the most important aspect of the sport. If the wicket is poor, it can affect the quality of the game and, in some instances, become dangerous. The ECB recommends full technical assessments of wickets and pitches available through a Performance Quality Standard (PQS) assessment. The Performance Quality Standard Assessment assesses a cricket square to ascertain whether it meets the standards that are benchmarked by the Ground Management Association.

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Football Foundation PitchPower Assessment

The Premier League, The FA and the Football Foundation are increasing efforts to improve the quality of grass pitches in England with the launch of the PitchPower app. Launched in 2020 alongside the Football Foundation Pitch Preparation Fund, The app is a new digital self-assessment tool to allow reports and recommendations to be made more quickly and easily once submitted for review by GMA regional pitch advisors.

The tool across mobile app and desktop is open to access by all providers, for example clubs, schools and local authorities. Following a PitchPower Assessment Report, organisations can work towards the recommended dedicated maintenance regime identified to improve the quality of their pitches.

In addition to non-technical assessments, clubs and education sites across East Hertfordshire continue to undertake PitchPower assessments as a means of improving the quality of provision. Consequently, it should be recommended through the PPS process for the local authority to support delivering any improvement to new sites that undertake PitchPower assessments.

Football Foundation Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund (GPMF)

Eligible clubs and organisations can also utilise the report as an evidence base to acquire potential funding streams, for example, to obtain the required maintenance equipment. If a PitchPower assessment categorises pitches as 'poor' or 'basic' they are then eligible to apply for funding through the Football Foundation through the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund¹², a fund offering six-year tapered grants to help clubs enhance or sustain the quality of their grass pitches. The fund is a key part of the Football Foundation's Grass Pitch Improvement Programme - an ambition to deliver 20,000 good quality grass pitches by 2030. Clubs with good or standard quality pitches can also apply for a lower level of funding to improve and sustain quality.

All applicants must have the required security of tenure and have received a PitchPower Pitch Assessment Report, with the fund currently open to football clubs, leagues, and charities. Local authorities are not currently eligible applicants, however, clubs, leagues and charitable organisations using local authority sites can apply provided they have security of tenure.

The Council is not presently eligible to access the GPMF as an applicant, however, can undertake technical assessment of pitches using the PitchPower app. Opportunities to access the fund to support presently Council managed sites include establishment of a service level agreement with a resident club for maintenance responsibilities, or transfer of long-term management to the club/organisation through leasehold or CAT, both enabling the club/organisation to apply to the fund.

Furthermore, the Football Foundation also launched a new Groundskeeping Community online platform in 2019 which provides a resource of expert advice for grounds staff, enabling them to connect with peers, discover new tips and tricks and share advice on best industry practice. Users can seek guidance from the GMA regional pitch advisors, who are available to answer questions and update members on changes to industry standards.

¹² <https://footballfoundation.org.uk/grant/grass-pitch-maintenance-fund>

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Addressing overplay

In order to improve the overall quality of the outdoor facility stock; it is necessary to ensure that provision is not overplayed beyond recommended carrying capacity. This is determined by assessing quality (via a non-technical site assessment) and allocating a match limit to each (daily for hockey, weekly for football and rugby union and seasonal for cricket).

The FA, RFU, RFL, ECB and EH all recommend a number of matches that pitches should take based on quality, as seen in the table below. For other grass pitch sports, no guidelines are set by the NGBs although it can be assumed that a similar trend should be followed.

Table 5.4: Capacity of pitches

Sport	Pitch type	No. of matches (Good quality)	No. of matches (Standard quality)	No. of matches (Poor quality)
Football	Adult pitches	3 per week	2 per week	1 per week
Football	Youth pitches	4 per week	2 per week	1 per week
Football	Mini pitches	6 per week	4 per week	2 per week
Rugby union	Natural Inadequate (D0)	2 per week	1.5 per week	0.5 per week
Rugby union	Natural Adequate (D1)	3 per week	2 per week	1.5 per week
Rugby union	Pipe Drained (D2)	3.25 per week	2.5 per week	1.75 per week
Rugby union	Pipe and Slit Drained (D3)	3.5 per week	3 per week	2 per week
Cricket	1 grass wicket 1 synthetic wicket	5 per season 60 per season	4 per season	0 per season
Hockey	Full size AGP	4 per day	4 per day	4 per day

It is imperative to engage with clubs to ensure that sites are not played beyond their capacity. Where overplay is identified, play should be encouraged, to transfer to alternative venues that are not operating at capacity. Alternatively quality, should be improved to increase capacity to appropriate levels. Where play is transferred, this may include transferring play to 3G pitches or to sites not currently available for community use but which may be in the future.

For cricket, an increase in the usage of NTPs (or hybrid wickets when suitable) is key to alleviating overplay as this allows for the transfer of junior demand from grass wickets. It also does not require any additional playing pitch space as NTPs can be installed adjacent to existing squares.

For rugby union, overplay can be reduced but not resolved through improvements to pitch maintenance or via capital drainage solutions. Three rugby clubs have a need for options outside of enhancing existing provision.

As mentioned earlier, there are also sites that are poor quality that are not overplayed. These should not be overlooked as often poor-quality sites have less demand than others but demand could increase if the quality were improved. It does, however, work both ways as potential improvements may make sites more attractive and therefore more popular, which in the long run can lead again to them becoming poor quality pitches if not properly maintained.

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Improving changing provision

There is a need to address changing provision at some sites in East Hertfordshire, these are generally centred at either club or parish/town council managed sites.

Sites which predominantly accommodate adult and/or older junior age group sports should be prioritised for improvements, whilst there is a trend for younger junior age groups (particularly for football) not to require use of changing provision, with suitable male and female toilet provision for players and spectators considered to be of greater importance.

The following sites are identified locally as ones where improvements are needed:

- ◀ Bishop's Stortford RFC.
- ◀ Braughing Playing Fields.
- ◀ Crouchfields.
- ◀ Datchworth Sports Club.
- ◀ Hertford Heath Playing Fields.
- ◀ Hertford RFC.
- ◀ Richard Hale School.
- ◀ Thorley Cricket Club.
- ◀ Watton-at-Stone (new site)

It is worthy of note that providing dedicated facilities for one team clubs, unless competing at a highly competitive level is not typically a worthwhile investment.

Recommendation (e) – Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites

To allow for facility developments to be programmed on a phased basis the Council should adopt a tiered approach to the management and improvement of outdoor sport sites and associated facilities. Please refer to Part 6: Action Plan for the proposed hierarchy.

Recommendation (f) – Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding

Partners should ensure that appropriate funding secured for improved sports provision is directed to areas of need, underpinned by a robust strategy for improvement in outdoor sport provision and accompanying ancillary facilities.

To address community need a coordinated approach to strategic investment is required. In delivering this recommendation, the Council should maintain a regular dialogue with local partners through the PPOSS Steering Group.

Although some investment in new provision will not be made by the Council directly, it is important that the Steering Group directs and leads a co-ordinated approach to facility development whether made at/by education sites, NGBs, sports clubs and the commercial sector. This is to ensure that the extent to which it addresses community need is optimised and duplication is avoided.

One of sport's key contributions is its positive impact on public health. It is therefore important to lever in investment from other sectors such as, for example, health and wellbeing. Sport and physical activity can have a profound effect on peoples' lives, and plays a crucial role in improving community cohesion, educational attainment and self-confidence.

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Recommendation (g) –Secure developer contributions

It is important that this strategy informs planning policies and decisions by setting out the approach to securing sport and recreational facilities through new housing development.

For playing pitches, it is recommended the Council continue to use Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator as a tool for helping to determine the additional demand for pitches and to estimate the likely developer contribution required linking to sites within the locality. This should form part of the Council working with Sport England to develop a process and guidance for obtaining developer contributions.

The calculator uses the current number of teams by sports pitch type contained within the Assessment Report and calculates the percentage within each age group that play that sport. That percentage is then applied to the population growth. The additional teams likely to be generated are then converted into match equivalent sessions and associated pitch requirements in the peak period, with the associated costs (both for providing the pitch/facility and for its life cycle) then given. The calculator splits the requirement into peak time demand for natural turf pitches, training demand for artificial grass pitches, and the number of new changing rooms required.

The PPOSS should be used to help determine the likely impact of a new development on demand and the capacity of existing sites in the area, and whether there is a need for improvements to increase capacity of existing provision or if new provision is required.

Where a development is located within access of existing high-quality provision, this does not necessarily mean that there is no need for further provision or improvement to existing provision, as additional demand arising from the development is likely to result in increased usage (which can result in overplay or quality deterioration).

Where it is determined that new provision is required to accompany a development, priority should be placed on providing facilities that contribute towards alleviating existing shortfalls within the locality. To determine what supply of provision is provided, it is imperative that the PPS findings are taken into consideration and that for particularly large developments consultation takes place with the relevant NGBs and Sport England.

This is due to the importance of ensuring that the stock of facilities provided is correct to avoid provision becoming unsustainable and unused. The preference is for multi-pitch and potentially multi-sport sites to be developed, supported by a clubhouse and adequate parking facilities which consider the potential for future AGP development. This is because single-pitch facilities are more likely to become under-used (or unused), unviable and unsustainable.

It is recognised that consultation cannot take place with NGBs for every development due to resource restrictions. Instead, it is recommended that such discussions take place within PPOSS Steering Group meetings, which should take place regularly following adoption of the study as part of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation process. It is recommended that these take place every 6-12 months and inform the annual review/update (see Part 8 for further information).

The guidance should form the basis for negotiation with developers to secure contributions to include provision and/or enhancement of appropriate provision and subsequent maintenance. S106 contributions could also be used to improve the condition and of the pitches in order to increase pitch capacity to accommodate more matches.

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The 2017 version of the playing pitch strategy and calculator has been used to inform sports provision and contributions in the strategic allocations of the adopted District Plan. Many of these allocations have commenced or been built out but several of the largest developments have sport provision commitments identified in District Plan policy and/or S106 agreements, but development has not started. As such the new facilities for these strategic allocations are not included within the action plan at this stage, but for clarity, they are identified below in table 5.5 because they will form part of the future sports provision for the district in due course.

Table 5.5: On-site sports proposals identified in District Plan (2018) site allocations that have not yet commenced development

Site allocation	Location	Current status	Playing pitches
WARE2	North and East of Ware	Planning application submitted, still to be determined.	Proposes two areas of playing pitches, includes new grass pitches and a new 3G pitch at the secondary school site (dual-use).
EWEL1	East of Welwyn Garden City	Planning application submitted, still to be determined.	Proposes new playing pitches as part of education provision at primary and secondary school sites (dual use).
Village 1 Gilston Park	Gilston	Outline planning permission granted (s106)	Gilston Park: 2 x U18 & Adult Football pitches (one to meet the Village 1 Playing Field provision of 0.8ha). 1 x cricket pitch and clubhouse. - Bowls club, to comprise of two six-rink bowls facilities and a club house (which may be combined with cricket facility). 2km trim trail. - Space for informal sports e.g. frisbee, kite flying etc.
Village 1 Schools	Gilston	Outline planning permission granted (s106)	Primary School to include: A MUGA, two mini 7v7 football pitches, two mini 5v5 pitches, one youth 9v9 pitch, a junior cricket pitch and a rounders pitch (which may be overlaid on the football pitches) and a grass athletics track. Secondary School to include: Artificial cricket wicket, artificial grass pitch (7,480sqm), one U18 & Adult grass football pitch, 400m grass athletics track, MUGA.
Village 2	Gilston	Outline planning permission granted (s106)	Village 2 Playing Fields (0.8ha): 1 x U18 & Adult football pitch.
Village 2 Primary School	Gilston	Outline planning permission granted (s106)	Village playing field. A primary school that will feature a three court MUGA, one mini 5v5 pitch, one mini 7v7 pitch, one youth 9v9 pitch, one junior cricket pitch and rounders pitch (which may be overlaid on the football pitches) and a grass athletics track.
Village 3	Gilston	Outline planning permission granted (s106)	Village 3 Playing Field (0.8ha) 1 x U18 & Adult football pitch.

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Site allocation	Location	Current status	Playing pitches
Village 3 Primary School*	Gilston	Outline planning permission granted (s106)	A primary school that will feature a three court MUGA, one mini 5v5 pitch, one mini 7v7 pitch, one youth 9v9 pitch, one junior cricket pitch and rounders pitch (which may be overlaid on the football pitches) and a grass athletics track.
Village 3/4 Gilson Fields	Gilston	Outline planning permission granted (s106)	Gilston Fields (CA4) Cricket Hub featuring: 2 x cricket pitches*. 2 x U15 & U16 football pitches*. 2 x U13 & U14 football pitches*. - Cricket nets. - Clubhouse. *may be dual use football and cricket
Village 4	Gilston	Outline planning permission granted (s106)	Eastwick Valley Green Corridor: 4 x U18 & adult football pitches. - Village 4 playing field (1 x O18 & adult football pitch). - Tennis facility, comprising of 8 senior pitches and may include a clubhouse.
Village 4 Primary School	Gilston	Outline planning permission granted (s106)	A primary school featuring a three court MUGA, one mini 5v5 pitch, one mini 7v7 pitch, one youth 9v9 pitch, one junior cricket pitch and rounders pitch (which may be overlaid on the football pitches) and a grass athletics track.
Village 5	Gilston	Outline planning permission granted (s106)	Village 5 Playing Fields (0.8ha located in CA14 V1-5 Corridor): 1 x U18 & adult football pitch Sports and Leisure Centre may be co-located with Eastwick Valley Green Corridor pitches.
Village 5 Schools	Gilston	Outline planning permission granted (s106)	A primary school featuring a three court MUGA, one mini 7v7 football pitch, one mini 5v5 pitches, one youth 9v9 pitch, a junior cricket pitch and a rounders pitch (which may be overlaid on the football pitches) and a grass athletics track. Secondary School to include: Artificial cricket wicket, artificial grass pitch (7,480sqm), one U18 & Adult grass football pitch, 400m grass athletics track, MUGA. An artificial hockey pitch (6,388.2sqm) which may be located within the school or co-located adjacent to the school as part of the Sports and Leisure Centre.
Village 6	Gilston	Outline planning permission granted (s106)	Village 6 Playing Fields (0.8ha) - located in CA14): 1 x U18 & adult football pitch.
Village 6 Primary School*	Gilston	Outline planning permission granted (s106)	A primary school featuring a three court MUGA, one mini 5v5 pitch, one mini 7v7 pitch, one youth 9v9 pitch and a junior cricket pitch and a rounders pitch (which may be overlaid on the football pitches) and a grass athletics track.

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Site allocation	Location	Current status	Playing pitches
Village 7 Playing Field	Gilston	Outline planning permission granted (s106)	Village 7 Playing Field: 1 x grass adult pitch (either rugby or football). - A sports pavilion (approximately 245sqm gross internal floor area).
Village 7	Gilston	Outline planning permission granted (s106)	Village 7 Football Hub: - A building no more than 800 sqm GEA and appropriate car parking. 2 x artificial grass pitches. 1 x adult grass pitch with a shelter/dug-out. 1 x adult grass pitch with 2 x U9/U10 pitches within. 1 x U15/U16 grass pitch with 2 x U7/U8 pitches within.
Village 7 Primary School	Gilston	Outline planning permission granted (s106)	A primary school featuring a three court MUGA, one mini 7v7 football pitch, one mini 5v5 pitches, one youth 9v9 pitch, a junior cricket pitch and a rounders pitch (which may be overlaid on the football pitches) and a grass athletics track.

*May not be required subject to education monitoring

The Council will continue to work with developers and stakeholders to bring forward the identified sports provision. It should be recognised that proposed development at WARE2 and EWEL1 has not secured planning permission yet so proposals may be subject to change. The information relating to Gilston is from masterplan drafts and the s106 for the outline applications. Pitch details could be subject to change as master planning work and the Reserved Matters applications progress.

As work progresses on the New District Plan planning officers will use the Playing Pitch Calculator and guidance to inform sport provision at new site allocations.

Sport England recommends that a number of objectives should be implemented to enable sports provision to be delivered and enhanced:

- Planning consent should include appropriate conditions and/or be subject to specific planning obligations. Where developer contributions are applicable, a S106 agreement or equivalent must be completed that should specify, when applied, the amount that will be linked to Sport England's Building Cost Information Service from the date of the permission and timing of the contribution/s to be made.
- Contributions should also be secured towards the first ten years of maintenance on new pitches (lifecycle costs), the cost of which is indicated by the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator. NGBs and Sport England can provide further and up-to-date information on the associated costs.
- External funding should be sought/secured to achieve maximum benefit from the investment into appropriate facility enhancement, alongside other open space provision, and its subsequent maintenance.
- Where new provision is provided, appropriate changing rooms and associated car parking should be located on site.
- All new or improved outdoor sports facilities on school sites should be subject to community use agreements.

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Developer contributions - step by step guide

For any application warranting a developer contribution the following processes should be followed in order to help inform the potential needs a new housing development may require and/or should look to consider. In accordance with National Planning Policy Guidance, contributions should not be sought from developments of 10 units or less, and which have a maximum combined gross floor space of no more than 1,000 square metres (gross internal area).

Any obligations sought should be based on a tailored approach to each development, considering the population derived from the development, determining if the demand can be met by existing facilities and identifying the project/s that any required contribution will be used towards. All of this should be carried out using the robust evidence base provided as part of the PPOSS to help with clearly justifying the needs arising and how they are to be met.

Step 1	Determine the playing pitch requirement resulting from the development
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The main tool for determining this is Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator, which is a Sport England tool provided on completion of the Strategy. The calculator will be pre-populated with the current population of the local authority and the current demand data from the PPOSS. Until this requires updating, to determine the playing pitch requirement resulting from a development, all that is required is the input of the new population that will derive from a proposal.

The calculator provides an estimation of the number of new pitches that would be required to meet the match equivalent sessions that will derive from the development. The associated costs for providing these new pitches are also identified (although please note that these are indicative costs only and appropriate local work should be undertaken to determine the true costs involved). The calculator can also be used by East Hertfordshire District Council to inform policies within the New District Plan.

Step 2	Determine whether new provision is required and whether this should be on or off site
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For large-scale developments that generate high levels of demand, new pitch provision may be required to meet the population growth. This is particularly the case when the calculator identifies a need for multiple pitches and across multiple sports.

When on site provision is required, priority should be placed on the creation of multi-pitch and multi-sport sites with appropriate ancillary facilities such as a clubhouse and adequate car parking, as well as ensuring the provision contributes towards reducing current shortfalls. This will ensure that the provision is sustainable and attractive to potential users. Emphasis should also be on ensuring the site can accommodate an AGP given current sporting trends.

Other useful questions when deciding on new provision include:

- ✦ Are there any teams/clubs playing outside of the local area (displaced demand) which could utilise provision at the site?
- ✦ Do any local clubs identify existing plans/demand for access to new provision?
- ✦ Are there any overplayed sites in the local area where existing demand could be transferred to a new site?

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- ◀ Do any local clubs identify any latent demand (i.e. if they had access to more pitches they could they field more teams?)

To further help determine the sustainability of establishing new provision, consideration should be given to the potential management opportunities which may be available onsite:

- ◀ Is the local authority (or town/parish council) in a position to take on further outdoor sports facilities from a financial point of view?
- ◀ Is an education establishment to be provided as part of the development which offers a potential management option of outdoor sports facilities?
- ◀ Is there a leisure trust in place which has the capacity to take on the management of outdoor sports facilities?
- ◀ Is there an opportunity for a trust based model of management, for example, by formation of a Community Interest Company (CIC) or Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)?
- ◀ Is there an existing sports club that has the capacity to take on the management of another site?

Where the calculator does not create demand for a whole pitch, which is often the case for smaller sized developments, it is recommended to make a contribution to increasing the capacity of an existing site to meet demand generated from the development. When identifying a site for off-site contributions, the proximity and location of existing playing pitch sites should be considered and whether they could help serve the new development – this could be informed by identifying the analysis area in which the development sits and if there are any hub sites or key centres within the locality. Initially, a one-mile radius could be drawn around the site in order to help identify the nearest priority sites, which may require consultation with neighbouring authorities when the development sites to close to the boundary.

The off-site decision should be based on the potential to improve existing facilities within an appropriate catchment of a development to create additional capacity, and how realistic it is given the nature of the local area to provide new provision. For example, there may be some poor quality playing fields that could potentially be improved with additional drainage and long-term maintenance works, along with enhanced changing provision, to enable use to be increased, thereby creating additional capacity to meet the increased demand generated from the development.

Discussions should be held with relevant parties (e.g. NGBs, landowners, facility operators and user groups), and any further necessary evidence gathered (e.g. a feasibility study) to help identify the specific works that are required, and to ensure they will provide the necessary additional capacity to meet the needs. It will also be important to demonstrate that the specific works can be delivered within an appropriate timescale in relation to the occupation of the development site.

Step 3	Determine the other pitch and non-pitch requirements resulting from the development
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The Sports Facility Calculator now calculates tennis demand so this can therefore be used to inform tennis requirements; however, neither this nor the Playing Pitch Calculator determine needs for any other sports. That being said, the PPOSS identifies (where relevant) current and future demand requirements and can therefore still be used to determine if contributions are required towards these sports or if new provision is required, in conjunction with NGB discussions.

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Where there is no identified shortfall in provision or future demand for new provision within an area relevant to the development (e.g. an analysis area or settlement), consideration should be given to the nearest site to the development containing that type of provision. If this could accommodate the increased demand from the development, no action is required; if it could not accommodate the demand, consider if the site could benefit from a contribution towards increasing capacity to meet likely need. For example, this could include increasing quality and/or addition of ancillary facilities such as floodlighting, changing rooms or car parking. The PPOSS Action Plan should be used as a starting point to identify site by site recommendations.

Where there is an identified shortfall that could not be overcome through contributions, new provision may be required within or nearby to the development as part a multi-sport development.

Step 4	Consider design principles for new provision
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The exact nature and location of provision associated with onsite developments should be fully determined in partnership with each relevant NGB. Further to this, each pitch sport NGB provides national guidance in relation to provision of new pitches.

There is also a need to ensure that the location of outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities are appropriately located in the context of indoor sports provision (if also being provided onsite) to ensure a cohesive approach to the whole sporting offer.

Step 5	Calculate the financial contribution required
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After using the PPOSS Playing Pitch Calculator and the PPOSS as a starting point, the local cost of provision should be fully determined in order to calculate the financial contributions required.

A clear and transparent methodology for calculating up to date costs for the specific works, including appropriate ancillary provision, should be presented. Where appropriate, depending on how the needs are to be met, the cost of any required land purchase should be included in the financial contribution. If an obligation will be directed to an off-site project it should be ensured the costs are limited to meet the needs of the individual development.

