

# **HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **Built Sports Facilities Strategy**

### **Final report**

**February 2020**



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## INTRODUCTION

This Sports Facilities Strategy forecasts the future needs for sport and recreation up to 2031 and takes into account the housing requirements in the recently adopted Harborough Local Plan 2011-2031 (Harborough District Council, 2019).

It is a complementary strategy to the Harborough District Playing Pitch Strategy 2018 (Harborough District Council , 2018) which forms part of the Local Plan evidence base and has already proven valuable in guiding local priorities, investment and policies.

The assessment methodology follows the Sport England Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance (ANOG) (Sport England, 2014), including consultation with the local clubs, parish councils and national governing bodies of sport, as well as Harborough District Council.

The Strategy makes recommendations for facility development and use based on evidence and consultation throughout the development of the document. It should be noted that the facility proposals identified in the strategy are not all intended to be provided or funded directly by the District Council and it should not be assumed that the Council will automatically make additional funds or resources available to assist other bodies to provide new or improved facilities. It also does not mean that the Council will take on responsibility for providing or managing more facilities.

Delivery of the recommendations associated with the District Council or other stakeholders are subject to capacity and resources being available to realise them. Inclusion in this strategy does not guarantee delivery of all recommendations in the lifetime of the Strategy.

A key driver for the production of this document is to deliver an evidence base which can support the planning policy for the Harborough Local Plan. The strategy will help the Council and its partners to:

- Understand provision needs now and in the future.
- Determine planning applications.
- Ensure that the management and maintenance of sports facilities is appropriate and sustainable.
- Prioritise local authority capital and revenue investment, including S106 and any future Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- Prioritise and support bids for external funding to assist in the delivery of sporting infrastructure.
- Identify the role of the education sector in supporting the delivery of community sporting facilities.
- Contribute to the aims and objectives of improving health and well-being and increasing participation in sport.

Achieving this will guarantee the effective delivery of sport and leisure services across the district and ensure that a network of sports facilities is in place to cater for the needs of the current and future population.

The geographical scope of this strategy is Harborough district, but it takes into account the influence of facilities in adjacent local authority areas where appropriate, in accordance with the brief. The assessment has identified high levels of cross-boundary movement for some facilities, particularly around the Market Harborough and Great Glen areas.

If major new housing is delivered outside of the district but close to the boundaries of Harborough without additional sports facilities, then this may increase the demand for sports provision within the district. Conversely if, for example, should a new large new leisure centre with swimming pool be provided just outside of Harborough's boundaries, then this may meet

some of the sports needs of the district's residents. Cross-boundary issues are therefore specifically considered for each facility type within this report.

## SECTION 1: ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

- 1.1 This strategy considers the built facilities used by the community for sport and physical activity. The approach to this assessment and the development of the recommendations reflects the guidance contained in the Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance of Sport England of 2014 (Sport England, 2014). It specifically considers the impact of the proposed housing contained within the emerging Local Plan. The forecast populations have been developed from bespoke modelling work undertaken for the strategy and take into account both the proposed housing and what is likely to happen to the demography of the existing population.
- 1.2 Geographical sub areas were specifically designed and agreed for the preceding Playing Pitch Strategy (Harborough District Council , 2018) as there was no simple fit with any of the other sub areas being used by the district council. The sub areas also needed to reflect the practical experiences of the sports across the district to take account of:
- the distance and travel time to sports sites.
  - the need to assess the supply and demand relating to the anticipated housing growth in each area of the district.
- 1.3 The sub areas chosen for the Playing Pitch Strategy also work effectively for this built facilities strategy and therefore form the basis of the assessment.

### The provision and protection of sports facilities

- 1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework, 2019 (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019) encourages local authorities to plan positively for sports provision and it also protects existing facilities. This strategy fulfils the policy requirements expected of local authorities.
- 1.5 Paragraph 92 states:
- To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:*
- a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*
- 1.6 Paragraph 96 of the NPPF states:

*Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. 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.*

1.7 Paragraph 97 of the NPPF states:

*Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, 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.*

1.8 Similar to the Playing Pitch Strategy, the built facilities strategy has the following key objectives.

*Objective 1 - To protect the existing supply of sports facilities where facilities are required for meeting current or future community sports needs.*

*Objective 2 - Secure tenure and access to sites for community use including via sports clubs, through a range of solutions and partnership agreements. Additionally, to maximise community use of education sites where there is demand.*

1.9 A number of sports facilities currently being used by the community across the district do not have any security of access, particularly the schools. A priority for these sites is to ensure that the long-term security of community use is achieved, and Sport England has produced guidance (Use Our School), online resources and toolkits to support negotiations (Sport England , 2017).

## Financial sustainability and sports development

- 1.10 In order to achieve financial sustainability, local sports clubs will need to be supported by partners including the Council, national governing bodies and the County Sports Partnership across a range of areas including management, membership, funding, facilities, volunteers and partnership working for example with volunteer support agencies and local businesses. As part of club development there will be a need to encourage clubs to develop sound business as well as sports development plans. Most clubs would also benefit from considering management models, including registering as Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC) or as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). There are benefits of both routes, and individual clubs would need to decide their best option. Clubs should also be encouraged to work with partners locally, possibly via volunteer support agencies or linking with local businesses.
- 1.11 Some clubs who currently hire their facilities may also be able to consider, should the opportunity arise, becoming more responsible for managing their facilities. Should asset transfer options be considered, any club must have a full business plan to ensure the proposal is financially sound, in the short, medium and long term.
- 1.12 On-going sports development is therefore an essential requirement for the delivery of this strategy, in addition to the facility elements.

## Methodology

### Overview

- 1.13 The assessment of each facility type draws on a number of different elements:
- The findings from the site audits, including an assessment of the used capacity of the facilities and management considerations;
  - The theoretical demand for facilities based on various modelling tools such as those on the Sport England Active Places Power website;
  - The results of consultation with local clubs, national governing bodies of sport, and site managers;
  - Issues associated with facility quality, accessibility for the community etc.;
  - The future population characteristics;
  - The Council's policies on participation, and sports development objectives;
  - The resources which may be available to meet the future requirements;
  - The network of facilities and housing growth.
- 1.14 As each assessment is based on a number of factors which can change over time, the recommendations will need to be kept under review. Details of the methodology are provided in Appendix 1.



## Consultation with sports clubs and national governing bodies of sport

- 1.15 The consultation process with local clubs and national governing bodies is detailed in Appendix 2, including the list of which clubs and NGBs responded.
- 1.16 The local sports clubs were identified through:
- Club details held by Harborough District Council
  - Club details held by Leicestershire and Rutland Sport
  - The relevant national governing bodies of sport
  - The leisure centres
  - Facility managers at school and other sites e.g. Fleckney Sports Centre
  - Web research
- 1.17 Direct contact was made by the consultants via e mail or via a club's own web site contact form where this information was available in January 2019. The leisure centres, facility managers and national governing bodies also contacted their local clubs on behalf of the study with a cover note and link to the online survey form. All of the known clubs were

therefore given the opportunity to complete the online survey form about their club, the facilities they use, their aspirations and any issues.

- 1.18 There is no comprehensive list of sports clubs in the district, but 34 separate clubs completed the web survey, with some providing additional information by phone or by e mail to the consultants. At least two reminders were sent out to all clubs if they had not responded to the survey, either directly by the consultants, or via the NGBs and facility managers.
- 1.19 Most Sport England funded NGBs (excluding the pitch sports) were contacted with a short survey to ask about their priorities and any known issues for the district over the period January – February 2019. Most NGBs responded, but only a small number had locally-identified priorities.
- 1.20 During September-early October 2019 all the clubs who had responded to the original consultation were given an opportunity to review the full main report, its appendices and summary. There was also additional contact with a small number of clubs who had not responded to the consultation earlier in the year, but who had since come forwards. Seven clubs provided comments on the full draft strategy, mainly associated with indoor bowls, indoor tennis and cycling.
- 1.21 The national governing bodies of sport were each sent the relevant section of the main report, plus introductory sections and appendices in September 2019. Eleven of the national governing body responses were received, mostly with small changes or some additional data. The issues raised by them at the draft strategy stage reflected the views of the local clubs and were again primarily associated with indoor bowls, indoor tennis and cycling. Lawn Tennis Association provided new information at this stage. There was also new information provided by British Gliding and this was added to the final report as a separate section.
- 1.22 The issues raised in relation to indoor bowls were discussed at a meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019 between the Market Harborough Indoor Bowls Club, the English Indoor Bowling Association (EIBA), Harborough District Council and the consultant. Information provided at that meeting and the immediate follow-up has been integrated into the final report.
- 1.23 The relevant sections of the draft final report were shared with the Lawn Tennis Association, England Netball and the EIBA in December 2019, and their feedback has been used to inform the final report.

- 1.24 More detail about the consultation process with the national governing bodies and clubs is provided in Appendix 2 and the individual club and NGB consultation responses are summarised within the relevant section of this strategy report. Appendix 3 provides a summary of the club online survey returns for the district of January-February 2019 and Appendix 4 provides the strategy overview for the national governing bodies of sport.