Along with any capital costs for the works, an obligation should ensure an appropriate level of lifecycle costs towards the new or enhanced provision. This is required to cover the day to day maintenance for an agreed long-term period and to help ensure a sinking fund exists for any major replacement work, e.g. the future resurfacing of an artificial grass pitch. Wherever possible, specific local costs should be used, especially if the works are to improve the existing quality of a site to increase capacity as there may be a number of site specifics to consider. Sport England does provide indicative costs for new provision:
<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>

For all developments community use agreements between providers and users would ensure that such demand continues to be provided for in the long-term.

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AIM 3

To **provide** new outdoor sport facilities where there is current or future demand to do so.

Recommendations:

- h. Rectify quantitative shortfalls through the current stock.
- i. Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand.

The PPOSS provides an estimate of demand for pitch sport based on population forecasts and club consultation to 2043 (in line with East Hertfordshire District Plan timeline), with this future demand then translated into teams likely to be generated. Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator adds to this, updating the likely demand generated for pitch sports based on housing increases before converting the demand into match equivalent sessions and the number of pitches that may be required to meet the growth. It also gives the associated costs of supplying the increased pitch provision and splits the total pitch requirement into natural turf pitches to meet peak period demand, artificial grass pitches to meet training demand, and the additional number of changing rooms required.

Recommendation (h) - Rectify quantitative shortfalls through the current stock

The Council and its partners should work to rectify identified inadequacies and meet identified shortfalls as outlined in the preceding Assessment Report and the sport-by-sport specific recommendations (Part 4) as well as the following Action Plan (Part 6).

It is important that the current levels of provision are protected, maintained and enhanced to secure provision both for now and in the future. Maximising use of existing provision through a combination of the following will help to reduce shortfalls and accommodate future demand:

- ◀ Improving quality in order to improve the capacity to accommodate more demand.
- ◀ Transferring demand from overplayed sites to sites with spare capacity.
- ◀ The re-designation of facilities e.g. converting an unused pitch (or pitch type) for one sport to instead cater for another sport (or another pitch type).
- ◀ Securing community use at school sites including those currently unavailable.
- ◀ Working with commercial and private providers to increase usage.

Unmet demand, changes in sport participation and trends, and proposed housing growth should be recognised and factored into future facility planning. Assuming an increase in participation and housing growth occurs, it will impact on the future need for certain types of sports facilities. Sports development work also approximates unmet demand which cannot currently be quantified (i.e. it is not being suppressed by a lack of facilities) but is likely to occur. The following table highlights the main development trends in each sport and their likely impact on facilities. However, it is important to note that these may be subject to change.

Furthermore, retaining some spare capacity allows some pitches to be rested to protect overall pitch quality in the long-term. Therefore, whilst in some instances it may be appropriate to redesignate a senior pitch where there is low demand identified a holistic approach should be taken to re-designation for the reasons cited. The site-by-site action planning will seek to provide further clarification on where re-designation is suitable.

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The PPOSS identifies priority sites that should be focused upon, including those that are presently overplayed and/or poor quality, or unused sites that are particularly large. It also advises how issues can be overcome.

Recommendation (i) - Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand

The Steering Group should use and regularly update the Action Plan within this Strategy. The Action Plan lists recommendations for each site, focused upon both qualitative and quantitative improvements, which if delivered will lessen the need for new provision.

Linked to the above and as evidenced in Part 4, although there are identified shortfalls of match equivalent sessions, most current and future demand is currently being met and most shortfalls for football, cricket, hockey, tennis, netball and lawn bowls can be addressed via quality improvements and/or improved access to sites that are presently used minimally or that are currently unavailable. This does however come with challenges such as breaking a schools long-term stance of not allowing community use to its playing fields or improving a grass pitch on an open space site to good quality. Adding to the current stock, particularly in the short term, is therefore not recommended as a priority, except for 3G pitches, padel courts and rugby union where the shortfall cannot be removed without new stock.

However, for rugby union Table 4.29 shows that given the amount of demand at the overplayed club sites, if maximum level quality improvements were to take place, shortfalls at both sites would still be present. In this instance, other methods of addressing overplay should be explored such as the installation of additional provision, increased sports lighting or using dedicated sports lit training areas and accessing the newly installed WR 3G pitch at Bishop's Stortford High School to better support training demand. Table 1.2 confirms that this also applies to the need for padel as there is a shortfall of courts which can only be addressed by developing new provision.

Notwithstanding the above, large scale housing developments and the establishment of new schools may also necessitate the need for new provision. Where new schools are developed, there is an opportunity to combine the building of the school to the development of a new multi-sport site that will be of a benefit to the school as well as the wider community.

For housing developments, as outlined in Recommendation (g), Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator can be used as a guide to inform requirements. As the new District Plan emerges, the Council can use Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator to explore the pitch requirements of housing growth scenarios.

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PART 6: ACTION PLAN

The site-by-site action plan seeks to address key issues identified in the preceding Assessment Report. It provides recommendations based on current levels of usage, quality and future demand, as well as the potential of each site for enhancement. It is organised by Analysis Area and includes information pertaining to the sub sections below.

Site hierarchy

The Council should make it a high priority to work with NGBs and other partners to comprise a priority list of actions based on local priorities, NGB priorities and available funding. As stated in Recommendation (e), to allow for facility developments to be programmed within a phased approach, the Council should adopt a tiered approach to the management and improvement of playing pitch sites and associated facilities.

The identification of sites is based on their strategic importance in a regional context i.e., they accommodate most demand, or the recommended action has the greatest impact on addressing shortfalls identified either on a sport-by-sport basis or across the Council area as a whole.

Table 6.1: Tiered site criteria

Criteria	Hub sites	Key centres	Local sites
Site location	Strategically located in the District. Priority sites for NGBs.	Strategically located within the analysis area.	Serves the local community.
Site layout	Accommodates three or more grass pitches, generally including provision of an AGP (or with the potential).	Accommodates two or more grass pitches.	Accommodates one or two pitches.
Type of sport	Multi-sport provision. Could also operate as a central venue.	Single or multi-sport provision.	Generally single sport provision but may cater for two.
Management	Management control allows for wide community use, i.e., through the local authority, a leisure operator or a school with a community use agreement.	Management control generally allows for wide community use but may include sites that are owned or leased by clubs/other organisations.	Management control can be via the local authority, schools, clubs and other providers such as town or parish councils
Maintenance regime	Maintenance regime aligns or could align with NGB guidelines.	Maintenance regime aligns or could align with NGB guidelines.	Standard maintenance regime or an in-house maintenance contract.
Ancillary facilities	Good quality ancillary facilities on site (or potential), with sufficient changing rooms and car parking to serve the number of pitches; may include wider social/function facilities.	Good quality ancillary facility on site (or potential), with sufficient changing rooms and car parking to serve the number of pitches.	Limited or no changing room access on site.

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Hub sites are of district wide importance where users are willing to travel to access the range and high quality of facilities offered and are likely to be multi-sport. These have been identified on the basis of the impact that the site will have on addressing the issues identified in the assessment.

Key centres are more community focused, although some are still likely to service a wider analysis area (or slightly wider); however, there may be more of a focus on a specific sport i.e., a dedicated site.

It is considered that some financial investment may be necessary to improve the facilities at both hub sites and key sites. This could be to improve the provision, create additional provision (e.g., a 3G pitch) or to enhance the ancillary facilities in terms of access, flexibility (i.e., single-sex changing if necessary) and quality as well as ensuring that they meet the rules and regulations of local competitions.

Local sites refer to those sites offering minimal provision or that are of minimal value to the wider community. Primarily they are sites with one pitch/facility or a low number of pitches/facilities that service just one or two sports (e.g., bowling green sites).

For local sites, consideration should be given, on a site-by-site basis, to the feasibility of a club taking on a long-term lease (if not already present), in order that external funding can be sought. Such sites will require some level of investment, either to the outdoor sport facilities or ancillary facilities and it is anticipated that one of the conditions of offering a hire/lease is that the Club would be in a position to source external funding to improve/extend the provision.

Other sites considered in this tier may be primary school sites or secondary school sites that are not widely used by the community or that do not offer community availability.

Partners

The column indicating partners in the Action Plans below refers to the main organisations that the Council (or the relevant provider) would look to work with to support delivery of the actions.

Given the extent of potential actions, it is reasonable to assume that partners will not necessarily be able to support all the actions identified but where the action is a priority and resource is available the partner will endeavour to assist.

As all sites sit within the local authority area, the Council is considered to be a partner for each identified action (as the column indicates partners for the Council) and is therefore not included. However, it is acknowledged that it will take on more of a leading role for some specific sites and some specific actions (e.g., at council venues).

Priority

Although hub sites are mostly likely to have a **high** level actions, as they have wide importance, high priority sites have been identified on the basis of the impact that the site will have on addressing the key issues identified in the assessment. Therefore, some key centres and local sites are also identified as having a high priority level. It is these projects/sites which should generally, if possible, be addressed within the short term (1-2 years).

The majority of key centres have **medium** priority actions. These have analysis area importance and are identified on the basis of the impact that they will have on addressing the issues identified in the assessment, although not to the same extent as high priority actions.

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The **low** priority actions tend to be for single pitch or single sport sites and often club or education sites with local specific importance but that may also contribute to addressing the issues identified in the assessment for specific users. Whilst low priority, there may be opportunities to action some of the recommendations made against such sites relatively quickly e.g., through S106 funding.

Costs

The strategic actions have also been ranked as low, medium, or high based on cost. The brackets are:

- ◀ (L) - Low - less than £150k.
- ◀ (M) - Medium - £150k-£750k.
- ◀ (H) - High £750k and above.

These are based on Sport England's estimated facility costs which can be found at: [Facility cost guidance | Sport England](#)

Timescales

The Action Plan has been created to be delivered over a ten-year period and the information within the Assessment Report, Strategy and Action Plan will require updating as developments occur. The indicative timescales relate to delivery times and are not priority based:

- ◀ (S) -Short (1-2 years).
- ◀ (M) - Medium (3-5 years).
- ◀ (L) - Long (6+ years).

Aim

Each action seeks to meet at least one of the three Sport England aims of the Strategy; **Enhance, Provide, Protect.**

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HIGH PRIORITY SPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Analysis area	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
Bishop's Stortford	Avanti Grange Secondary School	Football	Education	The site has new football pitches that have recently been fitted but cannot be accessed as it requires a footbridge to be built over the A120. BSC FC is one of the largest clubs in the Authority and is wanting to access the provision once the pitches become accessible.	Progress the build of a footbridge over the A120 to enable community use.	The School, HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	M	M	Protect Provide
Bishop's Stortford	Bishop's Stortford College	AGP	Education	Two hockey suitable sand filled AGPs, one standard and one poor open for community use. The poor-quality pitch is used by Bishop's Stortford HC on Sundays for master's and mixed training. The school confirms that there is a sink fund in place to resurface both pitches when required.	Both pitches will need resurfacing within the lifespan of the PPOSS. As the second pitch is used by Bishop's Stortford HC and is now 13 years old, the pitch should be resurfaced to improve its quality and allow the Club to continue accessing the site.	The School, EH,	Key Centre	H	M	H	Protect Enhance
Bishop's Stortford	Bishops Stortford RFC	Rugby Union	Sports Club	Four senior pitches, two of which are rated good and two standard. The Club has recently built foundations for new changing rooms that will be meet RFU specification. It confirms that storage space is an issue despite having eight storage containers, parking is also an issue. It wishes to add solar panels and has applied for airport funding.	Support the Club in developing new changing rooms at the site. To help manage training demand on its pitches it could be suggested that the Club moves some training demand to the new WR compliant 3G pitch at The Bishop's Stortford High School.	Sports Club, RFU	Key Centre	H	S	L	Protect Enhance Provide
Bishop's Stortford	Friedberg Playing Fields	Football	Sport Club	One youth 11v11, one 9v9, one 7v7 and one 5v5. All pitches are currently poor quality. The site is maintained by BSC FC which has a seven-year lease for the clubhouse and a license agreement to access the pitches until 2027. It is considering grass pitch maintenance funding to improve the quality of the pitches. It confirms that the site does have three changing rooms with no showers. It is hesitant to invest any more into the site as it does not own it and feel uneasy after having access removed from Albury Football Ground.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime to reduce overplay. Suggest that the Club uses PitchPower and accesses GPMF to improve pitch quality. Explore refurbishing existing changing rooms to include self-contained showers to promote women's and girls' game. Support the Club is accessing new provision within the town to allow the Club to better accommodate its high demand.	Sports Club, EH Council, HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	M	M	Protect Enhance
Bishop's Stortford	Herts & Essex Sports Centre	AGP	Education	One good hockey suitable AGP that was installed in 2019 which hosts Bishop's Stortford HC which use the pitch at capacity at weekends. The site has good ancillary provision alongside the pitch. Bishop's Stortford HC states it would like a second sand dressed AGP at the site bordering the existing pitch.	Ensure there is an adequate sinking fund in place to replace the carpet when required. Stakeholders to organise a feasibility study to discuss the logistics of a second AGP at the site.	The School, EH,	Key Centre	H	M	H	Protect

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Analysis area	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
Bishop's Stortford	Hoggates Park	Football	Bishop's Stortford Town Council	The Bishop's Stortford North development will add one new adult football pitch (Hoggates Park stadia pitch) that is designed to meet ground grading regulations for Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC.	Once the pitch is installed grant access to the site for Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC. Explore the possibility to develop a stadia 11v11 3G pitch at the site as a means of supporting the 3G training need in the Analysis Area.	Town Council, FA, FF	Local site	H	M	H	Provide
Bishop's Stortford	RDA Stadium	Football	Sport Club	One good adult pitch with good ancillary facilities accessed by Bishop's Stortford FC which currently play in the Southern League Premier Division Central which is Step 3. The Club has a planning application to develop eight padel courts at the site.	Protect for non-league football. Support the Club in developing padel provision as a means of reducing the shortfall of padel courts in the Authority.	Sports Club, HFA, FF, LTA	Hub site	H	M	H	Protect Provide
Bishop's Stortford	The Bishops Stortford Sports Trust	Cricket	Sport Club/Association	Three cricket squares one of which has an accompanying NTP. The first two squares are good quality and the third is a junior square which is standard. The site is used by Bishop's Stortford CC which has planning permission to rebuild the clubhouse and is fundraising for the project. The current ancillary provision is of a good quality and services cricket, tennis, football and squash.	Sustain good quality squares and improve quality of the new junior square to reduce overplay. Look to support the Club in enhancing its clubhouse to benefit Bishop's Stortford CC, Bishop's Stortford LTC, BSC FC and Chantry Squash and Racketball Club.	The Sports Club/Association, HCCC	Hub site	H	M	L	Protect Enhance
Buntingford	Aston Tennis Courts	Tennis	Sports Club	Two good non-sports lit macadam courts available for community use and accessed by Aston Tennis Club. The Club is operating 43 members over the LTA capacity guidelines. The Club has expressed ambitions for sports lighting on its courts which if fitted would position the Club only three members over capacity.	Protect for community use. The stakeholder group should install sports lighting to the courts to improve the capacity balance.	Sports Club, LTA	Local site	H	M	M	Protect Enhance
Buntingford	Datchworth Sports Club	Rugby Union	Sports Club	Three senior pitches, one of good quality, one of standard quality and one of poor quality. Datchworth RFC is currently fundraising to refurbish its clubhouse and ancillary offering as it has had planning permission granted.	Improve poor quality pitch through an enhanced maintenance regime. Work with partners to help with the development of a new ancillary provision.	Sports Club, RFU	Key Centre	H	M	H	Protect Enhance
Buntingford	Datchworth Sports Club	Cricket	Sports Club	Two grass cricket squares, one rated poor and the other standard which also has an accompanying NTP. Site has no actual spare capacity. Datchworth CC is currently fundraising to refurbish its clubhouse and ancillary offering as it has had planning permission granted.	Work with partners to help with the development of a new ancillary provision.	Sports Club, HCCC	Key Centre	H	M	H	Protect Enhance
Buntingford	London Road Playing Fields	Football	Sport Club	One poor quality 9v9 pitch with no accompanying ancillary facilities. Buntingford Cougars FC is concerned the land will be sold and they will lose the pitch.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime. Work with stakeholders to protect pitch. If the pitch is lost ensure appropriate mitigation is provided in a suitable location.	Sports Club, HFA, FF	Local site	H	M	L	Protect

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Analysis area	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
Buntingford	The Bury	Football	Sport Club	One adult pitch, one 7v7 and two 5v5 pitches all rated standard. The site is accessed by both Buntingford Town and Buntingford Cougars. Club consultation confirms good quality ancillary provision on site with self-contained showers and toilets. The site is identified in the LFFP for an 11v11 3G pitch.	Sustain pitch quality. Given the current ancillary provision it is an ideal site to promote and grow the women's and girls' game. Look to develop an 11v11 3G pitch as to reduce the shortfalls in the Buntingford Analysis Area.	Sports Club, HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	M	H	Protect Provide
Hertford, Ware	County Hall	Football	Hertfordshire County Council	The site formerly provided four grass football pitches.	The steering group should look to reinstate the provision. If the site is lost the steering group should look to source funds for mitigation in line with NPPF.	The Council HCCC	Local site	H	M	M	Provide
Hertford, Ware	County Hall	Cricket	Hertfordshire County Council	The site formerly provided a grass cricket square and NTP.	The steering group should look to reinstate the provision. If the site is lost the steering group should look to source funds for mitigation in line with NPPF.	The Council HCCC	Local site	H	M	M	Provide
Hertford, Ware	Hartham Leisure Centre	3G	Everyone Active	Two poor small sided 3G pitches. Everyone Active are considering converting these pitches to padel courts and has a planning application in place to convert the provision.	Given the lack of usage and current state of pitches it may be beneficial for the area to explore conversion to padel with stakeholders. Given the shortfalls of 3G provision in the Hertford, Ware Analysis Area off site contributions towards an 11v11 3G pitch should be considered if the pitch is converted into padel courts.	Everyone Active, EH Council, HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	M	H	Provide
Hertford, Ware	Hartham Leisure Centre	Tennis	Everyone Active	One poor macadam court with sports lighting and community use.	Given the lack of usage and current state of pitches it may be beneficial for the area to explore conversion to padel with stakeholders.	Everyone Active, EH Council, LTA	Key Centre	H	M	H	Provide
Hertford, Ware	Hertford Cricket Club	Cricket	Sports Club	Two squares, one rated good and one standard, the latter having an NTP accompanying it. The Club shares ancillary provision with Hertford HC which states it would like to refurbish the changing rooms. The Club is in need of a new roller as its current roller is over 50 years old. The second square is of a standard quality and is overplayed.	Improve the quality of the second square to reduce overplay. Explore funding options to refurbish changing rooms that need it. Look to provide the Club with a new roller.	Sports Club, HCCC	Local site	H	M	M	Protect Enhance
Hertford, Ware	Hertford Rugby Football Club	Rugby Union	Sports Club	Five standard senior pitches two of which are sports lit. The Club does have portable sports lighting which it uses in its training area. It has had planning permission granted to refurbish its clubhouse.	Sustain pitch quality. Explore adding sports lighting to another pitch to help spread training demand better and reduce overplay. Support the Club in developing a new ancillary provision.	Sports Club, RFU	Key Centre	H	S	L	Protect Provide

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Analysis area	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
Hertford, Ware	Richard Hale School	3G	Education	One standard 11v11 3G pitch installed in 2017. Bury Rangers FC is looking to develop a classroom and kitchen at the site to deliver lessons for its youth teams and provide the school with an additional space.	Ensure an adequate pitch replacement fund is in place to replace the carpet when required. Support Bury Rangers FC in developing a new classroom to give the Club a space to deliver lessons.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	H	M	H	Protect Provide
Hertford, Ware	Simon Balle School	AGP	Education	One poor hockey suitable sand filled AGP accessed for match play and training by Hertford HC. The pitch was last resurfaced in 2012. The school states it has a sink fund in place for the pitch.	The pitch needs to be resurfaced to ensure the future of the hockey Club which is already exporting demand to Welwyn Hatfield.	The School, EH	Local site	H	S	H	Protect Enhance
Hertford, Ware	The Chauncy School	Football	Education	One adult, one youth 11v11 and one 9v9, all of which are standard. Site is identified in the 2025 LFFP as a potential option for an 11v11 3G pitch.	Sustain pitch quality. Explore the possibility of developing an 11v11 3G pitch at the site as to reduce the analysis area shortfalls.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	H	M	H	Protect Provide
Hertford, Ware	The Sele School	Football	Education	Three youth 11v11, one of which is good and two standard, one 9v9 which is good, one 7v7 which is standard and one 5v5 which is good. Site is identified in the 2025 LFFP as a potential option for an 11v11 3G pitch.	Sustain pitch quality. Explore the possibility of developing an 11v11 3G pitch at the site as to reduce the analysis area shortfalls.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	H	M	H	Protect Provide
Hertford, Ware	Ware Youth Football Club	Football	Sports Club	Two poor adult, two standard 9v9, two poor 7v7 and two 5v5 one is poor and one is good. Site is identified in the 2025 LFFP as a potential option for an 11v11 3G pitch.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime. Explore the possibility of developing an 11v11 3G pitch at the site as to reduce the analysis area shortfalls.	Sports Club, HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	M	H	Protect Provide
Hertford, Ware	Wodson Park Sports Centre	Athletics	Private	One standard eight lane 400m athletics track. It is sports lit and is open for community use. The sports lighting covers both track and field events. The track could benefit from minor repairs and cleaning before reaccréditation, however, will likely need respraying in 2026.	Ensure a sinking fund is in place for the repairs and respraying of the track.	Organisation, EA	Key Centre	H	M	M	Protect Enhance
Sawbridgeworth	Bullfields	Football	Sawbridgeworth Town Council	One poor adult pitch and one poor youth 11v11. Site is accessed by Sawbridgeworth Town FC and has actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime to create actual spare capacity.	The Council, HFA, FF	Local Site	H	S	L	Protect Enhance
Sawbridgeworth	Town Fields	Cricket	Sport Club	One standard square and outfield that is accessed by Sawbridgeworth CC. The Club is seeking to refurbish its clubhouse to make it more inclusive for women's and girls' as well as space for umpires. This plan would also include a patio for socialising. It also raises that ball striking is an issue at its site.	Support the Club in developing new changing rooms at the site and erecting a ball stopping fence.	Sports Club, HCCC	Key Centre	H	M	M	Protect Enhance Provide
Watton-at-Stone	Bramfield Playing Field	Cricket	Bramfield Parish Council	One poor quality square that is accessed by Bramfield CC. Site is overplayed due to the poor-quality square.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime to reduce overplay.	The Council, HCCC	Local Site	H	M	L	Protect Enhance