### Consultation with Town and Parish Councils

- 1.25 A survey of town and parish councils was undertaken between April and August 2019 to confirm site information and project proposals relating to their village or community halls. 77 returns were received, representing 72% of parishes and 77% of these types of local facility.
- 1.26 The information provided in the feedback is summarised in Section 14 Village and Community Centres, of this report.

## SECTION 2: PROFILE OF HARBOROUGH

- 2.1 This section of the strategy provides a profile of the district, with more detail provided in Appendix 5. This section of the report is replicated from the adopted Harborough District Playing Pitch Strategy 2018 (Harborough District Council , 2018) and is repeated here so that the Sports Facilities Strategy can be more easily read as a standalone document.

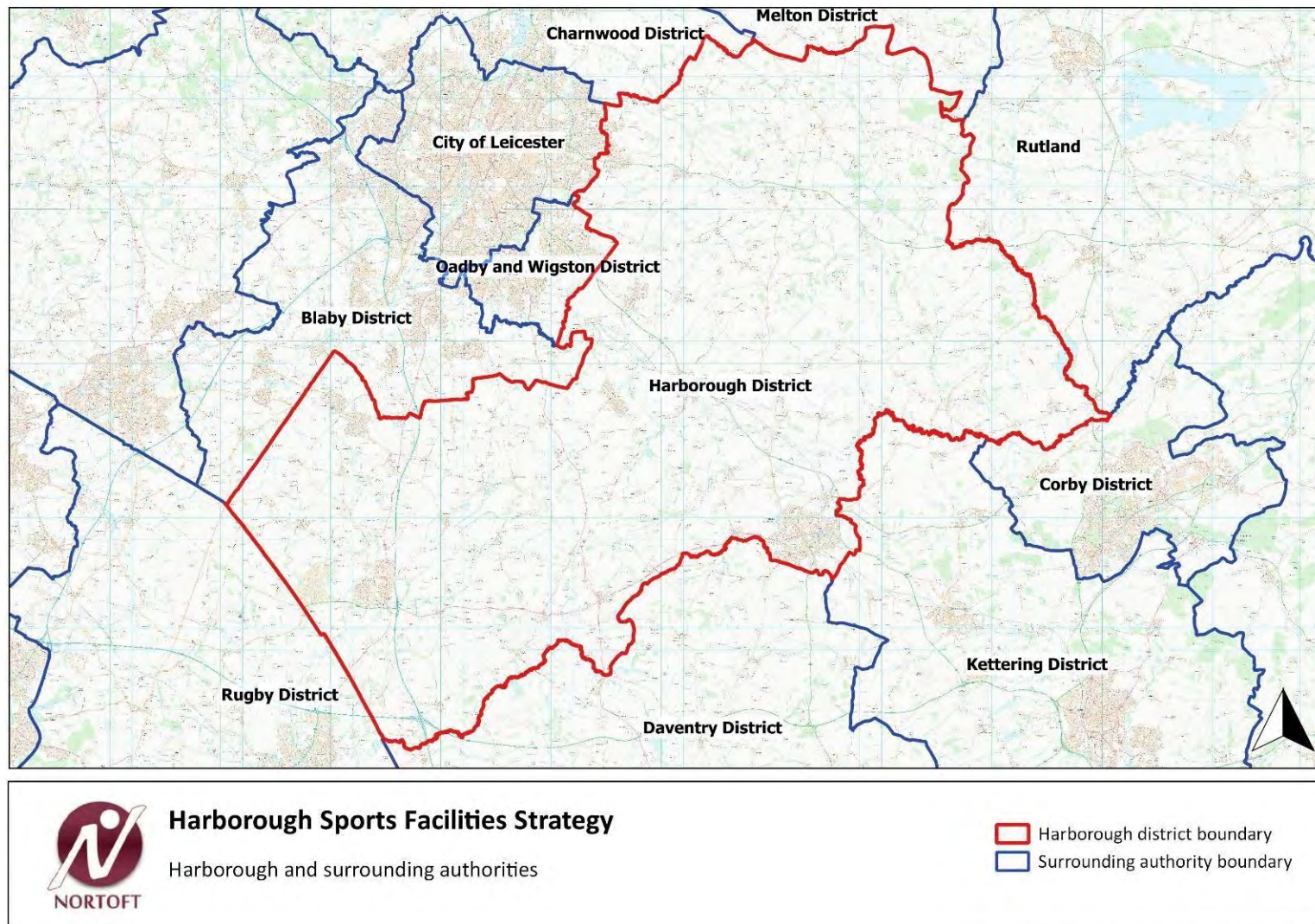
### Introduction to the district

- 2.2 Harborough District covers an area of 238 square miles of rural south and east Leicestershire, a map of the district is provided at Figure 1. The district's central location means that it has good access to regional and national transport links. The M1 passes through the district in the west whilst the M6/A14 is located to the south. Other main routes include the A6, A47 and A508 which between them provide links to Leicester, Northampton, Kettering and Corby.
- 2.3 Most of the district's population is found in the two market towns of Market Harborough and Lutterworth together with the larger villages of Broughton Astley, Great Glen, Kibworth and Fleckney. Bushby, Thurnby and Scraptoft form part of Leicester's Principal Urban Area. Just under a third of the district's population live in the smaller rural settlements, 71 of which have a population of less than 500 people.
- 2.4 Overall the district is one of the least deprived areas in England and the least deprived district in Leicestershire. However, central Market Harborough has been identified as a neighbourhood which suffers multiple deprivations. There are also significant barriers to housing and services in the more rural parts of the district, which have very limited public transport. Car ownership levels are high, with almost half of households having more than one car.