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Analysis area	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
Watton-at-Stone	Tewin Recreation Ground	Tennis	Tewin Parish Council	Two good non-sports lit artificial turf tennis courts with community use. Site is accessed by Tewin Tennis Club and is the most overcapacity tennis site in the Authority.	Sustain court quality. Install sports lights to improve the club's capacity balance.	The Council, LTA	Key Centre	H	M	M	Protect Provide
Watton-at-Stone	New site - Watton at Stone YFC	Football Padel	Sports Club	Watton at Stone YFC wants to build a new multi-sport site in the South East of the town. The main purpose is to obtain a small sided 3G pitch, however, it states a wish for a multi-sport site that could include grass pitches, padel as well as walking trails and ancillary provision. It currently has 19 teams and there is a shortfall of 3G pitches in the Watton-at-Stone Analysis Area.	The steering group should look to deliver new grass pitches, small sided 3G and ancillary provision to support Watton at Stone YFC. Considerations should also be made to install other sports or walking provision.	Sports Club, HFA, FF, LTA	Key Centre	H	H	H	Provide Enhance
-	New site	AGP	Local Authority	The East Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire and Stevenage 2025 Playing Pitch Strategies have identified the need for a new AGP.	Work with the necessary stakeholders to develop a new AGP to support the need across East Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire and Stevenage. If possible this should be in a location to allow it to service demand from all three Authorities, such as the Buntingford Analysis Area.	Local Authority EH, SE, NHDC, SBC	Key Centre	H	L	H	Provide

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BISHOP'S STORTFORD ANALYSIS AREA

Summary pitch sports (Bishop's Stortford Analysis Area)

Sport	Analysis area	Pitch type	Current capacity total in MES ^[1]	Future capacity total in MES (2043) ¹³
Football (grass)	Bishop's Stortford	Adult	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 1
Football (grass)	Bishop's Stortford	Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 2.5	Shortfall of 3
Football (grass)	Bishop's Stortford	Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 4	Shortfall of 5
Football (grass)	Bishop's Stortford	Mini 7v7	Shortfall of 1.5	Shortfall of 2.5
Football (grass)	Bishop's Stortford	Mini 5v5	At capacity	At capacity
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Adult	Spare capacity of 2.5	At capacity
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 2	Shortfall of 5
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 11	Shortfall of 14
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Mini 7v7	Spare capacity of 0.5	Shortfall of 3
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Mini 5v5	At capacity	Shortfall of 2
Football (3G)	Bishop's Stortford	11v11	Shortfall of 0.25	Shortfall of 0.25
Football (3G)	East Hertfordshire	11v11	Shortfall of 4	Shortfall of 4.75
Cricket	Bishop's Stortford	Saturday	Spare capacity of 1	Spare capacity of 1
Cricket	Bishop's Stortford	Sunday	Spare capacity of 13	Spare capacity of 13
Cricket	Bishop's Stortford	Midweek	Spare capacity of 43	Spare capacity of 37
Cricket	East Hertfordshire	Saturday	Shortfall of 29	Shortfall of 41
Cricket	East Hertfordshire	Sunday	Spare capacity of 67	Spare capacity of 67
Cricket	East Hertfordshire	Midweek	Spare capacity of 175	Spare capacity of 163
Rugby union	Bishop's Stortford	Senior	Shortfall of 11.25	Shortfall of 11.75
Rugby union	East Hertfordshire	Senior	Shortfall of 20.75	Shortfall of 21.75
Rugby league	East Hertfordshire	Senior	No demand so no provision required	No demand so no provision required
Hockey (sand AGPs)	East Hertfordshire	Full size, floodlit	An insufficient supply to meet current demand	With the AGPs provided at the Simon Balle School and Bishop's Stortford College having surpassed end of life, there is the need to provide a pitch replacement at each site in order to accommodate existing and future hockey demand.

¹³ Future demand (2043) is determined via ONS forecasts and club aspirations identified in PPS Assessment Report (2025).

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Summary non-pitch sports

Sport	Current picture	Future picture
Tennis	Braughing Tennis Club and Bishop's Stortford LTC are both currently operating within the guidelines. Bishop's Stortford LTC also has access to two padel courts at The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust that were installed in 2024 and are already nearing capacity with space for only another 30 members. Castle Park Tennis Courts have had recent investment, coupled with other community accessible courts there is a good level of supply in the Analysis Area.	Braughing Tennis Club will be three members over the guidelines should it meet future demand ambitions. Bishop's Stortford LTC has no future demand ambitions and would still have 200 spaces for new members. New padel courts will need to be installed in the analysis area to keep up with the fast growing demand in the area.
Netball	There are 28 community accessible courts in the Analysis Area. Herts & Essex Sports Centre is currently the home of the Bishop's Stortford District Netball League with six sport lit courts. New provision will be available for community use at the new Avanti Grange School.	The analysis area has the most amount of community accessible courts throughout the District with ample scope for growth.
Bowls	Havers Park Bowls Club represents the only bowls club in Bishop's Stortford Analysis Area, playing at a standard rated green. It leases the green from the Sawbridgeworth Masons and is in perpetuity until it is no longer used for bowling. Therefore, the Club do not pay anything towards the use of the land. It is currently within the capacity guidelines with spare capacity for another 28 members.	If the Club realises its growth ambitions, it will still have a spare capacity for 21 new members.
Athletics	There is currently one, four lane, 40 metre compact track at Hockerill Anglo-European College with associated long/triple jump runways/pit, High Jump fan and throws circle. Bishop's Stortford Running Club has a large membership with over 300 including triathlon, junior run and junior tri sub-sections. It also offers swimming and biking sessions to continue improving its triathlon section.	The current supply of athletics facilities is sufficient to meet future demand in the analysis area.
Golf	There are three 18-hole golf courses in the Bishop's Stortford Analysis Area. Bishop's Stortford Golf Club currently operates a waiting list suggesting unmet demand for the analysis area meaning those without a membership at the Club will have to travel to other analysis areas in the District.	If demand continues to grow in Bishop's Stortford, it will have to be exported to clubs outside of the analysis area to be accommodated as Bishop's Stortford Golf Club is currently operating a waiting list.
Water sports	Whoosh Explore Canoe Club (WECC) and Bishop's Stortford Canoe Club (BSCC) both use the River Stort for canoeing	The analysis area is well provided for in terms of water sports for future growth.

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Overarching recommendations

Sport	Priority recommendations
Football	- Protect provision. - Reintroduce community access at Albury Football Ground. - Improve pitch quality especially at key, poor quality and/or overplayed sites such as Bishop's Stortford College, Friedburg Playing Fields, Herts & Essex Sports Centre and Pearce House Playing Fields. - Consider asset transfer of sites to clubs if appropriate. - Enable use of currently unavailable sites e.g., at school sites such as Manor Fields Primary School and Hillmead primary School through the use of a community use agreement. - Look to improve the ancillary provision at relevant sites such as Friedburg Playing Fields. - Support Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC with the clubs plans to relocate to a new site at Hoggates Park. - Support Bishop's Stortford Community YFC in operating from a new site in addition to Friedberg Playing Fields to support the large amount of demand within the Club. - Ensure clubs are made aware of two new primary schools sites with community use agreements with new grass pitches.
3G pitches	- Protect provision. - Ensure the existing pitches at Birchwood High School and Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre both have sinking funds in place. - Ensure both pitches at Birchwood High School and Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre remain on the FA register to host competitive matches. - Ensure all future pitches have a sinking fund in place. - Ensure all future pitches look to be placed on the FA register to host competitive matches. - Consider installing additional provision to ensure adequate capacity for future demand and reduce the shortfall across East Hertfordshire. - Support the building of the new 3G WR complaint pitch at Bishop's Stortford High School and ensure clubs are signposted to it.
Cricket	- Protect provision. - Utilise spare capacity at Braughing Playing Fields, Thorley CC and Stocking Pelham CC. - Sustain good and standard quality pitches across the Analysis Area. - Support clubs which need assistance with development plans or replacing sight screens and covers, such as Braughing Playing Fields. - Support Bishop's Stortford CC in fundraising for its new clubhouse build.
Rugby union	- Protect provision. - Improve quality of existing provision. - Support Bishop's Stortford RFC in the building of its new ancillary provision. - Support building of a new footbridge to access new provision at Avanti Grange Secondary School. - Review the future use of Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC's current site to potentially convert the adult pitch into a senior rugby union pitch.
Rugby league	No action required.
Hockey	- Protect provision. - Ensure there is an adequate sinking fund in place to replace the pitches when required. - The two pitches at Bishop's Stortford College need to be resurfaced within the lifespan of the PPOSS. - Support Hockerill Anglo-European College in refurbishing its changing rooms to allow Bishop's Stortford HC to continue using the site for hockey.

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Sport	Priority recommendations
	Explore new pitch access for Bishop's Stortford HC to allow the Club to continue growing. An initial suggestion would be to search for AGPs with no current access for community use on Saturdays to open up to the clubs to create spare capacity, such as the pitch at Hockerill Anglo-European College.
Bowls	- Protect provision. - Sustain quality of existing provision at Havers Park Bowls Club.
Tennis/padel	- Protect provision. - Monitor the membership levels of Braughing Tennis Club and support the Club with its growth plans. - Look to build new padel provision in the Analysis Area to support the rapid growth of the sport. A potentially viable site to consider is RDA Stadium given the planning application placed by Bishop's Stortford FC to develop padel courts at the site.
Netball	- Protect provision. - Monitor levels of demand with the Bishop's Stortford District Netball League taking place at Herts & Essex Sports Centre.
Athletics	Protect provision.
Golf	- Protect provision. - Monitor the waiting list at Bishop's Stortford Golf Club.
Water sports	Protect provision.

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

BISHOP'S STORTFORD ANALYSIS AREA

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
1	Albury Football Ground	Football	Albury Parish Council	One adult pitch and one 7v7 pitch, both standard quality. Was used by BSC FC, however, Albury Parish Council removed the Clubs access mid-season due to noise complaints from local residents. It had invested a lot into this site to improve pitch and ancillary quality.	Work with the local council to reinstate the football pitches to increase the total supply of provision in the Authority.	The Council, HFA, FF	Local site	M	M	M	Provide
1	Albury Football Ground	Cricket	Albury Parish Council	Site formerly provided a grass wicket square.	Explore reinstating a cricket square to the site to increase the total number of squares in the Authority as to better support demand for cricket.	The Council, HCCC, ECB	Local site	M	M	M	Provide
2	All Saints CE Primary School	Netball	Education	One poor shale court with no community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, EN	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
10	Avanti Meadows Primary School	Netball	Education	One poor shale court with community use.	Protect for community use.	The School, EN	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
10	Avanti Meadows Primary School	Football	Education	A new primary school built which will have football pitches available for community use for the 25/26 season.	Protect for community use.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
15	Birchwood High School	Netball	Education	Six standard shale non-sports lit courts available for community use.	Protect for community use.	The School, EN	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
15	Birchwood High School	Rugby union	Education	Four poor senior pitches with no community use as the School protects them for school use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, RFU	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
15	Birchwood High School	Cricket	Education	One disused standalone NTP.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, HCCC	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
15	Birchwood High School	3G	Education	One 11v11 sports lit 3G pitch of a standard quality which was last resurfaced in 2017.	Ensure there is an adequate sinking fund in place as the carpet is nearing the end of its lifespan in 2027.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	M	S	H	Protect Enhance
16	Bishop's Stortford College	AGP	Education	Two hockey suitable sand filled AGPs, one standard and one poor open for community use. The poor-quality pitch is used by Bishop's Stortford HC on Sundays for master's and mixed training. The school confirms that there is a sink fund in place to resurface both pitches when required.	Both pitches will need resurfacing within the lifespan of the PPOSS. As the second pitch is used by Bishop's Stortford HC and is now 13 years old, the pitch should be resurfaced to improve its quality and allow the Club to continue accessing the site.	The School, EH,	Key Centre	H	M	H	Protect Enhance
16	Bishop's Stortford College	Cricket	Education	Eight good quality squares with good outfields with community use.	Protect for community use.	The School, HCCC	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
16	Bishop's Stortford College	Tennis	Education	Eight good macadam courts, four of which are sports lit which are available to community use.	Protect for community use.	The School, LTA	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
16	Bishop's Stortford College	Netball	Education	One shale and eight macadam courts, all rated good, four of which are sports lit. All are available for community use.	Protect for community use.	The School, EN	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
16	Bishop's Stortford College	Football	Education	One adult pitch, one youth 11v11, two 9v9 and three 7v7 pitches all poor quality. Pitches are open to community use and used by BSC FC on a Sunday.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime. Undertake a PitchPower report assessment of the site to then consider Grass Pitch Maintenance Funding to improve the provision.	The School, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	M	L	Protect Enhance
16	Bishop's Stortford College	Rugby union	Education	Six senior pitches and 13 junior pitches, all of which are poor.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime to enable spare capacity.	The School, RFU	Key Centre	M	M	L	Protect Enhance

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
18	Bishops Stortford RFC	Rugby union	Sports Club	Four senior pitches, two of which are rated good and two standard. The Club has recently built foundations for new changing rooms that will be meet RFU specification. It confirms that storage space is an issue despite having eight storage containers, parking is also an issue. It wishes to add solar panels and has applied for airport funding.	Support the Club in developing new changing rooms at the site. To help manage training demand on its pitches it could be suggested that the Club moves some training demand to the new WR compliant 3G pitch at The Bishop's Stortford High School.	Sports Club, RFU	Key Centre	H	S	L	Protect Enhance Provide
20	Bishops Stortford Swifts FC	Football	Sport Club	One standard adult pitch, one poor youth 11v11 and two 7v7 pitches, one good and one poor. The Club shares the site with Bishop's Stortford RFC. The Football Club is gaining a new grass stadia pitch located at a new site, Hoggates Park.	Improve poor pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime. Support Bishops Stortford Swifts FC in its relocation to Hoggates Park. Following this relocation, review the future use of this site and its role in either accommodating demand from Bishops Stortford Swifts FC or being converted to a rugby union pitch for Bishops Stortford RFC.	Sports Club, HFA, FF, RFU	Key Centre	M	M	L	Protect Provide
22	Braughing Playing Fields	Tennis	Braughing Parish Council	Two good sports lit macadam courts available for community use. The site is currently operating within the capacity guidelines, however, should future ambitions be realised they will be over.	Protect for community use. Monitor capacity levels and ensure the Club can sustain membership.	The School, LTA	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
22	Braughing Playing Fields	Football	Braughing Parish Council	Two poor 7v7 pitches with standard rated ancillary provision. The pitches have no actual spare capacity due to being accessed already at peak times and being poor quality.	Improve poor pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	Sports Club, the Council, HFA, FF	Local site	L	M	L	Protect
22	Braughing Playing Fields	Cricket	Braughing Parish Council	One standard quality square with a standard outfield with actual spare capacity Saturday, Sunday and midweek. The Club confirms that ball striking is an issue and has ambitions to erect a fence. It also states using sheets as it does not have any covers, however, these need replacing.	Utilise spare capacity. Club needs to explore funding options with stakeholders to erect a fence and obtain new covers.	The Council, HCCC	Local site	L	M	L	Protect Enhance
24	Brewery Field	Football	Furneux Pelham Parish Council	One poor adult pitch with community use and no accompanying ancillary provision. The pitch has no spare capacity as it is already accessed during peak times	Improve poor pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	Sports Club, the Council, HFA, FF	Local site	L	M	L	Protect
28	Castle Park Tennis Courts	Tennis	Sport Club	Three good non-sports lit courts available for community use.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, LTA, EH Council	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
41	Friedberg Playing Fields	Football	Sport Club	One youth 11v11, one 9v9, one 7v7 and one 5v5. All pitches are currently poor quality. The site is maintained by BSC FC which has a seven-year lease for the clubhouse and a license agreement to access the pitches until 2027. It is considering grass pitch maintenance funding to improve the quality of the pitches. It confirms that the site does have three changing rooms with no showers. It is hesitant to invest any more into the site as it does not own it and feel un easy after having access removed from Albury Football Ground.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime to reduce overplay. Suggest that the Club uses PitchPower and accesses GPMF to improve pitch quality. Explore refurbishing existing changing rooms to include self-contained showers to promote women's and girls' game. Support the Club is accessing new provision within the town to allow the Club to better accommodate its high demand.	Sports Club, HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	M	M	Protect Enhance

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
42	Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre	Football	Everyone Active	Five standard adult pitches, two poor youth 11v11 and two poor 7v7 pitches. Site is on a flood plain and is also open access so gets a lot of dog walkers and recreational use.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime to enable spare capacity. Potentially think about adding better drainage to counteract the fact the site is on a floodplain.	Sports Club, EA, EH Council, HFA, FF	Hub site	M	M	M	Protect Enhance
42	Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre	3G	Everyone Active	One 11v11 sports lit 3G pitch of a good quality which was installed in 2022. It is accompanied by good quality ancillary provision. It is not used to capacity at weekends as the site has limited parking and prioritises swimming pool users.	Utilise the spare capacity at the weekend to best support football demand and maximise revenue. Ensure a sinking fund is in place for carpet replacements when required.	EA, EH Council, HFA, FF	Hub site	M	S	L	Protect
45	Havers Park Bowls Club	Bowls	Sport Club	One standard flat green available for community use currently accessed by Havers Park Bowls Club. The site is currently operating within the capacity guidelines and will continue to do so should it be successful in recruiting new members.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, BE	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
53	Hertfordshire And Essex High School	Netball	Education	Three standard shale non-sports lit courts not available for community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, EN	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
56	Herts & Essex Sports Centre	Tennis	Education	Six standard sports lit shale courts available for community use. Overmarked with netball.	Protect for community use.	The School, LTA	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
56	Herts & Essex Sports Centre	Netball	Education	Six standard sports lit shale courts available for community use. Overmarked with tennis. The site is currently the home of the Bishop's Stortford District Netball League.	Protect for community use.	The School, EN	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
56	Herts & Essex Sports Centre	AGP	Education	One good hockey suitable AGP that was installed in 2019 which hosts Bishop's Stortford HC which use the pitch at capacity at weekends. The site has good ancillary provision alongside the pitch. Bishop's Stortford HC states it would like a second sand dressed AGP at the site bordering the existing pitch.	Ensure there is an adequate sinking fund in place to replace the carpet when required. Stakeholders to organise a feasibility study to discuss the logistics of a second AGP at the site.	The School, EH,	Key Centre	H	M	H	Protect
56	Herts & Essex Sports Centre	Football	Education	One poor youth 11v11 pitch which is overmarked with 9v9 and 5v5 pitches. The site has good ancillary provision alongside the pitch but is overplayed as it is poor quality and has a lot of demand.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime to reduce overplay.	The School, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	M	L	Protect Enhance
58	Hockerill Anglo-European College	Rugby union	Education	Two poor junior pitches with no community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, RFU	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
58	Hockerill Anglo-European College	Cricket	Education	One standard standalone NTP with no community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, HCCC	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
58	Hockerill Anglo-European College	Athletics	Education	A four lane synthetic, non-sports lit 40m compact running track.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, EA	Local site	L	S	L	Protect

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
58	Hockerill Anglo-European College	AGP	Education	One standard sand filled, hockey suitable AGP accessed by Bishop's Stortford HC. The School confirms its ancillary facilities are in major need of refurbishment, with floorboards giving in. It will need to stop allowing community access to the changing rooms if this is not addressed.	Protect the pitch for community use. Support the school with enhancing its ancillary offering via refurbishment. Look to grant access to the pitch on Saturdays as to give the Authority another useable pitch during the peak period.	The School, EH,	Local site	M	M	M	Protect Enhance
66	Manor Fields Primary School	Football	Education	Two standard 5v5 pitches. Accessed by Thorley Manor. The site has potential spare capacity of 5.5 MES across both pitches that has been discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Explore offering community use to more teams to utilise spare capacity.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
73	Northgate Primary School	Netball	Education	Two poor shale non-sports lit courts not available for community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, EN	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
77	RDA Stadium	Football	Sport Club	One good adult pitch with good ancillary facilities accessed by Bishop's Stortford FC which currently play in the Southern League Premier Division Central which is Step 3. The Club has a planning application to develop eight padel courts at the site.	Protect for non-league football. Support the Club in developing padel provision as a means of reducing the shortfall of padel courts in the Authority.	Sports Club, HFA, FF, LTA	Hub site	H	M	H	Protect Provide
81	Saint Mary's Catholic School	Tennis	Education	Six poor shale non-sports lit courts not available for community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, LTA	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
81	Saint Mary's Catholic School	Football	Education	Two standard 5v5 pitches with no community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
91	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	Netball	Education	Two poor shale non-sports lit courts not available for community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, EN	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
91	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	Football	Education	One standard 7v7 pitch with community use. The school pitch has actual spare capacity of 1 MES as it has a community use agreement in place.	Suggest actual spare capacity is utilised.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	M	S	L	Protect
101	The Bishop's Stortford High School	Netball	Education	Three good shale courts which are not sports lit but are open for community use.	Protect for community use.	The School, EN	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
101	The Bishop's Stortford High School	Tennis	Education	Four good shale courts which are not sports lit but are open for community use.	Protect for community use.	The School, LTA	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
101	The Bishop's Stortford High School	Football	Education	One adult, one youth 11v11 and one 9v9 pitch, all of which are standard. The School will be getting a new 11v11 WR 3G pitch that will be ready for the 25/26 season. The site is outlined to be accessed by Harlow RFC and Saracens RFC and will therefore contribute 0.75 of a pitch towards the 1:38 model.	Suggest actual spare capacity is utilised. Utilise the 11v11 3G pitch to support the football training need.	The School, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	M	H	Protect
101	The Bishop's Stortford High School	Rugby union	Education	One standard junior pitch. The School will be getting a new WR 3G pitch that will be ready for the 25/26 season. The site is outlined to be accessed by Harlow RFC and Saracens RFC and will therefore contribute 0.75 of a pitch towards the 1:38 model.	Utilise spare capacity. Utilise the WR 3G pitch to support the rugby union training need.	The School, RFU	Key Centre	M	S	H	Protect
103	The Bishops Stortford Sports Trust	Tennis Padel	Sport Club/ Association	Two good clay courts, five good artificial turf courts, three macadam courts and six standard grass courts. All of the courts are sports lit other than the grass courts. The site also has two good padel courts that were installed in 2024.	Protect for community use. Look to support the Club in enhancing its clubhouse to benefit Bishop's Stortford CC, Bishop's Stortford LTC and BSC FC.	Sports Club, the Association, LTA	Hub site	M	S	L	Protect Enhance

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
				The site is accessed by Bishop's Stortford LTC which is operating within the LTA capacity guidelines. The Club has 120 padel members and states once it reaches 150 members it will be at capacity. The Club uses both the main clubhouse servicing the cricket square and its own building with a kitchen and social space.							
103	The Bishops Stortford Sports Trust	Football	Sport Club/ Association	One standard youth 11v11 pitch which is accessed by BSC FC used at capacity. The site offers good ancillary provision, however, is fundraising to refurbish its clubhouse.	Protect for community use. Look to support the Club in enhancing its clubhouse to benefit Bishop's Stortford CC, Bishop's Stortford LTC and BSC FC.	Sports Club, the Association, HFA, FF	Hub site	M	S	L	Protect Enhance
103	The Bishops Stortford Sports Trust	Cricket	Sport Club/ Association	Three cricket squares one of which has an accompanying NTP. The first two squares are good quality and the third is a junior square which is standard. The site is used by Bishop's Stortford CC which has planning permission to rebuild the clubhouse and is fundraising for the project. The current ancillary provision is of a good quality and services cricket, tennis, football and squash.	Sustain good quality squares and improve quality of the new junior square to reduce overplay. Look to support the Club in enhancing its clubhouse to benefit Bishop's Stortford CC, Bishop's Stortford LTC, BSC FC and Chantry Squash and Racketball Club.	The Sports Club/Association, HCCC	Hub site	H	M	L	Protect Enhance
109	Thorley Cricket Club	Cricket	Sports Club	One good cricket square with actual spare capacity Sunday and midweek. The site had a poor quality ancillary provision during the 2024 season. HCCC has confirmed that work has begun building a new clubhouse to service the site.	Utilise spare capacity. Support the Club in completing the development of its new clubhouse.	The School, HCCC	Local site	M	S	H	Protect Enhance Provide
124	Windhill 21 Primary School	Netball	Education	One poor shale court with no community use or sports lighting.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, EN	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
136	Stocking Pelham Cricket Club	Cricket	Sports Club	One standard cricket square with actual spare capacity midweek.	Utilise spare capacity.	The School, HCCC	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
139	Pearce House Playing Fields	Football	Education	Two youth 9v9 pitches both poor quality. The site belongs to Birchwood High School and is accessed by BSC FC.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	The School, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	M	L	Protect Enhance
142	Hillmead Primary School	Football	Education	One standard 5v5 pitch with community use which has potential spare capacity of three MES and is not currently accessed for affiliated demand. Spare capacity has been discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Has no current demand outside of school use. Suggest using spare capacity to reduce overplay at other sites.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
143	Richard Whittington Primary School	Football	Education	One standard 7v7 pitch with no community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
165	Little Hadham Cricket Club	Cricket	Sports Club	The site formerly provided a grass wicket square. Little Hadham CC now use Thorley Cricket Club for home games.	Explore reinstating a cricket square to the site to increase the total number of squares in the Authority as to better support demand for cricket.	The Council, HCCC, ECB	Local site	M	M	M	Provide
168	Avanti Grange Secondary School	Football	Education	The site has new football pitches that have recently been fitted but cannot be accessed as it requires a footbridge to be built over the A120. BSC FC is one of the largest clubs in the Authority and is wanting to access the provision once the pitches become accessible.	Progress the build of a footbridge over the A120 to enable community use.	The School, HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	M	M	Protect Provide
168	Avanti Grange Secondary School	Tennis	Education	Four standard sports lit shale courts that are open for community use.	Protect for community use.	The School, LTA	Local site	L	S	L	Protect

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
168	Avanti Grange Secondary School	Netball	Education	Three standard shale sports lit courts available for community use.	Protect for community use.	The School, EN	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
168	Avanti Grange Secondary School	Rugby union	Education	One standard junior pitch. Newly built school with no community access to the pitches currently as a bridge needs building.	Build a footbridge over the A120 to enable community use.	The School, RFU	Key Centre	M	M	H	Protect Enhance
173	Bishop's Stortford Golf Club	Golf	Sports Club	The Club offers an 18 hole course, 10 bay driving range and a range of good ancillary facilities for its members. Bishop's Stortford Golf Club currently operates a waiting list suggesting unmet demand.	Protect for community use. Monitor waiting list.	Sports Club, England Golf	Local site	M	S	L	Protect
174	East Herts Golf Club	Golf	Sports Club	One members owned, 18-hole golf course.	Sustain course quality.	Sports Club, EG	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
176	Ash Valley Golf Club	Golf	Sports Club	An 18-hole and par 3 short course offering the cheapest membership in East Hertfordshire and the only club to offer membership under the national average of £1,071.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, EG	Local Site	L	S	L	Protect
-	Avanti Brook Primary School	Football	Education	A new primary school built which will have football pitches available for community use for the 25/26 season.	Protect for community use.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
-	River Stort	Water sports	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority	Whoosh Explore Canoe Club (WECC) and Bishop's Stortford Canoe Club (BSCC) both use the River Stort for canoeing	Utilise to full capacity	Sports Club, Paddle UK	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
-	Hoggates Park	Football	Bishop's Stortford Town Council	The Bishop's Stortford North development will add one new adult football pitch (Hoggates Park stadia pitch) that is designed to meet ground grading regulations for Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC.	Once the pitch is installed grant access to the site for Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC. Explore the possibility to develop a stadia 11v11 3G pitch at the site as a means of supporting the 3G training need in the Analysis Area.	Town Council, FA, FF	Local site	H	M	H	Provide

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BUNTINGFORD ANALYSIS AREA

Summary pitch sports (Buntingford Analysis Area)

Sport	Analysis area	Pitch type	Current capacity total in MES ^[1]	Future capacity total in MES (2043) ¹⁴
Football (grass)	Buntingford	Adult	Spare capacity of 2	Spare capacity of 2
Football (grass)	Buntingford	Youth 11v11	At capacity	Shortfall of 0.5
Football (grass)	Buntingford	Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 1.5	Shortfall of 2
Football (grass)	Buntingford	Mini 7v7	Spare capacity of 2.5	Spare capacity of 2
Football (grass)	Buntingford	Mini 5v5	Shortfall of 1	Shortfall of 1.5
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Adult	Spare capacity of 2.5	At capacity
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 2	Shortfall of 5
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 11	Shortfall of 14
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Mini 7v7	Spare capacity of 0.5	Shortfall of 3
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Mini 5v5	At capacity	Shortfall of 2
Football (3G)	Buntingford	11v11	Shortfall of 1.25	Shortfall of 1.5
Football (3G)	East Hertfordshire	11v11	Shortfall of 4	Shortfall of 4.75
Cricket	Buntingford	Saturday	Spare capacity of 2	Spare capacity of 2
Cricket	Buntingford	Sunday	Spare capacity of 14	Spare capacity of 14
Cricket	Buntingford	Midweek	Spare capacity of 38	Spare capacity of 38
Cricket	East Hertfordshire	Saturday	Shortfall of 29	Shortfall of 41
Cricket	East Hertfordshire	Sunday	Spare capacity of 67	Spare capacity of 67
Cricket	East Hertfordshire	Midweek	Spare capacity of 175	Spare capacity of 163
Rugby union	Buntingford	Senior	Shortfall of 8.5	Shortfall of 8.5
Rugby union	East Hertfordshire	Senior	Shortfall of 20.75	Shortfall of 21.75
Rugby league	East Hertfordshire	Senior	No demand so no provision required	No demand so no provision required
Hockey (sand AGPs)	East Hertfordshire	Full size, floodlit	An insufficient supply to meet current demand	With the AGPs at Simon Balle School and Bishop's Stortford College having surpassed end of life, there is a need to provide a pitch replacement at each.

^[1] MES – match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket)

¹⁴ Future demand (2043) is determined via ONS forecasts and club aspirations identified in PPS Assessment Report (2025).

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Summary non-pitch sports

Sport	Current picture	Future picture
Tennis	Datchworth Tennis Club and Standon & Puckeridge LTC is currently operating within the capacity guidelines. Aston Tennis Club are currently 43 members over the recommended guidelines as it has two non-sports lit courts. Both Datchworth Tennis Club and Aston Tennis Club have expressed demand for sports lighting on its courts.	If future demand ambitions from Datchworth Tennis Club and Standon & Puckeridge LTC, both clubs will still operate within the guidelines. If the aforementioned clubs were to obtain new sports lighting it would bring Aston Tennis Club closer to the recommended guidelines and give Datchworth Tennis Club scope to greatly increase its membership.
Netball	There are five courts available for community use and eight which are not. There are currently no leagues taking place in the analysis area suggesting demand is exported to other analysis areas.	The assessment suggests that there is a future need for improvements to the recreational supply and recreational access (aligned to England Netball participation schemes).
Bowls	There are four bowling greens in the Buntingford Analysis Area, three of which are good and one standard. Buntingford BC is currently operating well above the recommended Bowls England membership guidelines meaning there is no room for growth at the Club. Datchworth is also operating over the guidelines whilst Standon & Puckeridge Bowling Green have spare capacity.	Across the analysis area there is a shortfall meaning growth is limited. This would see newcomers having to export to other areas.
Athletics	No provision exists in the analysis area. All demand is exported outside of the area.	Considerations should be made for the installation of play, mini, compact or active tracks as to provide the district with some form of athletics provision.
Golf	There are two 18-hole golf courses in the Buntingford Analysis Area.	This is a sufficient supply for the analysis area to accommodate future demand.
Water sports	No provision identified.	No provision identified.

Overarching recommendations

Sport	Priority recommendations
Football	◆ Protect provision. ◆ Work with Buntingford Cougars and landowners to protect the pitch at London Road Playing Fields or to mitigate the loss. ◆ Improve pitch quality especially at key, poor quality and/or overplayed sites such as London Road Playing Fields, Ware Lions FC (Thundridge) and Walkern Sports & Community Centre. ◆ Consider asset transfer of sites to clubs if appropriate, Thundridge sports Ground currently has no teams accessing it for formal demand and could be offered to a club. ◆ Improve changing and other facilities where required, such as the ancillary provision at Thundridge Sports Ground. ◆ Look to obtain more formal community use agreements for Watton YFC which are currently nomadic and access several sites in the analysis area, such as Aston Playing Field and Aston St Mary's VA School. ◆ Explore more formal community use agreements at education sites to secure future use for football demand.

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Sport	Priority recommendations
	Where possible look to develop new provision as a means of meeting the demand for football in the analysis area.
3G pitches	- Support the development of the new 11v11 3G pitch being installed at Freman College. - Look to increase the number of 11v11 size 3G pitches as to address the current theoretical shortfall of 1.25 pitches, with The Bury as a potential suitable site. - Explore option to install the small sided 3G pitch at Norfolk Road Playing Field, highlighted by Buntingford Town Council, should the steering group all agree. - Ensure all future pitches have a sinking fund in place. - Ensure all future pitches look to be placed on the FA register to host competitive matches. - Given the size of the analysis area, consider accessing 3G provision in neighbouring analysis areas such as Watton-at-Stone and Hertford, Ware.
Cricket	- Protect provision. - Utilise spare capacity at sites such as Thundridge Sports Ground, Walkern Sports & Community Centre and Freman College. - Improve existing provision at Datchworth CC to enhance square quality and reduce overplay. - Improve the ancillary provision of sites where necessary such as Aston CC. - Support Datchworth CC with the fundraising of its new clubhouse build.
Rugby union	- Improve quality of existing provision, with Datchworth RFC and Datchworth Village hall outlined as the priority sites. - Work with key stakeholders to help with fundraising ideas or other ways to support Datchworth RFC in the building of its new clubhouse.
Rugby league	No action required.
Hockey	- Discuss potential conversion of small sided AGP to 3G at Norfolk Road Playing Fields with key stakeholders. - Resurface the pitch at St Edmunds College & Prep School within the lifespan of the PPOSS. - Explore opening the pitch at St Edmunds College & Prep School for community use
Bowls	- Protect provision. - Sustain good and standard quality of existing provision. - Ensure clubs such as Buntingford and Datchworth, with capacity issues manage access to its greens effectively. - Utilise actual spare capacity at Standon & Puckeridge Bowling Green.
Tennis	- Protect provision. - Ensure clubs with capacity issues manage access to its courts effectively, with Aston Tennis Club as a key site which is operating over the LTA recommended guidelines currently. This will be exacerbated if Club ambitions are achieved. - Discuss the conversion of Norfolk Road Playing Fields AGP to 3G as this would mean the loss of three tennis courts. - Support Datchworth Tennis Club and Aston Tennis Club ambitions for the installation of sports lighting on its courts.
Netball	Protect provision.
Athletics	Considerations should be made for the installation of play, mini, compact or active tracks as to provide the district with some form of athletics provision.
Golf	Protect provision.
Water sports	No action required.

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

BUNTINGFORD ANALYSIS AREA

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
5	Aston Bowls Club	Bowls	Sports Club	One good flat green with good ancillary facilities.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, BE	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
6	Aston Cricket Club (Herts)	Cricket	Sports Club	One standard rated square and outfield alongside poor ancillary facilities. Site has spare capacity for midweek cricket.	Utilise actual spare capacity.	Sports Club, HCCC	Local site	M	S	L	Protect
7	Aston Playing Field	Football	Aston Village Hall Committee	Two community available standard 7v7 pitches. One pitch has actual spare capacity of 0.5 MES The pitches are accessed by Watton YFC on a monthly rental basis.	Sustain pitch quality. Utilise spare capacity. Seek a more formal community use agreement.	Committee, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
8	Aston St Mary's VA School	Football	Education	Two poor 7v7 pitches available to community use. The pitches are accessed by Watton YFC on a monthly rental basis.	Sustain pitch quality. A formal security of tenure agreement should be sought with the Club to secure its use.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
8	Aston St Mary's VA School	Netball	Education	One poor shale court with no sports lighting or community use.	Protect for community use.	The School, EN	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
9	Aston Tennis Courts	Tennis	Sports Club	Two good non-sports lit macadam courts available for community use and accessed by Aston Tennis Club. The Club is operating 43 members over the LTA capacity guidelines. The Club has expressed ambitions for sports lighting on its courts which if fitted would position the Club only three members over capacity.	Protect for community use. The stakeholder group should install sports lighting to the courts to improve the capacity balance.	Sports Club, LTA	Local site	H	M	M	Protect Enhance
14	Benington Recreation Ground	Football	Sport Club	One poor youth 11v11 and one poor 9v9 pitch.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	Sports Club, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect Enhance
26	Buntingford Bowls Club	Bowls	Sports Club	One good flat green with good ancillary facilities. The green has no spare capacity as it is currently over by 81 members. It has no scope to grow and has no future demand ambitions.	Protect for community use. Monitor activity levels of club and ensure the green is continuing to cope with the level of demand it gets.	Sports Club, BE	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
31	Cottered Playing Field	Football	Cottered & Throcking Parish Council	One standard adult pitch and one standard youth 11v11 pitch.	Sustain pitch quality.	The Council, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
31	Cottered Playing Field	Cricket	Cottered & Throcking Parish Council	Site formerly provided a grass wicket square and is now has two football pitches marked.	Explore reinstating a cricket square to the site to increase the total number of squares in the Authority as to better support demand for cricket.	The Council, HCCC, ECB	Local site	M	M	M	Provide
36	Datchworth All Saints C Of Primary School	Football	Education	Three standard 5v5 pitches open to community use and is accessed by Watton YFC. Actual spare capacity has been discounted across the pitches due to unsecure tenure.	Sustain pitch quality. Seek a formal community use agreement with the School to obtain actual spare capacity.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
36	Datchworth All Saints C Of Primary School	Netball	Education	One poor shale court with no sports lighting or community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, EN	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
37	Datchworth Bowls Club	Bowls	Sports Club	One standard flat green with good ancillary facilities. The Club is currently operating over the recommended capacity guidelines by ten members and consequently, has no future demand ambitions.	Protect for community use. Monitor activity levels of club and ensure the green is continuing to cope with the level of demand it gets.	Sports Club, BE	Local site	L	L	L	Protect

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
38	Datchworth Sports Club	Cricket	Sports Club	Two grass cricket squares, one rated poor and the other standard which also has an accompanying NTP. Site has no actual spare capacity. Datchworth CC is currently fundraising to refurbish its clubhouse and ancillary offering as it has had planning permission granted.	Work with partners to help with the development of a new ancillary provision.	Sports Club, HCCC	Key Centre	H	M	H	Protect Enhance
38	Datchworth Sports Club	Rugby union	Sports Club	Three senior pitches, one of good quality, one of standard quality and one of poor quality. Datchworth RFC is currently fundraising to refurbish its clubhouse and ancillary offering as it has had planning permission granted.	Improve poor quality pitch through an enhanced maintenance regime. Work with partners to help with the development of a new ancillary provision.	Sports Club, RFU	Key Centre	H	M	H	Protect Enhance
38	Datchworth Sports Club	Tennis	Sports Club	Two good macadam non-sports lit courts with actual spare capacity for 34 new members currently and in the future should the Club realise growth ambitions. It would however, come close to the recommended guidelines. The Club has expressed a need for sports lighting on its courts.	Protect for community use. Explore the installation of sports lighting to improve the Clubs capacity for future growth.	Sports Club, LTA	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
39	Edwinstree C Of E Middle School	Cricket	Education	One standard standalone NTP with no community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, HCCC	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
39	Edwinstree C Of E Middle School	Football	Education	One standard 9v9 pitch with community use. Spare capacity has been discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Sustain pitch quality.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
39	Edwinstree C Of E Middle School	Netball	Education	Three poor shale courts with no sports lighting or community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, EN	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
40	Freman College	Cricket	Education	One standard grass square and outfield accessed by Reed CC, a North Herts cricket club. The site has actual spare capacity across Saturday, Sunday and midweek.	Sustain pitch quality.	The School, HCCC	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
40	Freman College	Football	Education	One good adult and one good youth 11v11 pitch. The School will be getting a new 11v11 WR 3G pitch that will be ready for the 25/26 season.	Sustain pitch quality. Utilise the 11v11 3G pitch to support the football training need.	The School, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	S	L	Protect
40	Freman College	Rugby union	Education	Two good senior pitches which are not open for community use.	Sustain pitch quality.	The School, RFU	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
40	Freman College	Tennis	Education	Three poor non-sports lit shale courts	Protect for curricular use.	The School, LTA	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
40	Freman College	Netball	Education	Three poor non-sports lit shale courts	Protect for curricular use.	The School, EN	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
59	Horseman's Meadow	Football	Great Munder Parish Council	Site formerly provided one adult football pitch.	Reinstate the football pitches to increase the total supply of provision in the Authority.	The Council, HFA, FF	Local site	M	M	M	Provide
64	Little Munden Cricket Club	Cricket	Sports Club	One standard grass square and outfield. Small village club that has spare capacity for midweek play.	Sustain pitch quality.	The School, HCCC	Local site	L	S	L	Protect