- 2.5 People in Harborough are generally healthier than the rest of Leicestershire and are significantly healthier than England as an average. The Sport England Active Lives Survey (Sport England, 2019) suggests that for the year November 2017-2018 Harborough residents were also more active than the county, region or England as a whole, see Figure 2.





*Figure 1: Map of Harborough with its surrounding districts*



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*Figure 2: Sport and Physical Activity Levels*  
(Sport England, 2019)

| Where          | Percentage rates of activity November 2017-18 per 1,000 population aged 16 years and over |   |                                 | Change from November 2015-16 |
|----------------|---|---|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                | Active (150+ minutes a week) %  | Fairly Active (30-149 minutes a week) % | Inactive (<30 minutes a week) % |                              |
| Harborough     | 64.7  | 12.9                                    | 22.3                            | No change                    |
| Leicestershire | 60.0  | 13.0                                    | 27.0                            | No change                    |
| East Midlands  | 61.2  | 12.5                                    | 26.3                            | No change                    |
| England        | 62.6  | 12.3                                    | 25.1                            | More people active           |

- 2.6 In Harborough district, the majority of residents are middle-aged, economically active, and relatively affluent. They are mainly attracted to sports such as swimming, cycling and gym, but also play football and tennis. There are however a relatively high number of older residents, particularly in the rural areas, some of which play bowls.

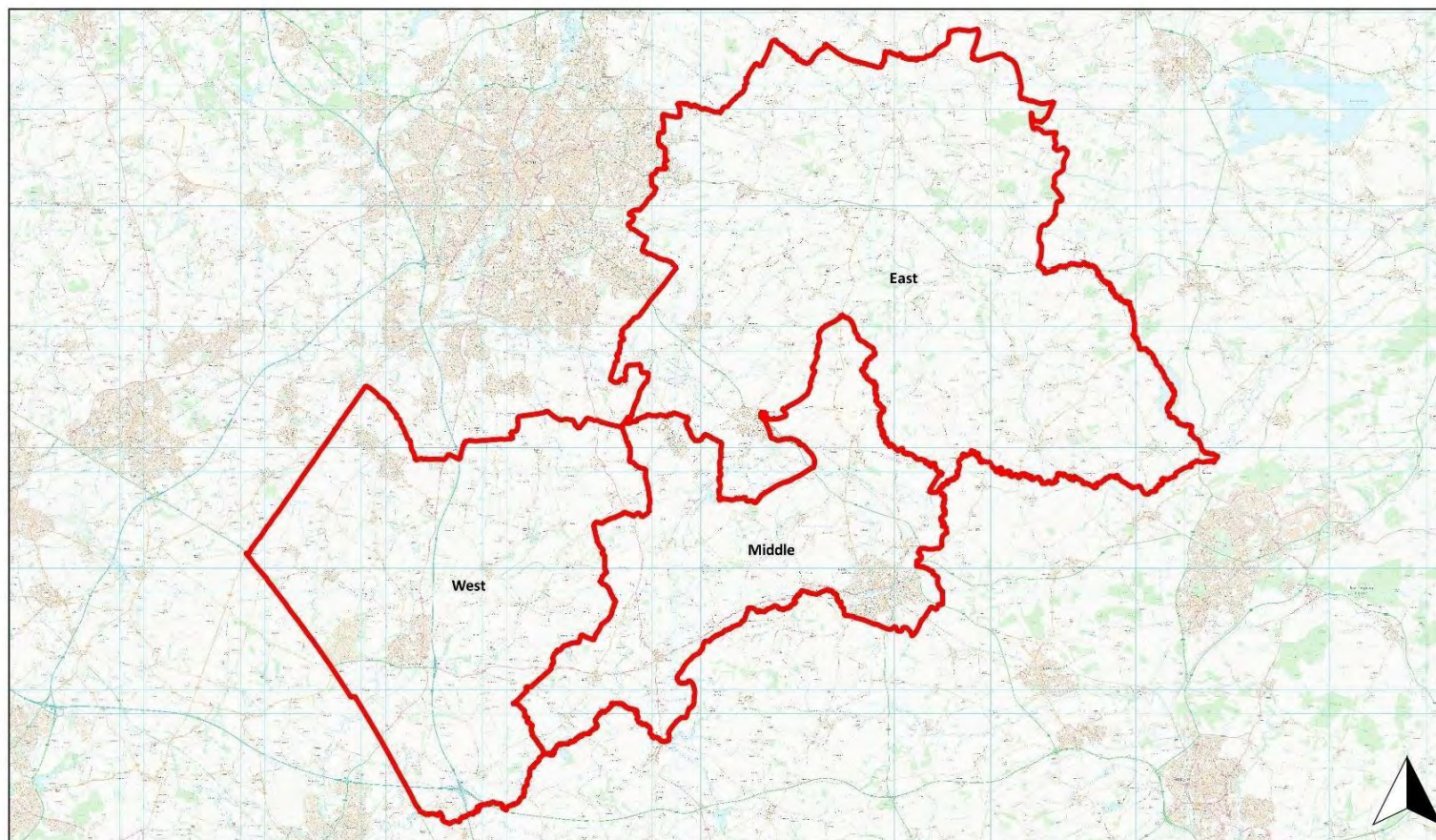
## Strategy sub areas and settlement hierarchy






- 2.7 The geographical sub areas used in this strategy recognise that there is no simple fit to any other existing sub areas being used by the District Council, and that new sub areas are needed to reflect the patterns of travel and facility use by sports participants across the district. There is also a need to reflect the characteristics of the district, with the two market towns with their sports provision, the influence of the Leicester fringe, and the strategic development areas identified for new housing.
- 2.8 The agreed strategy sub areas are mapped in Figure 3. In summary these are:
- West sub area: Lutterworth, Broughton Astley and surrounds
  - Middle sub area: Market Harborough and surrounds
  - East sub area: Kibworth, edge of Leicester and surrounds
- 2.9 The Local Plan's settlement hierarchy is given in Appendix F of the Local Plan (Harborough District Council, 2019) and is summarised in Figure 4.