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
65	London Road Playing Fields	Football	Sport Club	One poor quality 9v9 pitch with no accompanying ancillary facilities. Buntingford Cougars FC is concerned the land will be sold and they will lose the pitch.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime. Work with stakeholders to protect pitch. If the pitch is lost ensure appropriate mitigation is provided in a suitable location.	Sports Club, HFA, FF	Local site	H	M	L	Protect
72	Norfolk Road Playing Fields	Football	Buntingford Town Council	Site formerly provided one adult pitch and is now used as a cricket square. Site has a good quality ancillary provision.	Look to re-instate the football pitch as to increase the total supply of football provision in the Authority.	Buntingford Town Council, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	M	M	Provide
72	Norfolk Road Playing Fields	Cricket	Buntingford Town Council	One standard grass square and outfield that is accessed by both Buntingford CC and Hare Street & Hornead CC with no spare capacity.	Sustain pitch quality.	Buntingford Town Council, HCCC	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
72	Norfolk Road Playing Fields	AGP	Buntingford Town Council	One standard small sided (51m x 32m) hockey suitable AGP. Primarily used for affiliated football training and recreational use. Consultation with Buntingford Cougars highlights the possibility of the Council converting the pitch to 3G.	Discuss a potential conversion to 3G to address shortfall in Analysis Area. Ensure there is a sink fund to replace or convert the pitch surface when it has surpassed its lifespan. Freman School is getting a 11v11 3G which is neighbours the site.	Buntingford Town Council, EH, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	M	H	Protect
72	Norfolk Road Playing Fields	Tennis	Buntingford Town Council	Three courts overmarked on the small sided AGP. Buntingford Town Council were proposing to convert this pitch to a 3G pitch.	Discuss a potential conversion to 3G to address shortfall in Analysis Area. Ensure there is a sinking fund to replace the carpet which has surpassed its lifespan. Freman School is getting a 11v11 3G which neighbours the site.	Sports Club, LTA	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
76	Ralph Sadleir School	Football	Education	One standard 9v9, three good 7v7s and two 5v5s, one good and one poor. The site does have spare capacity on all pitches which was discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Provide a more formal lease agreement to the club to enable actual spare capacity.	The School, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	S	L	Protect
76	Ralph Sadleir School	Netball	Education	Two standard shale courts with community use but no sports lighting.	Protect for community use.	The School, EN	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
86	Seth Ward Community Centre	Football	Buntingford Town Council	One adult and one youth 11v11 pitch, both of which are standard. The adult pitch has actual spare capacity of 0.5 MES.	Sustain pitch quality.	The Council, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
90	St Edmunds College & Prep School	Cricket	Education	One standard grass square and outfield and two standalone NTPs with no community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, HCCC	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
90	St Edmunds College & Prep School	Football	Education	Two good adult pitches and two good youth 11v11 pitches accessed by Bully's Crusaders and Watton YFC. Spare capacity has been discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Sustain pitch quality.	The School, HFA, FF	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
90	St Edmunds College & Prep School	Rugby union	Education	Two good senior pitches open to community use with spare capacity of four MES across both pitches discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Sustain pitch quality.	The School, RFU	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
90	St Edmunds College & Prep School	Tennis	Education	Six standard macadam non-sports lit courts not available for community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, LTA	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
90	St Edmunds College & Prep School	Netball	Education	Three standard sports lit macadam courts with no community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, EN	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
90	St Edmunds College & Prep School	AGP	Education	One standard hockey suitable sand filled AGP that is not open for community use.	The pitch will need to be resurfaced within the lifespan of the PPOSS. Explore options to open the pitch up to Hertford HC to allow hockey to grow in the analysis area.	The School, EH	Key Centre	M	M	H	Protect Enhance
98	Standon Memorial Playing Field	Football	Standon Parish Council	One poor youth 11v11 pitch with standard ancillary facilities, accessed by Standon & Puckeridge Hares FC and Standon & Puckeridge Vets. The pitch is used at capacity.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	The Council, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect Enhance
104	The Bury	Football	Sport Club	One adult pitch, one 7v7 and two 5v5 pitches all rated standard. The site is accessed by both Buntingford Town and Buntingford Cougars. Club consultation confirms good quality ancillary provision on site with self-contained showers and toilets. The site is identified in the LFFP for an 11v11 3G pitch.	Sustain pitch quality. Given the current ancillary provision it is an ideal site to promote and grow the women's and girls' game. Look to develop an 11v11 3G pitch as to reduce the shortfalls in the Buntingford Analysis Area.	Sports Club, HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	M	H	Protect Provide
107	The Meads	Football	Hormead Parish Council	Site formerly provided one adult, one youth 11v11, one youth 9v9, two mini 7v7 and one mini 5v5 pitch. The site is now accessible open space. The site has a basic metal container servicing the grass pitches.	Look to re-instate the provision to increase the total supply of football pitches in the Authority.	Hormead Parish Council HFA, FF	Local site	M	M	M	Provide
107	The Meads	Cricket	Hormead Parish Council	Site formerly provided one cricket square and is now accessible open space. The site has a basic metal container servicing the grass pitches.	Look to re-instate the provision to increase the total supply of cricket squares in the Authority.	Hormead Parish Council HCCC	Local site	M	M	M	Provide
111	Thundridge Sports Ground	Cricket	Sports Club	One standard grass square and outfield which was previously accessed by Thundridge CC which has now folded. Consequently, there is no current demand on the square with actual spare capacity Saturday, Sunday and midweek.	Utilise actual spare capacity.	Sports Club, HCCC	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
111	Thundridge Sports Ground	Football	Thundridge Parish Council	One adult and two standard 7v7s pitches with poor ancillary provision. Site is un-used and has actual spare capacity. The site has a basic poor quality ancillary provision.	Improve ancillary provision to facilitate re-introducing demand to the site. Utilise actual spare capacity. Consider granting a Club a lease agreement to use the site as a new home ground.	The Council, HFA, FF	Local site	M	M	H	Protect Enhance Provide
113	Walkern School	Football	Education	One standard 7v7 pitch accessed by AFC Walkern. The pitch has had spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Sustain pitch quality. Seek a formal community use agreement with the School to obtain actual spare capacity.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
118	Ware Lions FC	Football	Sport Club	One standard youth 11v11, one standard 9v9, one standard 7v7 and one poor 5v5 with standard ancillary provision. The 5v5 and the 9v9 area overplayed by one and 0.5 MES respectively whilst the youth 11v11 is at capacity and the 7v7 has no actual spare capacity due to already having 2.5 MES of demand.	Sustain pitch quality and improve 5v5 quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	Sports Club, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	M	L	Protect
122	Westmill Recreation Ground	Football	Westmill Parish Council	One standard adult pitch with poor ancillary provision.	Improve ancillary provision.	The Council, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
127	Walkern Sports & Community Centre	Cricket	Sports Club	One standard grass square and outfield accessed by Ardeley Walkern CC with spare capacity across Saturday, Sunday and midweek.	Utilise actual spare capacity.	Sports Club, HCCC	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
127	Walkern Sports & Community Centre	Football	Walkern Parish Council	One poor adult pitch and one poor 9v9 with standard ancillary provision. The adult pitch is overplayed by 0.5 MES and the youth 9v9 is used at capacity.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	The Council, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect Enhance
129	Aspenden Standon & Puckeridge Cricket Club	Cricket	Sports Club	One standard grass square and outfield accessed by Aspenden, Standon and Puckeridge Cricket Club with spare capacity for midweek cricket.	Sustain pitch quality.	Sports Club, HCCC	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
134	Standon & Puckeridge Lawn Tennis Club	Tennis	Sports Club	Three good artificial turf sports lit courts with good ancillary provision. The Club has space for 25 new members currently and has not stated any demand for future growth.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, LTA	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
135	Standon & Puckeridge Bowling Green	Bowls	Sports Club	One good flat green with good ancillary facilities. The green has actual spare capacity for 37 new members currently and 27 should future ambitions be realised.	Protect for community use. Utilise actual spare capacity especially if the other bowls club are turning newcomers away, they should be signposted here where they can be accommodated.	Sports Club, BE	Local site	L	L	L	Protect
148	Thundridge Primary School	Football	Education	One poor 5v5 pitch which is not currently accessed for football demand. Spare capacity has been discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect Enhance
166	Layston C of E First School	Football	Education	One poor 7v7 pitch accessed by Buntingford Cougars and is used at capacity.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect Enhance
170	Datchworth Village Hall	Rugby union	Sports Club	One standard senior pitch that is accessed by Datchworth RFC for training and junior match play that is overplayed by 5.5 MES.	Sustain pitch quality.	Sports Club, RFU	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
175	Whitehill Golf Club	Golf	Sports Club	One 18-hole golf course with 12 driving range bays.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, EG	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
178	Hanbury Manor Golf Club	Golf	Sports Club	One 18-hole golf course with eight driving range bays.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, EG	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
-	New site	AGP	Local Authority	The East Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire and Stevenage 2025 Playing Pitch Strategies have identified the need for a new AGP	Work with the necessary stakeholders to develop a new AGP to support the need across East Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire and Stevenage. If possible this should be located in a location to allow it to service demand from all three Authorities, such as the Buntingford Analysis Area.	Local Authority EH, SE, NHDC, SBC	Key Centre	H	L	H	Provide

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HERTFORD, WARE ANALYSIS AREA

Summary pitch sports (Hertford, Ware Analysis Area)

Sport	Analysis area	Pitch type	Current capacity total in MES ^[1]	Future capacity total in MES (2043) ¹⁵
Football (grass)	Hertford, Ware	Adult	Spare capacity of 1	Shortfall of 1
Football (grass)	Hertford, Ware	Youth 11v11	Spare capacity of 1	Shortfall of 1
Football (grass)	Hertford, Ware	Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 6	Shortfall of 7.5
Football (grass)	Hertford, Ware	Mini 7v7	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 2.5
Football (grass)	Hertford, Ware	Mini 5v5	At capacity	Shortfall of 1.5
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Adult	Spare capacity of 2.5	At capacity
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 2	Shortfall of 5
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 11	Shortfall of 14
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Mini 7v7	Spare capacity of 0.5	Shortfall of 3
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Mini 5v5	At capacity	Shortfall of 2
Football (3G)	Hertford, Ware	11v11	Shortfall of 2.5	Shortfall of 3
Football (3G)	East Hertfordshire	11v11	Shortfall of 4	Shortfall of 4.75
Cricket	Hertford, Ware	Saturday	Shortfall of 10	Shortfall of 22
Cricket	Hertford, Ware	Sunday	Spare capacity of 14	Spare capacity of 14
Cricket	Hertford, Ware	Midweek	Spare capacity of 44	Spare capacity of 38
Cricket	East Hertfordshire	Saturday	Shortfall of 29	Shortfall of 41
Cricket	East Hertfordshire	Sunday	Spare capacity of 67	Spare capacity of 67
Cricket	East Hertfordshire	Midweek	Spare capacity of 175	Spare capacity of 163
Rugby union	Hertford, Ware	Senior	Shortfall of 1	Shortall of 1.5
Rugby union	East Hertfordshire	Senior	Shortfall of 20.75	Shortall of 21.75
Rugby league	East Hertfordshire	Senior	No demand so no provision required	No demand so no provision required

^[1] MES – match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket)

¹⁵ Future demand (2043) is determined via ONS forecasts and club aspirations identified in PPS Assessment Report (2025).

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Sport	Analysis area	Pitch type	Current capacity total in MES ^[1]	Future capacity total in MES (2043) ¹⁵
Hockey (sand AGPs)	East Hertfordshire	Full size, floodlit	An insufficient supply to meet current demand	With the AGPs at the Simon Balle School and Bishop's Stortford College having surpassed end of life, there is the need to provide a pitch replacement at each site in order to accommodate existing and future hockey demand.

Summary non-pitch sports

Sport	Current picture	Future picture
Tennis	Four clubs currently operating in the Analysis Area, Hertford LTC, Legends Tennis Club, St Margaretsbury Tennis Club and Allenburys Sports & Social Club. All clubs are currently operating within the recommended capacity guidelines. Hartham Leisure centre has a single poor macadam court that has no demand.	Only Legends Tennis Club has stated future demand ambitions and would still be well within the recommended guidelines.
Netball	There are currently 14 community accessible courts with five not accessible. The Presdales School currently hosts the Hertford and District League which has strong membership with four good macadam courts.	There is a good level of sports lit and community available courts to meet future levels of demand in the analysis area.
Bowls	Five clubs in the analysis area, with no poor greens or ancillary facilities highlighted. Hertford Castle Bowls Club which is shared by Hertford Bowls Club and Hertford Castle Bowls Club is over the BE recommended guidelines by 69 members. Bengeo BC and Sele Farm both have spare capacity currently.	Hertford Bowls Club and Hertford Castle Bowls Club will continue to operate over Bowls England capacity guidelines in future and cannot grow. However, Bengeo BC and Sele Farm both have spare capacity should future demand ambitions be realised.
Athletics	One standard eight lane 400m athletics track, The Stuart Storey Track. It is sports lit and is open for community use. The sports lighting covers both track and field events. The track could benefit from minor repairs and cleaning before reaccreditation, however, will likely need respraying in 2026. Herts Phoenix AC reports it is operating a waiting list and wants to continue to grow its membership.	The track will need to be resprayed in 2026 to continue to service future demand.

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Sport	Current picture	Future picture
Golf	There are two 18-hole golf courses in the Hertford, Ware Analysis Area.	If demand continues to grow, membership levels should be monitored to ensure all courses can accommodate the new levels of demand.
Water sports	Abbotts Lake is a 25-acre lake based in Stanstead Abbots in East Hertfordshire. The lake caters for various water sports including yachting and canoeing. The Lake forms part of the Lea Valley Regional Park. Ware Priory Lido offers a 30m main pool as well as a teaching pool and ancillary provision for its users which includes changing facilities as well as food and drink offerings. Herts Canoe Club access the River Lea for various forms of water sports such as canoeing, paddling and kayaking.	There is adequate supply to cater for future demand.

Overarching recommendations

Sport	Priority recommendations
Football	- Protect provision. - Improve pitch quality especially at key, poor quality and/or overplayed sites such as Presdales School, Ware YFC and Hartham Common & Kingsmead. - Utilise actual spare capacity. - Support Hertford Heath FC in improving its pitch to comply with ground grading regulations so it can use its home pitch for league games and not have to export to St Margaretsbury FC. - Explore potential conversion of St Margaretsbury FC main pitch to 3G 11v11 to reduce the shortfall in the Analysis Area. - Explore potentially handing over Presdales Recreation Ground to Bury Rangers FC to manage.
3G pitches	- Look to increase the number of 3G pitches as to address the current theoretical shortfall of 2.25 pitches, with The Sele School, Ware YFC and The Chauncy School as potential suitable sites. - Ensure all future pitches have a sinking fund in place. - Ensure all future pitches look to be placed on the FA register to host competitive matches. - Discuss the potential loss of two small sided 3G pitch to padel conversion at Hartham Leisure Centre. If delivered mitigation towards an 11v11 3G pitch should look to be sourced given the shortfalls of 3G pitches in the Analysis Area. - The poor small sided 3G pitch at Allenburys Sport & Social Club and the 11v11 poor 3G pitch at Wodson Park Sports Centre should be resurfaced within the lifespan of the PPOSS to ensure long-term usability.
Cricket	- Protect provision. - Given the current overplay in the analysis area discussions surrounding opening the provision at Haileybury Sports Complex to community use should be sought. - Improve existing provision at Allenburys Sport & Social Club and Morgans Field. - Improve the ancillary provision of sites where necessary such as St Margaretsbury Sports & Social Club and Hertford CC.
Rugby union	- Protect provision. - Explore adding sports lighting to another pitch at Hertford RFC to help spread training demand better and reduce overplay.

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Sport	Priority recommendations
	- Support Hertford RFC with the refurbishment of its clubhouse. - Given the current overplay in the Analysis Area discussions surrounding opening the provision at Haileybury Sports Complex to community use should be sought.
Rugby league	No action required.
Hockey	- Protect provision. - Look to re-surface the small sided AGP at Amwell View School as well as the full size pitches at Simon Balle School and Haileybury College. - The resurface at Simon Balle should be a priority to ensure the future of Hertford HC.
Bowls	- Protect provision. - Sustain quality of existing provision. - Monitor levels of demand and quality of green at Hertford Castle Bowls Club, with two clubs accessing one site which is already over capacity.
Tennis	- Protect provision. - Key stakeholders to discuss the potential conversion of tennis court at Hartham Leisure Centre to padel, given the lack of tennis demand for this court, the shortfall of padel courts and the growing demand for padel in East Hertfordshire. - Utilise spare capacity at four tennis clubs in the analysis area and promote new membership initiatives.
Netball	- Protect provision. - Monitor levels of demand for the Hertford and District League to ensure the supply of courts at Presdales School is sufficient. Alternative good, sports lit provision, such as Wodson Park Sports Centre, is available in the Analysis Area should the league grow and need further courts.
Athletics	- The track will need to be resprayed in 2026 to continue to service future demand. - The track could benefit from minor repairs and cleaning before reaccreditation. - Support athletics clubs, such as Herts Phoenix AC that are looking to grow membership.
Golf	Protect provision.
Water sports	Protect provision.

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

HERTFORD, WARE ANALYSIS AREA

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
3	Amwell View School	AGP	Education	One poor small sided hockey suitable sand filled AGP pitch installed in 2013.	Look to resurface the pitch within the lifespan of the PPOSS.	The School, EH	Local site	L	M	M	Protect Enhance
11	Bengeo Bowls Club	Bowls	Sports Club	One good flat bowling green with standard ancillary facilities. The Club is operating within Bowls England capacity guidelines.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, BE	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
12	Bengeo Sports Ground	Cricket	Sports Club	One standard senior square and outfield that is accessed by Bengeo CC. Site has no actual spare capacity.	Sustain pitch quality.	Sports Club, HCCC	Local site	M	S	L	Protect
12	Bengeo Sports Ground	Football	Sports Club	One poor adult pitch that is accessed by Bengeo Trinity FC. Site is overplayed by 1.5 MES.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime and reduce overplay.	Sports Club, HFA, FF	Local site	M	M	L	Protect Enhance
29	Christ Church C Of E (VA) Primary School And Nursery	Football	Education	One standard 5v5 pitch that is open to community use but is un-used.	Sustain pitch quality. Utilise un-used provision.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
29	Christ Church C Of E (VA) Primary School And Nursery	Netball	Education	Two poor shale courts with no sports lighting or community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, EN	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
43	Haileybury Sports Complex	Cricket	Education	Four grass cricket squares, two of which are good and two are standard. The site further has two standalone NTPs rated good and standard. None are available for community use.	Given the current overplay in the Analysis Area discussions surrounding opening the provision to community use should be sought.	The School, HCCC	Key Centre	M	S	L	Provide
43	Haileybury Sports Complex	Football	Education	Two good youth 11v11, four good 9v9s and one good 5v5 pitch. Pitches are open to community use but are un-used.	Protect for curricular use. Look to provide a partner club to utilise the large un-used playing field.	The School, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	S	L	Protect
43	Haileybury Sports Complex	Rugby union	Education	Two good senior pitches with no community use.	Given the current overplay in the Analysis Area discussions surrounding opening the provision to community use should be sought.	The School, RFU	Key Centre	M	S	L	Provide
44	Hartham Leisure Centre	Football	Everyone Active	Two standard adult pitches and one standard youth 11v11 pitch. Youth 11v11 pitch has actual spare capacity.	Sustain pitch quality. Utilise actual spare capacity.	Everyone Active, EH Council, HFA, FF	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
44	Hartham Leisure Centre	3G	Everyone Active	Two poor small sided 3G pitches. Everyone Active are considering converting these pitches to padel courts and has a planning application in place to convert the provision.	Given the lack of usage and current state of pitches it may be beneficial for the area to explore conversion to padel with stakeholders. Given the shortfalls of 3G provision in the Hertford, Ware Analysis Area off site contributions towards an 11v11 3G pitch should be considered if the pitch is converted into padel courts.	Everyone Active, EH Council, HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	M	H	Provide
44	Hartham Leisure Centre	Tennis	Everyone Active	One poor macadam court with sports lighting and community use.	Given the lack of usage and current state of pitches it may be beneficial for the area to explore conversion to padel with stakeholders.	Everyone Active, EH Council, LTA	Key Centre	H	M	H	Provide
47	Hertford Castle Bowls Club	Bowls	Sports Club	One standard flat bowling green with standard ancillary facilities. The Club is operating above Bowls England capacity guidelines.	Protect for community use. Monitor the club's membership levels to ensure it can accommodate current demand.	Sports Club, BE	Local site	L	S	L	Protect

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
48	Hertford Cricket Club	Cricket	Sports Club	Two squares, one rated good and one standard, the latter having an NTP accompanying it. The Club shares ancillary provision with Hertford HC which states it would like to refurbish the changing rooms. The Club is in need of a new roller as its current roller is over 50 years old. The second square is of a standard quality and is overplayed.	Improve the quality of the second square to reduce overplay. Explore funding options to refurbish changing rooms that need it. Look to provide the Club with a new roller.	Sports Club, HCCC	Local site	H	M	M	Protect Enhance
49	Hertford Heath Playing Fields	Football	Hertford Heath Parish Council	One poor adult pitch with a poor ancillary provision. Hertford Heath FC states that the pitch does not meet FA regulations and the first team plays its games at St Margaretsbury FC. It currently plays at step 7 so initially needs to enhance its current provision to meet these regulations specifically ancillary provision. If the Club was to gain promotion it would need a lot of investment to meet ground grading regulations for step 6. The Club has a lease agreement with Hertford Town Council to access the site.	Discussions surrounding current and future ground grading requirements should be had to inform the Club. Fundraising options should be explored to progress this.	The Council, HFA, FF	Local site	M	M	M	Protect Enhance
50	Hertford Lawn Tennis Club	Tennis	Sports Club	Six good sports lit courts, three polymeric and three artificial turf open for community use. Club is operating within LTA capacity guidelines.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, LTA	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
51	Hertford Rugby Football Club	Rugby union	Sports Club	Five standard senior pitches two of which are sports lit. The Club does have portable sports lighting which it uses in its training area. It has had planning permission granted to refurbish its clubhouse.	Sustain pitch quality. Explore adding sports lighting to another pitch to help spread training demand better and reduce overplay. Support the Club in developing a new ancillary provision.	Sports Club, RFU	Key Centre	H	S	L	Protect Provide
51	Hertford Rugby Football Club	Cricket	Sports Club	One disused standalone NTP.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, HCCC	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
54	Hertingfordbury Park	3G	Sports Club	One good 11v11 3G pitch installed in 2021. Hertford Town YFC has identified a grass area behind the 3G pitch it shares with Hertford Town as a potential space to develop a mini 7v7 grass pitch. Alongside this, the Club would like a youth 11v11 pitch to be marked out near the River Lea which originally had a pitch on the marked out but an agreement with the council could not be reached. It feels that it is at capacity and cannot grow without additional pitch space.	Ensure an adequate sinking fund is in place to replace the carpet when required. The steering group to explore the possibility of the new pitches stated and support Hertford Town YFC in its efforts.	Sports Club, HFA, FF	Local site	M	M	H	Protect
55	Hertingfordbury Recreation Ground	Cricket	Sports Club	One standard grass square accessed by Hertingfordbury CC. Site has actual spare capacity across Saturday, Sunday and midweek. The Club has plans to fit new changing rooms to the site. Hertford CC is looking to formalise access to the site for junior teams.	Utilise actual spare capacity. Support the Club in fitting new changing rooms to service its current demand. Support Hertford CC and Hertingfordbury CC in granting access to the site for Hertford CC junior teams.	Sports Club, HCCC	Local site	M	S	L	Protect

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
60	Legends Tennis Centre	Tennis	Sports Club	Eight good polymeric courts, four of which are outdoor with the other four under an air dome. The Club is operating within LTA recommended capacity guidelines.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, LTA	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
68	Morgans Field	Cricket	Education	One poor standalone NTP with no ancillary facilities.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	The School, HCCC	Key Centre	M	M	L	Protect Enhance
68	Morgans Field	Football	Education	One adult pitch, one youth 11v11 one 7v7 and two 5v5 all of which are rated standard. Adult pitch is un-used No ancillary facilities on site.	Sustain pitch quality. Utilise un-used adult pitch.	The School, HFA, FF	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
74	Presdales Recreation Ground	Football	East Herts District Council	Four adult, one youth 11v11, one 9v9 and one 7v7, all of which are standard. East Herts District Council were previously looking to hand over management of the site to a football club and spoken to Bury Rangers FC, but discussions broke down. Site has actual spare capacity.	Sustain pitch quality. Explore and discuss potentially handing the site over to Bury Rangers FC to manage. Utilise actual spare capacity.	The Council, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	S	L	Protect
75	Presdales School	Football	Education	Two youth 11v11, one 9v9, one 7v7 and one 5v5 all of which are standard. Youth 9v9 pitch is overplayed by 4 MES.	Improve pitch quality to reduce overplay.	The School, HFA, FF	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect Enhance
75	Presdales School	3G	Education	One good 11v11 3G pitch installed in 2025.	Ensure an adequate pitch replacement fund is in place to replace the carpet when required.	The School, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	M	H	Protect
75	Presdales School	Netball	Education	Four good macadam courts which are sports lit and available for community use. Currently the home of The Hertford and District League.	Protect for community use.	The School, EN	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
75	Presdales School	Tennis	Education	Four good macadam courts with sports lighting and are available for community use.	Protect for community use.	The School, LTA	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
79	Richard Hale School	3G	Education	One standard 11v11 3G pitch installed in 2017. Bury Rangers FC is looking to develop a classroom and kitchen at the site to deliver lessons for its youth teams and provide the school with an additional space.	Ensure an adequate pitch replacement fund is in place to replace the carpet when required. Support Bury Rangers FC in developing a new classroom to give the Club a space to deliver lessons.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	H	M	H	Protect Provide
79	Richard Hale School	Tennis	Education	Seven poor shale courts with no community use or sports lighting.	Protect for community use.	The School, LTA	Local site	M	M	H	Protect
80	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School	Football	Education	Two standard 9v9 pitches that are open to community use but are un-used.	Sustain pitch quality. Utilise un-used provision.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
80	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School	Netball	Education	One poor shale courts with no sports lighting or community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, EN	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
85	Sele Farm Bowls Club	Bowls	Sports Club	One standard flat bowling green with standard ancillary facilities. Club is operating within Bowls England capacity guidelines.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, BE	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
89	Simon Balle School	Football	Education	Two standard youth 11v11 and one standard 9v9 pitch that are open to community use but un-used.	Sustain pitch quality. Utilise un-used provision.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
89	Simon Balle School	Rugby union	Education	One poor junior pitch.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	The School, RFU	Local site	M	M	L	Protect Enhance