Figure 3: Strategy sub areas



## Harborough Sports Facilities Strategy

MSOA based Sub Areas

 MSOA based Sub Areas

*Figure 4: Settlement hierarchy*

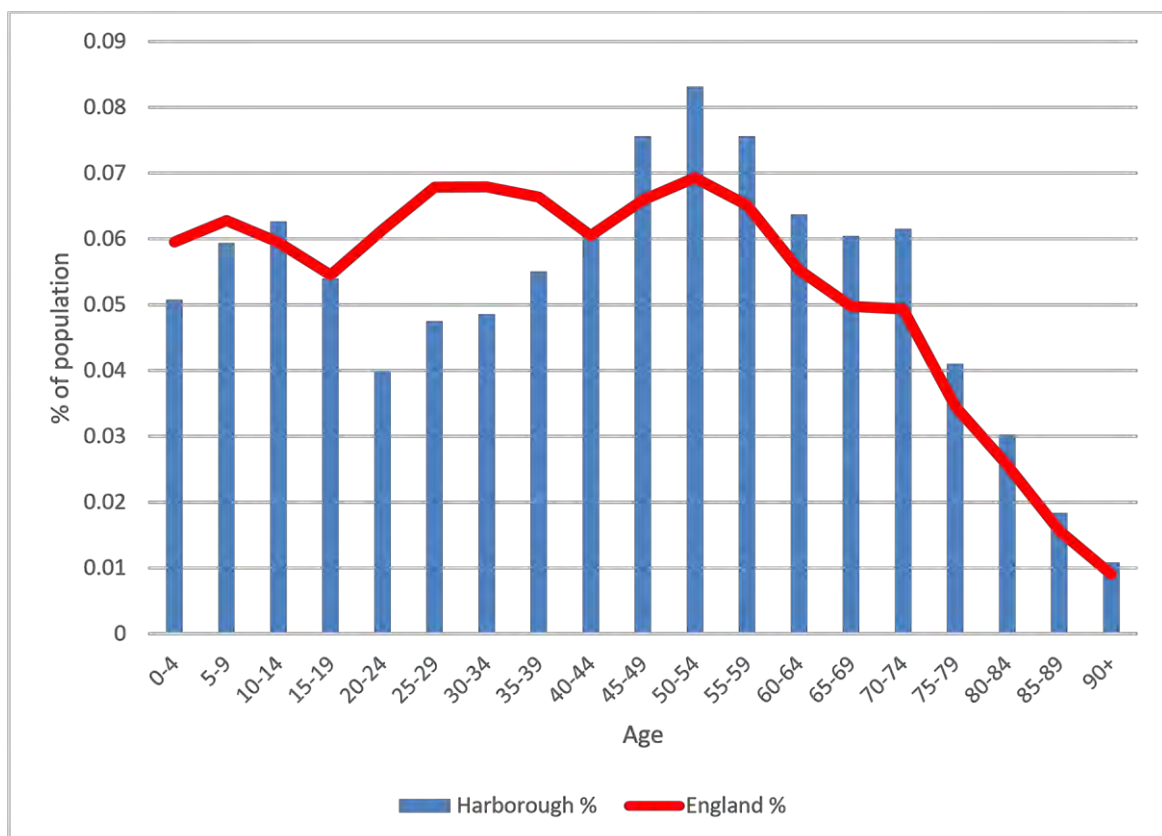
| Settlement hierarchy       | Definition   | Settlements  |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Principal Urban Area (PUA) | Settlement forms part of the built up area of Leicester and consequently there is access to a wide range of services, facilities and employment opportunities.   | Thurnby and Bushby, Scraptoft  |
| Sub Regional Centre        | Settlement has wide range of retail, service and employment provision, good road and rail links and performs a sub regional role equivalent to other centres in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area (HMA).  | Market Harborough  |
| Key Centres                | Settlement has a range of retail, service and employment and is a significant residential area   | Lutterworth, Broughton Astley  |
| Rural Centres              | Rural Centres are identified on the basis of the presence of least four of the six key services (food shop, GP surgery, library, post office, primary school and pub) and a minimum of 400 households. A village's relationship with larger settlements higher up in the hierarchy has also been taken into account. Rural Centres are a sustainable location for rural housing and additional employment, retail and community uses to serve the settlement and the surrounding area. | Billesdon, Fleckney, Great Glen, Houghton on the Hill, Husbands Bosworth, The Kibworths, Ullesthorpe   |
| Selected Rural Villages    | Selected Rural Villages are identified on the basis of presence of at least 2 of the 6 key services and a minimum of 100 households. Where neighbouring villages share a primary school which is within acceptable and safe walking distance, they have been grouped as joint Selected Rural Villages.   | Bitteswell, Church and East Langton, the Claybrookes, Dunton Bassett, Foxton, Gilmorton, Great Bowden, Great Easton (with Bringham), Hallaton, Lubenham, Medbourne, North Kilworth, South Kilworth, Swinford, Tilton on the Hill, Tugby. |

|                                      |  |                        |
|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Other Villages and Rural Settlements | These are rural villages and settlements that do not meet the criteria for identification as Selected Rural Villages due to their size and/or level of services. | Others not named above |
|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------|

## Current population

- 2.10 The population of Harborough in 2017 was estimated by ONS to be around 89,900, and the latest set of ONS projections released in May 2018 estimated that the population in 2019 would be 92,600. The current population structure shows a much higher percentage of those aged 45-74 years than the national average, whilst there are much lower numbers of people aged 20-39 years, and in those aged 0-4 years, see (Figure 5).

*Figure 5: Harborough current population structure compared to England*  
(Source: ONS)



## Population forecasts

- 2.11 The ONS population forecasts for Harborough which were available in 2017 included some housing growth, but not the amount being proposed in the emerging Local Plan. It was therefore necessary to develop a bespoke population methodology to underpin the playing pitch strategy, the steps and outcomes of which were agreed by Harborough District Council. These projections have been used to underpin the modelling of this Harborough Sports Facilities Strategy.