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
89	Simon Balle School	Netball	Education	Two poor shale courts with community use and no sports lighting.	Protect for community use.	The School, EN	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
89	Simon Balle School	AGP	Education	One poor hockey suitable sand filled AGP accessed for match play and training by Hertford HC. The pitch was last resurfaced in 2012. The school states it has a sink fund in place for the pitch.	The pitch needs to be resurfaced to ensure the future of the hockey Club which is already exporting demand to Welwyn Hatfield.	The School, EH	Local site	H	S	H	Protect Enhance
93	St Joseph's In The Park	Netball	Education	Two poor shale courts with no sports lighting or community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, EN	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
94	St Margaretsbury FC	Football	Sport Club/ Association	Two standard adult pitches. The Club has aspirations of converting its main pitch to 3G and is seeking partners to enable the project.	Sustain pitch quality. Steering group should explore the possibility of converting the clubs main grass pitch to a 3G pitch to help reduce shortfall in the Analysis Area. The FA confirms there is further exploration needed to determine the viability of delivering an 11v11 3G pitch at the site.	Sports Club/Association, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	M	H	Protect Enhance
95	St Marys Junior School	Football	Education	One standard 7v7 and one standard 5v5 that are open to community use but unused.	Sustain pitch quality. Utilise un-used provision.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
95	St Marys Junior School	Netball	Education	Two poor shale courts with community use and no sports lighting.	Protect for community use.	The School, EN	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
97	St Margaretsbury Sports & Social Club	Tennis	Sports Club	Three artificial turf courts that area sport lit and available for community use.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, LTA	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
97	St Margaretsbury Sports & Social Club	Cricket	Sports Club	Two good grass cricket squares and outfield with standard ancillary facilities. The Club confirms the changing rooms could do with refurbishing due to being old and some being in poor condition.	Sustain pitch quality. Explore improving ancillary facilities.	Sports Club, HCCC	Key Centre	M	M	L	Protect Enhance
105	The Chauncy School	Cricket	Education	One standard standalone NTP not available for community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, HCCC	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
105	The Chauncy School	Football	Education	One adult, one youth 11v11 and one 9v9, all of which are standard. Site is identified in the 2025 LFFP as a potential option for an 11v11 3G pitch.	Sustain pitch quality. Explore the possibility of developing an 11v11 3G pitch at the site as to reduce the analysis area shortfalls.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	H	M	H	Protect Provide
105	The Chauncy School	Rugby union	Education	One poor senior pitch with no community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, RFU	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
105	The Chauncy School	Netball	Education	Two standard macadam courts with community use and no sports lighting.	Protect for community use.	The School, EN	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
108	The Sele School	Football	Education	Three youth 11v11, one of which is good and two standard, one 9v9 which is good, one 7v7 which is standard and one 5v5 which is good. Site is identified in the 2025 LFFP as a potential option for an 11v11 3G pitch.	Sustain pitch quality. Explore the possibility of developing an 11v11 3G pitch at the site as to reduce the analysis area shortfalls.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	H	M	H	Protect Provide
108	The Sele School	Rugby union	Education	One standard junior pitch.	Sustain pitch quality.	The School, RFU	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
108	The Sele School	Tennis	Education	Three standard shale courts with sports lighting and available for community use.	Protect for community use.	The School, LTA	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
108	The Sele School	Netball	Education	Three standard shale courts with no sports lighting but available for community use.	Protect for community use.	The School, EN	Local site	L	S	L	Protect

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
116	Ware Football Club	3G	Sports Club	One standard 11v11 3G pitch installed in 2018.	Ensure an adequate pitch replacement fund is in place to replace the carpet when required.	Sports Club, HFA, FF	Local site	M	M	H	Protect
117	Ware Lawn Bowling Club	Bowls	Sports Club	One standard flat bowling green with good ancillary facilities.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, BE	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
119	Ware Youth Football Club	Football	Sports Club	Two poor adult, two standard 9v9, two poor 7v7 and two 5v5 one is poor and one is good. Site is identified in the 2025 LFFP as a potential option for an 11v11 3G pitch.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime. Explore the possibility of developing an 11v11 3G pitch at the site as to reduce the analysis area shortfalls.	Sports Club, HFA, FF	Key Centre	H	M	H	Protect Provide
125	Wodson Park Sports Centre	Football	Private	Two standard adult pitches. Site has actual spare capacity.	Sustain pitch quality. Utilise actual spare capacity.	Sports Club, HFA, FF	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
125	Wodson Park Sports Centre	3G	Private	One poor 11v11 3G pitch last resurfaced in 2015. The site was initially funded by the Football Foundation meaning it should have a pitch replacement fund to resurface the pitch when necessary.	Explore funding options with stakeholders to replace the carpet as it is now at the end of its lifespan.	Sports Club, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	M	M	Protect Enhance
125	Wodson Park Sports Centre	Athletics	Private	One standard eight lane 400m athletics track. It is sports lit and is open for community use. The sports lighting covers both track and field events. The track could benefit from minor repairs and cleaning before reaccreditation, however, will likely need respraying in 2026.	Ensure a sinking fund is in place for the repairs and respraying of the track.	Organisation, EA	Key Centre	H	M	M	Protect Enhance
125	Wodson Park Sports Centre	Tennis	Private	Four good macadam courts with sports lighting and available for community use.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, LTA	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
125	Wodson Park Sports Centre	Netball	Private	Four good macadam courts with sports lighting, available for community use.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, EN	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
126	Allenburys Sports & Social Club	Cricket	Private	One poor grass cricket square and standard outfield with standard ancillary facilities. The Club states it has changed groundsman.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	Sports Club, HCCC	Key Centre	M	M	L	Protect Enhance
126	Allenburys Sports & Social Club	Football	Private	One adult and one youth 11v11 both of which are good quality. Youth 11v11 pitch has actual spare capacity.	Sustain pitch quality. Utilise actual spare capacity.	Sports Club, HFA, FF	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
126	Allenburys Sports & Social Club	3G	Private	One poor small sided 3G pitch installed in 2009.	Resurface during the lifespan of the PPOSS.	Sports Club, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	M	M	Protect Enhance
126	Allenburys Sports & Social Club	Tennis	Private	One standard macadam court with sports lighting and available for community use.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, LTA	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
126	Allenburys Sports & Social Club	Netball	Private	One standard macadam court with sports lighting and community use.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, EN	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
126	Allenburys Sports & Social Club	Bowls	Sports Club	One good flat bowling green with standard ancillary facilities.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, BE	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
131	Hartham Common & Kingsmead	Football	Everyone Active	Two adult pitches, one youth 11v11 and one 9v9 all rated poor quality. Site has overplay and actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime to reduce overplay and create actual spare capacity.	Everyone Active, EH Council, HFA, FF	Local site	M	M	L	Protect Enhance
138	County Hall	Football	Hertfordshire County Council	The site formerly provided four grass football pitches.	The steering group should look to reinstate the provision. If the site is lost the steering group should look to source funds for mitigation in line with NPPF.	The Council, HFA, FF	Local site	H	M	M	Provide

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
138	County Hall	Cricket	Hertfordshire County Council	The site formerly provided a grass cricket square and NTP.	The steering group should look to reinstate the provision. If the site is lost the steering group should look to source funds for mitigation in line with NPPF.	The Council, HCCC	Local site	H	M	M	Provide
149	Abel Smith Primary School	Football	Education	One standard 7v7 pitch.	Sustain pitch quality.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
163	Haileybury College	AGP	Education	Two standard full size AGPs open for community use. Both pitches will need to be resurfaced within the lifespan of the PPOSS	Look to resurface the pitches within the lifespan of the PPOSS.	The School, EH	Local site	M	M	H	Protect Enhance
169	St John the Baptist CE VA Primary	Football	Education	One standard 5v5 pitch.	Sustain pitch quality.	The School, HFA, FF	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
172	Brickendon Grange Golf Club	Golf	Sports Club	One 18-hole golf course	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, EG	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
179	Chadwell Springs Golf Centre	Golf	Sports Club	One 18-hole golf course as well as a par 3 course and 17 driving range bays.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, EG	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
-	Abbotts Lake	Water sports	Lee Valley Regional Park/ Aquamaintain Ltd	Abbotts Lake is a 25-acre lake based in Stanstead Abbots in East Hertfordshire. The lake caters for various water sports including yachting and canoeing. The Lake forms part of the Lea Valley Regional Park.	Protect for community use.	Lee Valley Regional Park/ Aquamaintain Ltd	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
-	Ware Priory Lido	Water sports	Ware Town Council	The site offers a 30m main pool as well as a teaching pool and ancillary provision for its users which includes changing facilities as well as food and drink offerings.	Protect for community use.	The Council.	Local site	L	S	L	Protect
-	Herts Canoe Club	Water sports	Sports Club	A Canoe club which offers various forms of water sports based on the River Lea beside Hartham Leisure Centre. It is affiliated to Paddle UK and offers canoeing, paddling and whitewater kayaking.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, EH Council	Local site	L	S	L	Protect

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

SAWBRIDGEWORTH ANALYSIS AREA

Summary pitch sports (Sawbridgeworth Analysis Area)

Sport	Analysis area	Pitch type	Current capacity total in MES ^[1]	Future capacity total in MES (2043) ¹⁶
Football (grass)	Sawbridgeworth	Adult	At capacity	At capacity
Football (grass)	Sawbridgeworth	Youth 11v11	At capacity	At capacity
Football (grass)	Sawbridgeworth	Youth 9v9	Spare capacity of 1	Spare capacity of 1
Football (grass)	Sawbridgeworth	Mini 7v7	At capacity	At capacity
Football (grass)	Sawbridgeworth	Mini 5v5	At capacity	At capacity
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Adult	Spare capacity of 2.5	At capacity
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 2	Shortfall of 5
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 11	Shortfall of 14
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Mini 7v7	Spare capacity of 0.5	Shortfall of 3
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Mini 5v5	At capacity	Shortfall of 2
Football (3G)	Sawbridgeworth	11v11	Spare capacity of 0.5	Spare capacity of 0.5
Football (3G)	East Hertfordshire	11v11	Shortfall of 4	Shortfall of 4.75
Cricket	Sawbridgeworth	Saturday	Shortfall of 28	Shortfall of 28
Cricket	Sawbridgeworth	Sunday	Shortfall of 4	Shortfall of 4
Cricket	Sawbridgeworth	Midweek	Spare capacity of 8	Spare capacity of 8
Cricket	East Hertfordshire	Saturday	Shortfall of 29	Shortfall of 41
Cricket	East Hertfordshire	Sunday	Spare capacity of 67	Spare capacity of 67
Cricket	East Hertfordshire	Midweek	Spare capacity of 175	Spare capacity of 163
Rugby union	Sawbridgeworth	Senior	At capacity	At capacity
Rugby union	East Hertfordshire	Senior	Shortfall of 20.75	Shortfall of 21.75
Rugby league	East Hertfordshire	Senior	No demand so no provision required	No demand so no provision required

^[1] MES – match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket)

¹⁶ Future demand (2043) is determined via ONS forecasts and club aspirations identified in PPS Assessment Report (2025).

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Sport	Analysis area	Pitch type	Current capacity total in MES ^[1]	Future capacity total in MES (2043) ¹⁶
Hockey (sand AGPs)	East Hertfordshire	Full size, floodlit	An insufficient supply to meet current demand	With the AGPs at the Simon Balle School and Bishop's Stortford College having surpassed end of life, there is the need to provide a pitch replacement at each site in order to accommodate existing and future hockey demand.

Summary non-pitch sports

Sport	Current picture	Future picture
Tennis	Much Hadham Tennis Club is currently operating above LTA recommended guidelines. Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club is operating within LTA capacity guidelines. The Club has ambitions to upgrade its sports lights to LED.	Consider installing an extra court at Much Hadham Tennis Club as a means of accommodating the high levels of demand identified.
Netball	All demand is currently exported into neighbouring analysis areas when competing in the Bishop's Stortford District Netball League and Hertford and District Netball League.	Look to increasingly use the accessible sports lit courts at Leventhorpe School for Play Netball sessions to grow the sport.
Bowls	Much Hadham Bowls Club and Sawbridgeworth Bowls Club are the two clubs within the analysis area. Neither Club is known to be operating outside of the Bowls England capacity guidelines.	Monitor the future capacity balance of Much Hadham Bowls Club and Sawbridgeworth Bowls Club to ensure both clubs continue to adequately cater for its current demand and do not come under risk of folding as clubs.
Athletics	No provision exists in the analysis area. All demand is exported outside of the Analysis Area to Wodson Park Sports Centre (Hertford, Ware), which provides a sports lit 400m track.	Considerations should be made for the installation of play, mini, compact or active tracks as to provide the district with some form of athletics provision.
Golf	There are two 18-hole golf courses in the Sawbridgeworth Analysis Area.	If demand continues to grow in Sawbridgeworth, membership levels should be monitored to ensure all courses can accommodate the new levels of demand.
Water sports	No provision identified.	No provision identified.

Overarching recommendations

Sport	Priority recommendations
Football	- Protect provision. - Improve pitch quality especially at key, poor quality sites such as Bullfields and St George's Playing Field both of which would create actual spare capacity if quality improved. - Enable use of currently unavailable sites. - Look to improve the ancillary provision at relevant poor-quality sites such as Crouchfields which is accessed by Wodson Park FC. - Explore the possibility of developing a new site to service Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club and Sawbridgeworth Town FC.

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Sport	Priority recommendations
3G pitches	- Protect provision. - Ensure the existing pitch at Leventhorpe School has a pitch replacement fund in place. - Ensure the Leventhorpe School pitch remains on the FA 3G pitch register after its retest in June 2027 to ensure it can continue to host competitive matches. - Consider installing additional provision at Sawbridgeworth Town FC to ensure adequate capacity for future demand and reduce the shortfall across East Hertfordshire.
Cricket	- Protect provision. - Improve square quality at Town Fields and Leventhorpe School to reduce overplay and improve the user experience for Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club. - Explore the possibility of developing a new site to service Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club and Sawbridgeworth Town FC. This will provide Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club with the second site required if it does stop accessing Leventhorpe School in 2027. - Support Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club in enhancing the changing rooms for its clubhouse.
Rugby union	- Protect provision. - Improve quality of existing provision. - Consider formalising use of the two senior pitches at The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood) for Bishops Stortford RFC as a means of reducing the overplay identified at the site.
Rugby league	No action required.
Hockey	- Protect provision. - Look to identify a site to potentially house a new full sized AGP to service the need in East Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire and Stevenage.
Bowls	- Protect provision. - Sustain quality of existing provision at Sawbridgeworth Bowls Club. - Look to improve green quality at Much Hadham Bowls Club.
Tennis/padel	- Protect provision. - Monitor the membership levels of Much Hadham Tennis Club and ensure the Club can continue to operate above LTA capacity guidelines. - Consider developing an extra court at Much Hadham Tennis Club to support the Club with its high membership levels. - Look to enhance the sports lights at Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club.
Netball	- Protect provision. - Look to increasingly use the courts at Leventhorpe School to grow the sport.
Athletics	- Protect provision. - Consider installing play, mini, compact or active tracks as a means of increasing the amount of provision in the Authority.
Golf	- Protect provision. - Ensure Manor of Groves Golf Club and Great Hadham Golf & Country Club continue to operate sustainably and can balance current membership levels.
Water sports	No action required.

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

SAWBRIDGEWORTH ANALYSIS AREA

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
25	Bullfields	Football	Sawbridgeworth Town Council	One poor adult pitch and one poor youth 11v11. Site is accessed by Sawbridgeworth Town FC and has actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime to create actual spare capacity.	The Council, HFA, FF	Local Site	H	S	L	Protect Enhance
57	High Wych Ce Primary School	Netball	Education	One poor shale court with no community use or sports lighting.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, EN	Local Site	L	S	L	Protect
62	Leventhorpe School	Football	Education	One standard adult, one poor youth 11v11 and one standard 9v9. Provision is open to community use and is used by Sawbridgeworth Town FC. Adult and youth 9v9 pitches are un-used.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime. Utilise un-used provision.	The School, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	S	L	Protect Enhance
62	Leventhorpe School	Cricket	Education	One poor cricket square with an accompanying NTP. The site is accessed by Sawbridgeworth CC and is overplayed by 28 MES due to being poor quality. The site has no covers and the outfield grass is cut to football pitch length.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime and reduce overplay. Consider providing a set of covers for the square. Look to cut the outfield to a shorter length to make it more suitable for cricket.	The School, HCCC	Key Centre	M	S	M	Protect Enhance Provide
62	Leventhorpe School	Rugby union	Education	One senior and one junior pitch, both of which are poor.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	The School, RFU	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect Enhance
62	Leventhorpe School	3G	Education	One good quality 11v11 3G pitch that was installed in 2024.	Ensure an adequate pitch replacement fund is in place to replace the carpet when required.	The School, HFA, FF	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
62	Leventhorpe School	Tennis	Education	Five good polymeric courts with sports lighting and community use.	Protect for community use.	The School, LTA	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
62	Leventhorpe School	Netball	Education	Three good polymeric courts with sports lighting and community use.	Protect for community use.	The School, EN	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
69	Much Hadham Bowls Club	Bowls	Sport Club	One standard flat bowls green with good ancillary provision. Club is operating within Bowls England capacity guidelines.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, BE	Local Site	L	S	L	Protect
70	Much Hadham Recreation Ground	Football	Sports Club	Site formerly provided one adult football pitch.	Reinstate the football pitches to increase the total supply of provision in the Authority.	The Council, HFA, FF	Local site	M	M	M	Provide
71	Much Hadham Tennis Club	Tennis	Sport Club	Three good macadam courts with sports lighting and community use. The Club is operating marginally above LTA capacity guidelines.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, LTA	Local Site	L	S	L	Protect
78	Reedings Junior School	Football	Education	One standard 7v7 pitch that is open to community use and accessed by Sawbridgeworth Town FC.	Sustain pitch quality for community use.	The School, HFA, FF	Local Site	L	S	L	Protect
82	Sawbridgeworth Bowling Club	Bowls	Sport Club	One good flat bowls green with good ancillary provision.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, BE	Local Site	L	S	L	Protect
83	Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club	Tennis	Sport Club	Two good sports lit clay courts, one good non-sports lit clay court and three standard artificial turf courts are all available for community use. The Club aspires to changes it current sports lighting to LED as its priority.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, LTA	Local Site	L	S	L	Protect

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
84	Sawbridgeworth Town Football Club	Football	Sport Club	Two good adult pitches that are accessed by Sawbridgeworth Town FC which play at Step 5 in the NLS.	Sustain pitch quality.	Sports Club, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	S	L	Protect
102	The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood)	Football	Education	Three adult pitches, three youth 11v11, one 9v9 and one 5v5, all of which are rated standard and open to community use. Pitches are underutilised.	Sustain pitch quality. Look to maximise the use of the provision.	The School, HFA, FF	Local Site	L	S	L	Protect
102	The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood)	Cricket	Education	Two standard quality cricket squares with no community access. One square has an accompanying NTP and there is also a standalone NTP.	Discuss possibility of opening provision to the community to address Saturday shortfalls in the Analysis Area.	The School, HCCC	Local Site	M	S	L	Provide
102	The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood)	Rugby union	Education	Two standard senior pitches that are open to community use.	Sustain pitch quality. Consider granting access to the pitches to Bishop's Stortford RFC as a means of reducing overplay.	The School, RFU	Local Site	L	S	L	Protect
112	Town Fields	Cricket	Sport Club	One standard square and outfield that is accessed by Sawbridgeworth CC. The Club is seeking to refurbish its clubhouse to make it more inclusive for women's and girls' as well as space for umpires. This plan would also include a patio for socialising. It also raises that ball striking is an issue at its site.	Support the Club in developing new changing rooms at the site and erecting a ball stopping fence.	Sports Club, HCCC	Key Centre	H	M	M	Protect Enhance Provide
115	Ware Cricket Club	Cricket	Private	One standard square and outfield. The site has actual spare capacity for Sunday and midweek cricket. The Club rents the pitch from the landowner which maintains the square.	Sustain pitch quality and utilise spare capacity.	Sports Club, landowner, HCCC	Local Site	L	S	L	Protect
123	Widford Playing Field	Football	Widford Parish Council	Site formerly provided one adult pitch. Site has no ancillary provision but borders Ware Cricket Club which has a standard quality ancillary provision.	Look to re-instate the football pitch as to increase the total supply of football provision in the Authority.	The Council, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	M	M	Provide
141	St. George's Playing Field	Football	High Wych Parish Council	One poor 5v5 pitch that is open to community use but is un-used.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime and create actual spare capacity. Utilise un-used pitch.	The Council, HFA, FF	Local Site	M	S	L	Protect Enhance
167	Mandeville Primary School	Football	Education	One poor and one standard 9v9 that is open to community use but is un-used.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime. Utilise un-used provision.	The School, HFA, FF	Local Site	M	S	L	Protect Enhance
171	Manor Of Groves Golf Club	Golf	Sport Club	An 18-hole course at a proprietary managed club.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, EG	Local Site	L	S	L	Protect
177	Great Hadham Golf & Country Club	Golf	Sport Club	An 18-hole course and driving range with 18 covered bays which are sports lit and available for pay and play.	Protect for community use.	Sports Club, EG	Local Site	L	S	L	Protect
	Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club and Town Football Club new site	Cricket Football	Sports Club	Consultation with Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club confirms the Club is considering working with Sawbridgeworth Town FC to develop a new site to service football and cricket need. Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club requires two squares and its current lease agreement with Leventhorpe School is scheduled to expire in 2027.	Look to develop a new site with a cricket square and grass football pitches to service the need of Sawbridgeworth CC and Sawbridgeworth Town FC.	Sports Club, HCCC, HFA, FF	Local Site	M	L	H	Provide

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

WATTON-AT-STONE ANALYSIS AREA

Summary pitch sports (Watton-at-Stone Analysis Area)

Sport	Analysis area	Pitch type	Current capacity total in MES ⁽¹⁾	Future capacity total in MES (2043) ¹⁷
Football (grass)	Watton-at-Stone	Adult	At capacity	At capacity
Football (grass)	Watton-at-Stone	Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 0.5
Football (grass)	Watton-at-Stone	Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 0.5
Football (grass)	Watton-at-Stone	Mini 7v7	At capacity	At capacity
Football (grass)	Watton-at-Stone	Mini 5v5	Spare capacity of 1	Spare capacity of 1
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Adult	Spare capacity of 2.5	At capacity
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Youth 11v11	Shortfall of 2	Shortfall of 5
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Youth 9v9	Shortfall of 11	Shortfall of 14
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Mini 7v7	Spare capacity of 0.5	Shortfall of 3
Football (grass)	East Hertfordshire	Mini 5v5	At capacity	Shortfall of 2
Football (3G)	Watton-at-Stone	11v11	Shortfall of 0.5	Shortfall of 0.5
Football (3G)	East Hertfordshire	11v11	Shortfall of 4	Shortfall of 4.75
Cricket	Watton-at-Stone	Saturday	Spare capacity of 6	Spare capacity of 6
Cricket	Watton-at-Stone	Sunday	Spare capacity of 30	Spare capacity of 30
Cricket	Watton-at-Stone	Midweek	Spare capacity of 42	Spare capacity of 42
Cricket	East Hertfordshire	Saturday	Shortfall of 29	Shortfall of 41
Cricket	East Hertfordshire	Sunday	Spare capacity of 67	Spare capacity of 67
Cricket	East Hertfordshire	Midweek	Spare capacity of 175	Spare capacity of 163
Rugby union	Watton-at-Stone	Senior	At capacity	At capacity
Rugby union	East Hertfordshire	Senior	Shortfall of 20.75	Shortfall of 21.75
Rugby league	East Hertfordshire	Senior	No demand so no provision required	No demand so no provision required.

⁽¹⁾ MES – match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket)

¹⁷ Future demand (2043) is determined via ONS forecasts and club aspirations identified in PPS Assessment Report (2025).

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Sport	Analysis area	Pitch type	Current capacity total in MES ¹¹	Future capacity total in MES (2043) ¹⁷
Hockey (sand AGPs)	East Hertfordshire	Full size, floodlit	An insufficient supply to meet current demand	With the AGPs at the Simon Balle School and Bishop's Stortford College having surpassed end of life, there is the need to provide a pitch replacement at each site in order to accommodate existing and future hockey demand.

Summary non-pitch sports

Sport	Current picture	Future picture
Tennis	Tewin Tennis Club is the most overcapacity tennis Club in the Authority. There is the need to fit sports lights to improve its capacity balance. Watton at Stone Tennis Club is operating within LTA capacity guidelines.	Neither Tewin Tennis Club or Watton at Stone Tennis Club express any future demand ambitions. Watton at Stone Tennis Club has plans to resurface its courts as part of a site development plan.
Netball	There are no sports lit community accessible courts in the Analysis Area. All demand is currently exported into neighbouring analysis areas when competing in the Bishop's Stortford District Netball League and Hertford and District Netball League.	Consider opening the Heath Mount School courts to community to improve the recreational access (aligned to England Netball participation schemes).
Bowls	Shire Park Bowls Club is operating marginally above Bowls England recommended guidelines.	Shire Park Bowls Club has future demand ambitions to gain 22 members which will mean the Club is operating further outside of Bowls England recommended capacity guidelines. Monitor the membership levels at Shire Park Bowls Club to ensure it continues to adequately cater its demand.
Athletics	No provision exists in the analysis area. All demand is exported outside of the district to Wodson Park Sports Centre (Hertford, Ware), which provides a sports lit 400m track.	Considerations should be made for the installation of play, mini, compact or active tracks as to provide the district with some form of athletics provision.
Golf	No provision exists in the analysis area. All demand is exported into neighbouring analysis areas.	Ensure that neighbouring clubs can continue to accommodate demand from residents within the Watton at Stone analysis area.
Water sports	No provision identified.	No provision identified.

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Overarching recommendations

Sport	Priority recommendations
Football	- Protect provision. - Improve pitch quality especially at key, poor quality and/or overplayed sites such as Crouchfields. - Look to improve the ancillary provision provided at Crouchfields to better support Watson Park FC. - Support Watton at Stone YFC in developing a new site with grass football pitches, a small sided 3G pitch and new build ancillary provision. Explore any viable multi-sport opportunities within this project.
3G pitches	- Look to increase the number of 3G pitches as to address the current theoretical shortfall of 0.5 of a pitch, with the Watton at Stone YFC new site as the priority potential site. - Ensure all future pitches have a sinking fund in place. - Ensure all future pitches look to be placed on the FA register to host competitive matches.
Cricket	- Protect provision. - Improve existing provision at Bramfield Playing Field to reduce overplay and support Bramfield CC. - Improve the poor-quality ancillary provision at Little Berkhamsted Recreation Ground to support Little Berkhamsted Sahibs CC.
Rugby union	No action required.
Rugby league	No action required.
Hockey	Look to identify a site to potentially house a new full sized AGP to service the need in East Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire and Stevenage.
Bowls	- Protect provision. - Improve quality of existing provision at Shire Park BC. - Ensure Shire Park BC manages the access to its green effectively as the site is operating above Bowls England capacity guidelines.
Tennis	- Protect provision. - Work with Tewin Tennis Club to install sports lighting to its courts to improve its capacity balance. - Look to resurface the courts at Watton at Stone Tennis Club during the lifespan of the PPOSS.
Netball	- Protect provision. - Consider opening the Heath Mount School courts to community use to provide the analysis area with accessible provision.
Athletics	Consider the installation of play, mini, compact and active tracks as to increase the amount of athletics provision.
Golf	No action required.
Water sports	No action required.

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

WATTON-AT-STONE ANALYSIS AREA

Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
21	Bramfield Playing Field	Cricket	Bramfield Parish Council	One poor quality square that is accessed by Bramfield CC. Site is overplayed due to the poor-quality square.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime to reduce overplay.	The Council, HCCC	Local Site	H	M	L	Protect Enhance
21	Bramfield Playing Field	Football	Bramfield Parish Council	One poor adult pitch accessed by Golden Griffin FC. Actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime as to create actual spare capacity.	The Council, HFA, FF	Local Site	M	M	L	Protect Enhance
21	Bramfield Playing Field	Tennis	Bramfield Parish Council	One poor non-sports lit shale tennis court overmarked with basketball. Site is accessed by Braughing Tennis Club which is operating within LTA capacity guidelines.	Improve court quality to encourage further community use.	The Council, LTA	Local Site	M	M	L	Protect Enhance
30	Church Lane Playing Field	Football	Stapleford Parish Council	One poor 5v5 pitch that is open to community use but is un-used.	Utilise un-used pitch.	The Council, HFA, FF	Local Site	M	M	L	Protect Enhance
35	Crouchfields	Football	Sports Club	Site has one pitch of all five pitch scales and is accessed by Wodson Park FC. Ancillary provision is of a poor quality. Mini 5v5 pitch has actual spare capacity and youth 11v11 pitch is overplayed.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime. Look at improving ancillary facilities. Utilise actual spare capacity.	Sports Club, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	M	M	Protect Enhance
46	Heath Mount School	AGP	Education	One 70m x 44m pitch which is neither sports lit or community accessible.	Consider opening provision to community use to better service hockey and football need.	Education FA, FF, EH	Local Site	M	M	M	Protect Provide
46	Heath Mount School	Cricket	Education	One standard cricket pitch with no community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, HCCC	Local Site	L	S	L	Protect
46	Heath Mount School	Tennis	Education	Six standard artificial turf tennis courts overmarked on a small sided AGP which has no community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, LTA	Local Site	L	S	L	Protect
46	Heath Mount School	Netball	Education	Two standard non-sports lit shale netball courts with no community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, EN	Local Site	L	S	L	Protect
63	Little Berkhamsted Recreation Ground	Cricket	Little Berkhamsted Parish Council	One standard cricket pitch accessed by Little Berkhamsted Sahibs CC with actual spare capacity for Sunday and midweek cricket. Ancillary provision if of a poor quality.	Sustain pitch quality. Consider enhancing the ancillary provision to improve the user experience for Little Berkhamsted Sahibs CC.	The Council, HCCC	Local Site	M	S	H	Protect Enhance
87	Shire Park Bowls Club	Bowls	Sports Club	One standard bowling green with standard ancillary facilities. The Club is operating marginally above Bowls England capacity guidelines.	Protect for community use and sustain green quality. Ensure the Club can continue to accommodate its current demand.	Sports Club, BE	Local Site	L	S	L	Protect
99	Tewin Cowper Primary School	Netball	Education	One poor non-sports lit shale court with community use.	Protect for community.	The School, EN	Local Site	L	S	L	Protect
100	Tewin Recreation Ground	Cricket	Tewin Parish Council	One standard cricket pitch accessed by Tewin CC and has actual spare capacity for Sunday and midweek cricket. Tewin CC states it requires a fixed lane practice net to support its training demand.	Sustain pitch quality. Install a fixed lane practice net to support the clubs training need.	The Council, HCCC	Key Centre	M	S	M	Protect Provide
100	Tewin Recreation Ground	Football	Tewin Parish Council	One poor 5v5 pitch with standard ancillary facilities. Site is un-used and has actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.	Utilise un-used pitch. Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	The Council, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	S	L	Protect Enhance

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Site ID	Site	Sport	Management	Current status	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Priority	Timescales	Cost	Aim
100	Tewin Recreation Ground	Tennis	Tewin Parish Council	Two good non-sports lit artificial turf tennis courts with community use. Site is accessed by Tewin Tennis Club and is the most overcapacity tennis site in the Authority.	Sustain court quality. Install sports lights to improve the club's capacity balance.	The Council, LTA	Key Centre	H	M	M	Protect Provide
120	Watton-At-Stone Primary School	Football	Education	One poor 9v9 pitch that is accessed by Watton YFC and overplayed by 0.5 MES.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime to remove overplay.	The School, HFA, FF	Local Site	M	M	L	Protect Enhance
120	Watton-At-Stone Primary School	Netball	Education	One poor non-sports lit shale netball court with no community use.	Protect for curricular use.	The School, EN	Local Site	L	S	L	Protect
128	Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground	Cricket	Sports Club	One standard cricket pitch that is used by Watton at Stone CC. Site has actual spare capacity for Saturday, Sunday and midweek cricket.	Sustain pitch quality. Utilise actual spare capacity.	Sports Club, HCCC	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
128	Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground	Football	Sports Club	One poor youth 11v11 with good ancillary facilities. Site is used at capacity by Watton YFC.	Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.	Sports Club, HFA, FF	Key Centre	M	M	L	Protect Enhance
128	Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground	Tennis	Sports Club	Three sports lit macadam courts available for community use, two of which are good and one standard. Site is used by Watton at Stone Tennis Club and is operating within LTA capacity guidelines.	Sustain court quality.	Sports Club, LTA	Key Centre	L	S	L	Protect
130	Bayford & Hertford Nondescripts Cricket Club	Cricket	Sports Club	One standard cricket pitch which has actual spare capacity for Saturday, Sunday and midweek cricket.	Sustain pitch quality.	Sports Club, HCCC	Local Site	L	S	L	Protect
-	New site - Watton at Stone YFC	Football Padel	Sports Club	Watton at Stone YFC wants to build a new multi-sport site in the South East of the village. The main purpose is to obtain a small sided 3G pitch, however, it states a wish for a multi-sport site that could include grass pitches, padel as well as walking trails and ancillary provision. It currently has 19 teams and there is a shortfall of 3G pitches in the Watton-at-Stone Analysis Area.	The steering group should look to deliver new grass pitches, small sided 3G and ancillary provision to support Watton at Stone YFC. Considerations should also be made to install other sports or walking provision.	Sports Club, HFA, FF, LTA	Key Centre	H	H	H	Provide Enhance

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PART 7: DELIVER THE STRATEGY AND KEEP IT ROBUST AND UP-TO-DATE

The section below is a generalised approach on how to deliver a PPOSS whilst also keeping it robust and up-to-date. However, a more tailored approach should also be considered and designed for the East Hertfordshire based on the requirements and priorities of the Steering Group.

Delivery

The PPOSS seeks to provide guidance for maintenance/management decisions and investment made across the East Hertfordshire. By addressing the issues identified in the Assessment Report and using the strategic framework presented in this Strategy, the current and future sporting and recreational needs of the district can be satisfied. The Strategy identifies where there is a deficiency in provision and recommends how best to resolve this in the future.

It is important that this document is used in a practical manner, is used to engage with partners and encourages partnerships to be developed, to ensure that outdoor sports facilities are regarded as a vital aspect of community life and which contribute to the achievement of Council priorities.

The creation of this document should be regarded as part of the planning process. The success of this Strategy and the benefits that are gained are dependent upon regular engagement between all partners involved and the adoption of a strategic approach. Each member of the steering group should take the lead to ensure the PPOSS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence.

To help ensure the PPOSS is well used, it should be regarded as the key document within the study area guiding the improvement and protection of playing pitch and outdoor sport provision. It needs to be the document people regularly turn to for information on the how the current demand is met and what actions are needed to improve the situation and meet future demand. For this to be achieved, the Steering Group needs to have a clear understanding of how the PPOSS can be applied and therefore delivered.

The process of completing the PPOSS will hopefully have already resulted in a number of benefits that will help with its application and delivery. These may include enhanced partnership working across different agendas and organisations, pooling of resources along with strengthening relationships and understanding between different stakeholders and between members of the steering group and the sporting community. The drivers behind the PPOSS and the work to develop the recommendations and action plan will have also highlighted, and helped the steering group to understand, the key areas to which it can be applied and how it can be delivered.

Monitoring and updating

It is important that there is regular monitoring and review against the actions identified in the Strategy. This monitoring should continue be led by the local authority and supported by all members of, and reported back to, the Steering Group. Understanding and learning lessons from how the PPOSS has been applied should also form a key component of monitoring its delivery. It is possible that in the interim between reviews the Steering Group could also operate as a 'virtual' group; prepared to comment on suggestions and updates electronically when relevant.

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It is agreed that the Council (potentially via consultants e.g., KKP) is responsible for keeping the database and background supply and demand information up-to-date in order that area-by-area action plans can be updated. This should be carried out in consultation with the NGBs, particularly around affiliation time when information is updated.

As a guide, if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years of the PPS being signed off by the steering group, then Sport England and the NGBs would consider it and the information on which it is based to be out of date. The nature of the supply and in particular the demand for provision is likely to change year-on-year, meaning that without any form of review and update it would be difficult to make the case that the supply and demand information and assessment work is sufficiently robust.

An annual review should not be regarded as a particularly resource intensive task. However, it should highlight:

- ◀ How the delivery of the recommendations and action plan has progressed and any changes required to the priority afforded to each action (e.g., the priority of some may increase following the delivery of others).
- ◀ How the PPOSS has been applied and the lessons learnt.
- ◀ Any changes to particularly important sites and/or clubs in the area (e.g., the most used or high quality sites for a particular sport) and other supply and demand information, what this may mean for the overall assessment work and the key findings and issues.
- ◀ Any development of a specific sport or particular format of a sport.
- ◀ Any new or emerging issues and opportunities.

Alongside regular steering group meetings a good way to keep the strategy up-to-date and maintain relationships is to hold sport specific meetings with the NGBs and other relevant parties. These meetings look to update the key supply and demand information, if necessary amend the assessment work, track progress with implementing the recommendations and action plan and highlight any new issues and opportunities.

These meetings could be timed to fit with the annual affiliation process undertaken by the NGBs which would help to capture any changes in the number and nature of sports clubs in the area. Other information that is already collected on a regular basis such as pitch booking records for local authority and other sites could be fed into these meetings.

The NGBs are also able to indicate any further performance quality assessments that have been undertaken within the study area.

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Checklists

In order for this Strategy to be signed off by the steering group, a Stage D Checklist: Develop the Strategy, is signed off.

Stage D Checklist: Develop the Strategy	Tick ✓	
	Yes	Requires Attention
Step 7: Develop the recommendations and action plan	✓	
1. Have a number of study area specific scenarios been looked at to help explore key issues and findings along with possible recommendations and actions?	✓	
2. Have any recommendations and actions regarding AGP provision taken into account the guidance in the 'Selecting the Right Artificial Surface' document and any NGB specific information?	✓	
3. Do the recommendations reflect the drivers, vision and objectives of the work?	✓	
4. Are the recommendations precise enough to enable the development of clear individual area, sport and site specific actions to help achieve them?	✓	
5. Have all relevant parties been engaged with the development of, and are signed up to the delivery of, the recommendations and actions?	✓	
6. Are the recommendations and actions clearly presented?	✓	
7. Has particular attention been paid to the situation at priority sites and those which are being significantly overplayed?	✓	
8. Have area, sport and site specific solutions been proposed to protect, enhance, and provide playing pitch provision to meet the current and future demand?	✓	
9. Has guidance on the future of any sites highlighted as being at risk been provided?	✓	
10. Do the recommendations and actions seek to make the best use of existing pitches?	✓	
11. Has the detriment and benefit of proposals to relocate provision been presented?	✓	
12. Has the level and type of any new playing pitch provision required been presented?	✓	
13. Has the importance of providing appropriate and fit for purpose ancillary facilities been highlighted in order to maximise the potential benefit to sport of any pitches?	✓	
14. Have the recommendations sought to ensure an adequate amount of spare capacity in the provision of accessible pitches with secured community use?	✓	
15. Does the PPS provide a steer as to the future of any spare capacity and any provision that may be genuinely surplus to requirements (paragraphs D12 to D15)?	✓	
16. Does the action plan cover the points listed in paragraph D17?	✓	
17. Does the action plan provide the most appropriate actions to improve provision in the study area rather than just those which the local authority can deliver?	✓	
18. Does the action plan represent an infrastructure plan for playing pitches with deliverable area, sport and site specific actions and projects?	✓	
Step 8: Write and Adopt the Strategy	✓	
1. Does the PPS document provide the reader with a clear understanding of the areas listed in paragraph D20?		

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2.	Is it clear from the PPS document why the recommendations and actions have been included, how they are to be delivered and what they will achieve?	✓	
3.	Does the PPS document indicate how it should be used and applied in different areas and circumstances along with the benefits of doing so?	✓	
4.	Has the PPS document been subject to appropriate consultation?	✓	
5.	Do all members of the steering group and other relevant parties endorse the PPS and recognise its lead role in guiding the improvement of pitches in the study area?	✓	
6.	Has the PPS document been formally adopted by the local authority and is its status recognised across all relevant departments?	✓	

To help ensure the PPOSS is delivered and is kept robust and up-to-date, the steering group can refer to the new methodology Stage E Checklist: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up-to-date:

Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up-to-date	Tick ✓	
	Yes	Requires Attention
Step 9: Apply and deliver the strategy		
1. Are steering group members clear on how the PPS can be applied across a range of relevant areas?		
2. Is each member of the steering group committed to taking the lead to help ensure the PPS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence?		
3. Has a process been put in place to ensure regular monitoring of how the recommendations and action plan are being delivered and the PPS is being applied?		
Step 10: Keep the strategy robust and up-to-date		
1. Has a process been put in place to ensure the PPS is kept robust and up-to-date?		
2. Does the process involve an annual update of the PPS?		
3. Is the steering group to be maintained and is it clear of its on-going role?		
4. Is regular liaison with the NGBs and other parties planned?		
5. Has all the supply and demand information been collated and presented in a format (i.e. single document that can be filtered accordingly) that will help people to review it and highlight any changes?		
6. Have any changes made to the Active Places Power data been fed back to Sport England?		

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APPENDIX ONE: SPORTING CONTEXT

The following section outlines a series of national, regional and local policies pertaining to the study and which will have an important influence on the Strategy.

National context

The provision of high quality and accessible community outdoor sports facilities at a local level is a key requirement for achieving the targets set out by the Government and Sport England. It is vital that this strategy is cognisant of and works towards these targets in addition to local priorities and plans.

Department of Culture, Media and Sport Get Active: A Strategy for the Future of Sport and Physical Activity (2023)

The Government published its new strategy for sport in August 2023. The 2015 government sport strategy, Sporting Future: A New Strategy for a More Active Nation, was a fundamental re-framing of sport and physical activity in the UK. It set out five outcomes delivered by sport and physical activity:

- ◀ Physical wellbeing.
- ◀ Mental wellbeing.
- ◀ Individual development.
- ◀ Social and community development.
- ◀ Sustainable economic development.

This new strategy builds on the foundations of Sporting Future and retains these five outcomes at its core. In order to measure its success in producing outputs which accord with these aims it has also adopted a series of three core priorities, with seven indicators to achieve these priorities as follows:

- ◀ **Being unapologetically ambitious in making the nation more active**
 - ◀ Ensuring everyone is focused on increasing physical activity, meaning fewer inactive children, and narrowing the gap on inactivity where groups are not being reached, with visible progress across the country by 2030
 - ◀ Focusing on evidence, data and metrics
 - ◀ Setting the future direction for facilities and spaces where people can be active
- ◀ **Making sport and physical activity more inclusive and welcoming for all that everyone can have confidence that there is a place for them in sport**
 - ◀ Helping the sector to be welcoming to all
 - ◀ Improving how issues and concerns are dealt within the sector
- ◀ **Moving towards a more sustainable sector that is more financially resilient and robust**
 - ◀ Supporting the sector to access additional, alternative forms of investment
 - ◀ Working towards a more environmentally sustainable sector

Delivering against these priorities will help create a more active nation and a more sustainable sport sector. These aims are complementary; greater participation, stronger governance and confidence in the sector will help to drive investment, which in turn helps to attract new audiences. The vision is to make sport and physical activity accessible, resilient, fun and fair, for now and the years to come – for the benefit of individuals and the country.

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Sport England Uniting the Movement: Our 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport (2021-2031)

Sport and physical activity makes people happier and healthier, and movement is the lens through which we can make that happen. It does the same thing for our communities, with life-changing, sustainable benefits that have huge economic and social value. That's why Sport England wants sport and physical activity to be recognised as essential to help overcome these national challenges.

The Strategy recognises the need to invest in sport and physical activity through NGBs, other sports bodies and local sports clubs, organisations and community groups to increase engagement for different groups as part of our core purpose. It states that there is now a need to go further in promoting movement in general as the means to unlock sport and activity for some people.