2.12 The starting point for the future population estimates were the ONS estimates for each of the Middle Super Output Areas for 2014 aggregated into the sub areas. The balance in the population across the district by sub area, based on the MSOA estimates in 2014 were:

- Middle sub area: Market Harborough and surrounds – 40.79%
- West sub area: Lutterworth, Broughton Astley and surrounds – 31.83%
- East sub area: Kibworth, edge of Leicester and surrounds – 27.38%

2.13 Harborough District Council has advised that the housing in the following proposed strategic development areas (SDA) and housing allocations from the draft housing trajectory of May 2017 should be added to the ONS population forecasts, with the number of houses completed by each milestone date of 2021, 2026 and 2031 being:

- Middle

| North West Market Harborough SDA |      |      | Overstone Park |      |      | East of Blackberry Grange |      |      | Arnesby Rd and Fleckney |      |      | Burnmill Farm |      |      |
|----------------------------------|------|------|----------------|------|------|---------------------------|------|------|-------------------------|------|------|---------------|------|------|
| 2021                             | 2026 | 2031 | 2021           | 2026 | 2031 | 2021                      | 2026 | 2031 | 2021                    | 2026 | 2031 | 2021          | 2026 | 2031 |
| 329                              | 600  | 571  | 62             | 335  | 201  | 0                         | 14   | 335  | 0                       | 181  | 117  | 0             | 90   | 0    |

- West

| East of Lutterworth SDA |      |       |
|-------------------------|------|-------|
| 2021                    | 2026 | 2031  |
| 0                       | 412  | 1,088 |

- East

| Scraptoft North SDA |      |      |
|---------------------|------|------|
| 2021                | 2026 | 2031 |
| 0                   | 524  | 676  |

2.14 The modelling for the above sites uses a housing multiplier of 2.3 persons per dwelling, with a population structure reflecting a typical sustainable urban extension, as tested in Northamptonshire, Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes. The SDA sites are consequently expected to have a much higher proportion of young families, and very few older people.

- 2.15 With the inclusion of the new growth from the strategic housing areas, the population of the authority as a whole is expected to rise to around 116,673 by 2031, with about 44% in the Middle sub area, 30% in the West, and 26% in the East. The summary of the district wide population and sub area populations for 2017, 2021, 2026 and 2031 is provided in Figure 6. These forecasts underpin the estimated future demand for sport during the period up to 2031.
- 2.16 The forecast population for 2031 using this methodology is higher at 116,673 than the 2016 ONS based estimate of 2018 for 2031 which is 101,000. At this time, the difference between the ONS estimate and the estimated strategy population is the equivalent to additional demand for approximately 1.5 sports halls and 158 sq m of swimming pool water space across the district. This is not significant in the sports strategy planning.
- 2.17 It is intended that this strategy will be regularly reviewed, and this will include updating population estimates and assessing the implications thereof.



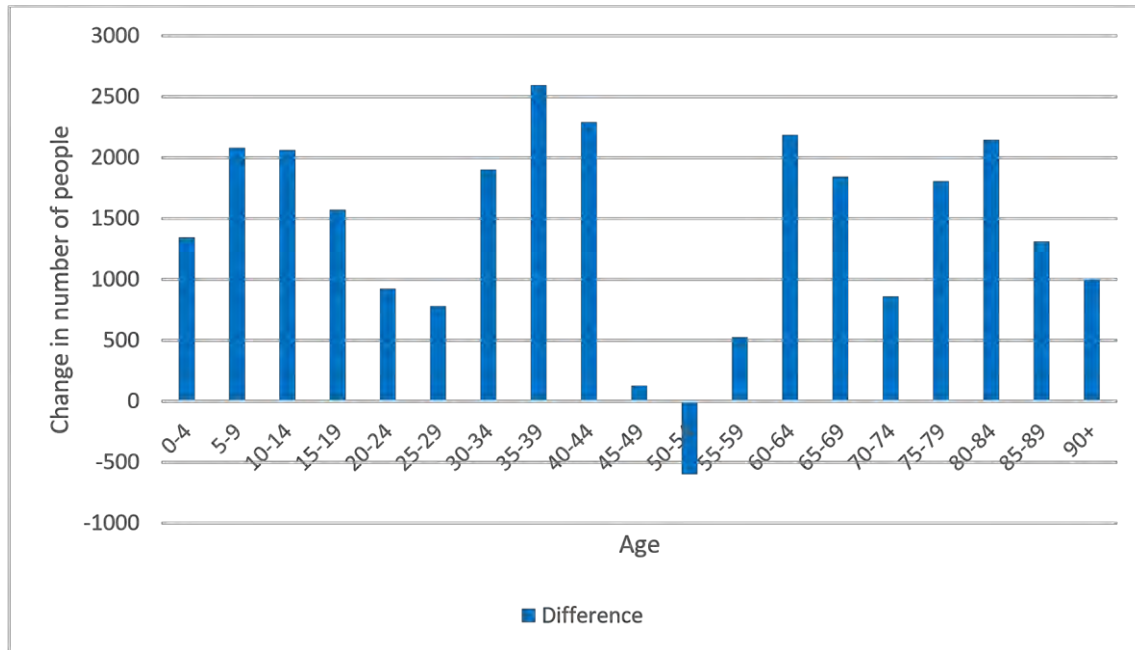
Figure 6: *Harborough population up to 2031*