There are deep-rooted inequalities in sport and physical activity, which means that there are people who feel excluded from being active because the right options and opportunities aren't there. These inequalities are at the very core of the Uniting the Movement.

Sport England plans on having a laser focus on tackling inequalities in all that it does, because providing opportunities to people and communities that have traditionally been left behind, and helping to remove the barriers to activity is vitally important.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out planning policies for England. It details how these changes are expected to be applied to the planning system. It also provides a framework for local people and their councils to produce distinct local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities.

The NPPF states the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It identifies that the planning system needs to focus on three themes of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. A presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key aspect for any plan-making and decision-taking processes. In relation to plan-making the NPPF sets out that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs.

The 'promoting healthy communities' theme identifies that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficiencies or surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform what provision is required in an area.

As a prerequisite the NPPF states existing open space, sports and recreation buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- ◆ An assessment has been undertaken, which has clearly shown that the open space, buildings or land is surplus to requirements.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

In order for planning policies to be 'sound' local authorities are required to carry out a robust assessment of need for open space, sport and recreation facilities.

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The FA National Football Facilities Strategy (2018-28)

The Football Association's (FA) National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS) provides a strategic framework that sets out key priorities and targets for the national game (i.e., football) over a ten-year period.

The Strategy sets out shared aims and objectives it aims to deliver on in conjunction with The Premier League, Sport England and the Government, to be delivered with support of the Football Foundation.

These stakeholders have clearly identified the aspirations for football to contribute directly to nationally important social and health priorities. Alongside this, the strategy is clear that traditional, affiliated football remains an important priority and a core component of the game, whilst recognising and supporting the more informal environments used for the community and recreational game.

Its vision is: "Within 10 years we aim to deliver great football facilities, wherever they are needed"

£1.3 billion has been spent by football and Government since 2000 to enhance existing football facilities and build new ones. However, more is needed if football and Government's shared objectives for participation, individual well-being and community cohesion are to be achieved. Nationally, direct investment will be increased – initially to £69 million per annum from football and Government (a 15% increase on recent years).

The NFFS investment priorities can be broadly grouped into six areas, recognising the need to grow the game, support existing players and better understand the different football environments:

- ◀ **Improve 20,000 Natural Turf pitches**, with a focus on addressing drop off due to a poor playing experience;
- ◀ **Deliver 1,000 3G AGP 'equivalents'** (mix of 11v11 and small sided provision, including MUGAs - small sided facilities are likely to have a key role in smaller / rural communities and encouraging multi-sport offers), enhancing the quality of playing experience and supporting a sustainable approach to grass roots provision;
- ◀ **Deliver 1,000 changing pavilions/clubhouses**, linked to multi-pitch or hub sites, supporting growth (particularly in women and girls football), sustainability and providing a facility infrastructure to underpin investment in coaching, officials and football development;
Support access to flexible indoor spaces, including equipment and court markings, to support growth in futsal, walking football and to support the education and skills outcomes, exploiting opportunities for football to positively impact on personal and social outcomes for young people in particular;
- ◀ **Refurbish existing stock to maintain current provision**, recognising the need to address historic under-investment and issues with refurbishment of existing facilities;
- ◀ **Support testing of technology and innovation**, building on customer insight to deliver hubs for innovation, testing and development of the game.

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Local Football Facility Plans

To support in delivery of both the current and superseding FA National Game Strategy (NGS), the FA commissioned a nationwide consultancy project. A Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) has now been produced for every local authority across England. Each plan is unique to its area as well as being diverse in its representation.

The LFFP is strategically aligned to the National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS); a 10-year plan to change the landscape of football facilities in England. The NFFS represents a major funding commitment from the national funding partners (The FA, Premier League, DCMS, Football Foundation) to inform and direct an estimated one billion pounds of investment into football facilities over the next ten years.

Each LFFP will build upon PPOSS findings (where present and current) regarding the formal and affiliated game, to also include strategic priorities for investment across small sided football (recreational and informal including indoors). The LFFP will also incorporate consultation with groups outside of formal football, as well as underrepresented communities. This could include those which may be key partners with regards to football for behavioural change and groups which may be key drivers of FA NGS priorities around participation in the likes of women and girls' football, disability football and futsal.

LFFPs will identify key projects to be delivered and act as an investment portfolio for projects that require funding. As such, around 90% of all national football investment through the funding partners will be identified via LFFPs.

It is important to recognise that a LFFP is an investment portfolio of priority projects for potential investment - it is not a detailed supply and demand analysis of all pitch provision in a local area. Consequently, it cannot be used in place of a PPOSS and is not an accepted evidence base for site change of use or disposal. A LFFP will, however, build on available/existing local evidence and strategic plans and may adopt relevant actions from a PPS and/or complement these with additional investment priorities.

The FA: Inspiring Positive Change Through Football (2024-28)¹⁸

The FA launched its new Strategy which aims to 'take English football forward, with clear focus on the biggest opportunities and challenges that need to be addressed'.

To achieve this, eight key strategic priorities are identified which include four 'Game Changer' objectives and four 'Drivers' objectives as detailed below. The strategy also outlines how The FA's plans to achieve these objectives.

Game Changers:

- ◀ Win tournaments
 - ◀ Develop pathways
 - ◀ Support elite players
 - ◀ Enhance environments
 - ◀ Collaborate and influence
- ◀ A game free from discrimination
 - ◀ Boost representation
 - ◀ Drive more inclusion
 - ◀ Tackle discrimination
- ◀ Equal opportunities for women & girls
 - ◀ Increase school participation
 - ◀ Increase club participation

¹⁸ [FA Strategy 2024-2028: The Football Association](#)

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- ◀ Enhance women's competitions
- ◀ Support female coaches and referees
- ◀ Transform the pitch landscape
 - ◀ Sustain and grow high-quality grass pitches
 - ◀ Deliver new 3G pitches
 - ◀ Support inclusivity accessibility and environmental sustainability of facilities

Drivers:

- ◀ Thriving community clubs
 - ◀ Develop club opportunities
 - ◀ Support the current and future generation of club leaders
 - ◀ Equip clubs to add long-term value to local communities
- ◀ World-class FA cups
 - ◀ Broaden commercial appeal
 - ◀ Evolve the Adobe Women's FA Cup format
- ◀ Participant led
 - ◀ Place participants at the centre of decision making
 - ◀ Create flexible models to meet participants needs
 - ◀ Provide digital tools to improve experiences
- ◀ Progressive governance
 - ◀ Support integration of women's and girls' football
 - ◀ Support governance of the NLS
 - ◀ Support our County Football Associations (CFAs)

The FA: Reaching Higher (2024-28)¹⁹

The FA's 2020-2024 strategy, 'Inspiring Positive Change', coincided with record growth across the sport, with more women and girls playing, coaching, officiating and supporting the flourishing professional game than ever before.

This strategy aims to build on the success achieved to date and strives to continue working to unlock the full potential of the women's and girls' game. The strategy outlines four strategic priorities as seen below.

1. **Build and Protect the Uniqueness of the Women's Game:** Continue to honour the history of women's football and recognise those who have contributed towards making it so unique, whilst ensuring the distinct qualities and unique culture of the women's game are valued and protected.
2. **Win a Major Tournament:** Continue to be world-leaders both on and off the pitch, developing players and building an inclusive talent pathway system to make football more equal and accessible at every level of the game, ensuring the England pathway and teams represent society.
3. **Build Robust, High-Quality Competition:** Create compelling competition structures and support clubs to develop to the appropriate level within the game, while enabling people to grow and develop within The FA's competition structures.
4. **Deliver Equal Opportunities for Women and Girls to Play:** Sustain growth in schools whilst tackling inequalities. Continue to grow the number of female teams and deliver vibrant league offers whilst extending and enhancing the sessional football offer. The ambition is for 90% of schools to deliver equal access for girls to play football in key stages two and three.

There are five golden threads which weave through each of the four strategic priorities and across all levels of the women's and girls' game, which will be instrumental for delivering the next phase of growth by 2028:

¹⁹ [The FA Women's & Girls Football Strategy 2024-28](#)

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1. **Female Health and Wellbeing:** Develop the game to support women and girls with their health and wellbeing needs, providing them with environments in which they can thrive.
2. **Safeguarding:** Support the evolution of an ever-safer culture across the women's and girls' game.
3. **Refereeing:** Grow and nurture a new generation of referees who are representative of our society.
4. **Coaching:** Support and develop brilliant coaches capable of unleashing every player's potential in a safe and inclusive game.
5. **Diversity and Inclusion:** Ensure the game is more reflective of our society.

Inspiring Generations – Cricket's Game-wide Strategy (2025 – 28)^[1]

In October 2024 the ECB released its updated Inspiring Generations – Cricket's Game-wide Strategy (2025–28). Cricket in England and Wales has seen transformative growth since the publication of its previous strategy Inspiring Generation (2020-24). Its new strategy represents an evolution of its plans, however, many of its previous themes are still relevant. Its main purpose is to say 'Cricket is a game for me' through its vision:

- ◀ To become the most inclusive team sport
- ◀ To grow and unite the game
- ◀ Lead the game through global transformation

It aims to obtain this vision through six key objectives

- ◀ Make cricket diverse, inclusive and accessible
- ◀ Transform Women's and Girl's cricket
- ◀ Connect communities through play
- ◀ Inspire through winning England teams
- ◀ Support a thriving and sustainable men's and women's professional game
- ◀ Win the battle for attention

Underpinning these six ambitions are a series of enablers that cut-across multiple areas of the game, alongside Cricket's Core Values.

The Rugby Football Union Strategy 2021 Onwards

Through the strategy, the RFU aims to enrich lives, introduce more people to rugby union and develop the sport for future generations. The goal is to achieve this by strengthening and uniting rugby union in England and producing consistently winning England teams.

Eight key strategic priorities are identified with all investment decisions aligned to these. The strategy also outlines the RFU's core activities which form the backbone of its business operations and services to the game.

The priorities include four 'Game Objectives' and four 'Driving Objectives' as detailed below.

Game Objectives:

- ◀ Enjoyment – enable positive player experiences on and off the field
- ◀ Winning England – create the best possible high-performance system for England Rugby
- ◀ Welfare – enhance player welfare to protect and support the wellbeing of players

^[1]<https://resources.ecb.co.uk/ecb/document/2024/10/22/19a925d7-3c92-4a36-8e7b-f49cb470377f/ECB-Inspiring-Generations-2025-2028.pdf>

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- ◀ Flourishing rugby communities – support clubs to sustain and grow themselves and to reflect society

Driving Objectives:

- ◀ Diversity & Inclusion – drive rugby union in England to reflect the diversity of society
- ◀ Understand – build a deep understanding of players, volunteers and fans to shape the future of the game
- ◀ Connect – connect with and grow the rugby community and create exceptional experiences
- ◀ Commercial and operational excellence – ensure a sustainable and efficient business model delivered by an inspired workforce

England Hockey Strategy (2023 – 2028)

England Hockey's Facilities Strategy can be found [here](#).

Aiming to make hockey more noticeable, relevant, and accessible to all, England Hockey have launched their new strategy 'Creating a Future for Our Game Together' on 3rd October.

The new strategy is a continued effort to re-engage with the current hockey community and to reach out to potential newcomers to introduce them to hockey.

Underpinning the strategy and of importance to the hockey community are four values, "collaborate inclusively, care for people and places, play with spirit win with grace and resilient in everything we do".

The strategy is the culmination of two years consultation with various stakeholders across the sport and larger sporting sector. Hockey will be guided by five key objectives over the next five years.

1. Lead Positive Change: to create and champion positive change within the community by broadening and widening the engagement of the sport and making it more ethnically and culturally diverse.
2. Meaningful Growth: to make sure that our sport thrives and grows into the future, we want to nurture a love of hockey within a more diverse group of young players and communities to reflect society.
3. Drive Visible Impact: to produce and release high-quality, engaging content that shares the love of the game, captures the passion, builds a deep connection and amplifies the voices of the hockey community with new and existing participants.
4. Responsible Leadership: to provide forward thinking, compassionate and inclusive leadership. Leadership that fosters trust within physically and psychologically safe environments and which puts players, the community and sustainability at heart of every decision.
5. Inspirational International Success: inspirational club and national teams delivering podium success in Europe and on the world stage, underpinned by a thriving talent system and domestic game.

The strategy aligns with Sport England's 'Uniting the movement' strategy and UK Sport's Powering Success, Inspiring Impact' strategic plan.

Rugby Football League – National Community Facilities Strategy (2024 – 2030)

The RFL has developed a new National Facilities Strategy which will guide investment into the game from 2024 through to 2030. The proposed investment package aligned to the Strategy will not only transform facilities, but also bolster the sport's social impact, reinforcing

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its position as a vital part of the nation's sporting and social fabric. The four focus areas of the Strategy are:

- ◀ **Security of Tenure** – allowing clubs to plan for the long-term
- ◀ **Accessible and Inclusive Facilities** – providing suitable facilities for all and creating safe spaces for the wider community
- ◀ **Adequate and Appropriate Pitch Provision**– investment both in playing surfaces, and in upskilling a volunteer workforce to maintain them
- ◀ **Sustainability**– both environmental and financial

The Strategy will deliver on the four focus areas by delivering against a set of five recommendations which are set within the Strategy and are detailed below. These recommendations reflect the wider strategic aspirations across the sport and are for the RFL to work to deliver.

◀ **Focus Community Clubs**

- ◀ Ensure the RFL has sufficient capacity and resource to deliver the recommendations identified within this Strategy to support its community clubs.
- ◀ Ensure all community clubs have the knowledge and resource to provide good quality grass pitches.
- ◀ Supporting clubs to have good quality changing and social facilities which can support the scale of need at each club. These must be inclusive for all participants and benefit target user groups such as women and girls' participants.
- ◀ Ensure clubs can accommodate a sustainable operational programme for clubhouses to ensure the longevity of provision.
- ◀ Work with clubs and key partners to increase the number of clubs with secured tenure of their club facilities.
- ◀ Develop a dedicated funding programme which is specifically aimed at supporting clubs to gain security of tenure at their respective site.
- ◀ Highlight success stories and best practices from community clubs to inspire others and showcase the positive impact of these efforts.

◀ **Deliver positive social and environmental impact**

- ◀ Support clubs through training and advice on how to promote facilities for non-rugby league purposes.
- ◀ Work with Active Partnerships across England to enable higher usage and activation of rugby league assets for non-rugby league activity.
- ◀ Prioritise clubs for wellbeing hubs which may offer the widest social benefit (relative to local need) – particularly those in high deprivation areas.
- ◀ Use the activation of club facilities as a prerequisite to capital funding for club house improvements / new development.
- ◀ Collaborative working with sports partners and key agencies

◀ **Collaborative working with sports partners and key agencies**

- ◀ Ensure continued working with Sport England and National Governing Bodies of other sports to capitalise on shared investment opportunities.
- ◀ Work with the Football Foundation to maximise Multi-Sport funding opportunities – utilising the framework provided in this Strategy as the baseline of shared investment.
- ◀ Work closely with Active Partnerships in areas with high club densities to establish opportunities for pitch access via the Open School Facilities programme.

◀ **Technological solutions**

- ◀ Ensure the RFL gathers greater levels of information from clubs via affiliation. To include (e.g.) security of tenure information and an integrated self-assessment audit of community facilities.

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- ◀ Continue expanding the use and application of PitchPower so all clubs can self-assess provision and support clubs to make positive contributions to improving the quality of grass pitches.
- ◀ Promote technological solutions which progress clubs into being more sustainable, energy efficient and ensure their long-term viability as community assets.
- ◀ Create a platform or resource hub where clubs can access information on funding opportunities, facility management, and sustainable operational practices.
- ◀ **Working with Charitable Community Organisations and Wheelchair Rugby League**
 - ◀ Develop an investment package to support the operational delivery of professional club foundation led wheelchair activity focusing on storage and logistical solutions.
 - ◀ Prioritise capital investment into community club sites which also accommodate professional club foundations as tenants for community Rugby League activity.
 - ◀ Begin work on the feasibility of developing a national wheelchair centre which includes exploring partnership opportunities with other sports to maximise multisport value and return on investment.
 - ◀ Consult with professional club foundations, where possible, to understand the need for 3G access and work to ascertain sufficient access hours during peak times of need.

Herts Sport and Physical Activity Partnership

This is the active partnership area in which East Hertfordshire is located. The Partnership's vision is to 'strategically and collaboratively improve the lives of the people of Hertfordshire, by using the power of sport and physical activity to tackle inequality and disadvantage'. It is one of 43 active partnerships across England and is funded by Sport England to locally deliver the Uniting the Movement Strategy. Key insights which informed its Strategic Plan 2022-2027 are:

- ◀ The need for a joined-up approach between schools and community sport.
- ◀ The Covid-19 Pandemic affecting the most disadvantaged communities.
- ◀ Opportunities to use sport and physical activity to tackle the number of long-term health conditions and wider societal issues.
- ◀ Widening inequality gaps.
- ◀ The need for well-designed spaces to increase physical activity levels and improve mental health.

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Bowls England: Fit for the Future (2021-2026)

Bowls England's new Strategy: 'Fit For The Future' frames an exciting course for the sport. The five-year plan has been designed with the ultimate goal of getting more people playing & enjoying bowls. It sets out its vision for the sport, how it plans to achieve its objectives and what success looks like in 2026. The priorities that will get it the target of 1 million bowls experiences per year by 2026 are:

- ✦ Building the brand of bowls by increasing focus on international & top domestic bowls, and utilizing opportunities such as Birmingham 2022 to achieve larger media coverage;
- ✦ Ensuring the sport is truly accessible to all by offering different formats of the game which suit all time constraints, as well as driving more people to clubs in new ways;
- ✦ Creating positive playing experiences for everyone who steps on the green, both for casual and competitive players, as well as growing our events calendar and introducing a Performance Pathway
- ✦ Putting volunteers first, as the lifeblood of our sport, by increasing our support for clubs in order to empower them to thrive;
- ✦ Leading the sport with purpose by developing our Governance structures, diversifying our revenue streams, and work collaboratively with all the sport's key stakeholders.

England Netball

In November 2021 England Netball launched a 10-year 'Adventure Strategy' for the game with a new brand identity for the organisation.

England Netball's 'Adventure Strategy' shares a purpose-led ambition for the game, to build on the momentum the sport has seen in recent years and take it to new heights for the decade ahead.

The 'Adventure Strategy' outlines the intention to:

- ✦ accelerate the development and growth of the game at every level, from grassroots to the elite,
- ✦ elevate the visibility of the sport, and
- ✦ lead a movement to impact lives on and beyond the court.

At the heart of its purpose, England Netball, with its proud and unique female foundations, will remain dedicated to increasing opportunities for women and girls to play the game as a priority, working tirelessly to address the gender participation gap in sport that has widened since the global pandemic.

Underpinned by years of engaging with and delivering netball for female communities, the organisation pledges to understand, support and nurture women and girls more deeply at every life stage, at every age.

The organisation is also committed to opening the sport to new audiences in every community, so netball better represents the rich diversity of the country it proudly represents, and ensures the sport continues to evolve and adapt to thrive in the future, helping to create a truly inclusive sport for all where everyone can belong, flourish and soar. A recent partnership announcement with England Men's and Mixed Netball Association (EMMNA) to help develop and grow male participation in the game, supports this commitment as England Netball pledges to promote difference and embrace the opportunity to make the sport a possibility within everyone's reach.

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Transforming netball for children and young people is a strategic priority to protect the future of the sport. Working with schools and policy makers to extend physical literacy within, and after the school day with a focus on netball specific provision will pave the way for greater community participation. The organisation will accelerate the expansion of its Bee Netball programme for young children, whilst supporting teens and young women to stay in the game to keep them physically active and in the game for life.

The elite game is in focus too, with the ambition for the Vitality Roses to be the best female sports team in the world, supporting the national team to consistently win on the world stage, with an outstanding talent pathway in place to fuel sustainable successes on court, and setting new standards for netball. The professionalisation of the game over the next decade is a priority, focusing on growing world-leading international and domestic competitions and events, and creating more careers in the sport.

Grounded in feedback from the Netball Family, with over 3,000 members and stakeholders consulted as part of the strategic process to understand what they wanted netball to 'look like' in 2031, the plan is aspirational and ambitious and sees the organisation pledge to continue to be a trailblazer for women's sport as it embarks on its new adventure.

Facility development

The facility development aspirations stated within the Strategy are to:-

- ✦ Take a fresh look at the spaces required to support the sport, creating accessible places in every community to allow netball to be incorporated into how and where women and girls live their lives;
- ✦ Protect, enhance, and extend the network of homes that house the sport at a local and regional level;
- ✦ Develop an elite domestic professional competition that supports full time athletes underpinned by a world class infrastructure and environments.
- ✦ For England Netball to achieve its ambitions to make the game accessible to wider audiences and in every community, it encourages Local Authorities to adopt policies within Playing Pitch Strategies and Built Facilities Strategies that:-
- ✦ Facilitates informal netball activity within neighbourhood multi use games areas for example by installing combined outdoor basketball and netball goals and art courts in Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs).
- ✦ Incorporates the cultural and health needs of women and girls within any designs for improved or new facilities.
- ✦ Protects and enhances netball facilities within all Primary and Secondary School environments so they offer a positive first experience of the sport for students and the wider community during out of school hours.
- ✦ Supports the installation of floodlights on outdoor courts to increase all year-round use.
- ✦ Facilitates the development of netball growth programmes, club training and competition within public leisure centres.
- ✦ Where appropriate, supports the development of netball homes and performance environments that enable local women and girls to pursue a career in netball as an elite athlete, official, coach or administrator.

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The purpose of this document is to set out our long term vision for athletics facilities in England. Facilities form a vital component of the overall England Athletics strategy.

The development, protection and enhancement of facilities will support our strategic plan and help England Athletics contribute to the delivery of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Sporting Futures: A New Strategy for Sport and Sport England's strategy Towards an Active Nation. Appropriate facilities help to attract and inspire new participants and provide the foundation and focus for a significant proportion of the England Athletics family.

The England Athletics Strategic Plan notes that the sport increasingly needs to become financially sustainable and that a business-like and innovative approach is a vital component of its future success. Facilities are fundamental, but they are also expensive to create and to maintain. The sport therefore faces a significant challenge to develop, improve and maintain facilities, most of which are currently operated and funded by third parties.

This strategy sets out a challenge to all those involved with the delivery of the sport to be innovative and business like in the operation and development of facilities at a time of financial challenge, as it aims "To create an innovative and inspiring network of sustainable athletic facilities, with the capacity to meet both current and future demand across England".