|         |       | Populations at 2017, 2021, 2026, 2031 |       |       |          |        |       |       |          |        |       |       |          |        |       |       |          |
|---------|-------|---------------------------------------|-------|-------|----------|--------|-------|-------|----------|--------|-------|-------|----------|--------|-------|-------|----------|
|         |       | 2017                                  |       |       |          | 2021   |       |       |          | 2026   |       |       |          | 2031   |       |       |          |
|         |       | Middle                                | West  | East  | District | Middle | West  | East  | District | Middle | West  | East  | District | Middle | West  | East  | District |
| Males   | 0-4   | 979                                   | 764   | 657   | 2400     | 1028   | 764   | 657   | 2449     | 1221   | 847   | 750   | 2817     | 1373   | 931   | 769   | 3073     |
|         | 5-9   | 1142                                  | 891   | 767   | 2800     | 1185   | 891   | 767   | 2843     | 1409   | 969   | 852   | 3230     | 1778   | 1142  | 971   | 3891     |
|         | 10-14 | 1142                                  | 891   | 767   | 2800     | 1262   | 955   | 821   | 3038     | 1425   | 995   | 873   | 3293     | 1769   | 1139  | 973   | 3882     |
|         | 15-19 | 1061                                  | 828   | 712   | 2600     | 1090   | 828   | 712   | 2629     | 1301   | 922   | 806   | 3028     | 1555   | 1013  | 868   | 3436     |
|         | 20-24 | 816                                   | 637   | 548   | 2000     | 754    | 573   | 493   | 1820     | 845    | 594   | 519   | 1959     | 1118   | 723   | 621   | 2462     |
|         | 25-29 | 938                                   | 732   | 630   | 2300     | 975    | 732   | 630   | 2337     | 1028   | 707   | 624   | 2360     | 1234   | 792   | 665   | 2691     |
|         | 30-34 | 857                                   | 668   | 575   | 2100     | 1029   | 764   | 657   | 2450     | 1264   | 849   | 752   | 2865     | 1475   | 911   | 766   | 3151     |
|         | 35-39 | 979                                   | 764   | 657   | 2400     | 1028   | 764   | 657   | 2449     | 1396   | 943   | 833   | 3173     | 1786   | 1114  | 947   | 3847     |
|         | 40-44 | 1101                                  | 859   | 739   | 2700     | 1142   | 859   | 739   | 2740     | 1357   | 934   | 821   | 3112     | 1811   | 1151  | 985   | 3946     |
|         | 45-49 | 1468                                  | 1146  | 986   | 3600     | 1290   | 987   | 849   | 3126     | 1329   | 950   | 828   | 3108     | 1625   | 1069  | 920   | 3614     |
|         | 50-54 | 1550                                  | 1210  | 1040  | 3800     | 1530   | 1178  | 1013  | 3721     | 1416   | 1040  | 904   | 3360     | 1560   | 1071  | 919   | 3551     |
|         | 55-59 | 1346                                  | 1050  | 904   | 3300     | 1477   | 1146  | 986   | 3609     | 1525   | 1155  | 997   | 3678     | 1479   | 1065  | 919   | 3463     |
|         | 60-64 | 1101                                  | 859   | 739   | 2700     | 1274   | 987   | 849   | 3110     | 1477   | 1124  | 971   | 3573     | 1596   | 1182  | 1014  | 3793     |
|         | 65-69 | 1142                                  | 891   | 767   | 2800     | 1106   | 859   | 739   | 2704     | 1292   | 991   | 854   | 3137     | 1507   | 1136  | 979   | 3622     |
|         | 70-74 | 1061                                  | 828   | 712   | 2600     | 1146   | 891   | 767   | 2804     | 1080   | 831   | 717   | 2628     | 1278   | 970   | 833   | 3081     |
|         | 75-79 | 653                                   | 509   | 438   | 1600     | 899    | 700   | 602   | 2202     | 1073   | 830   | 715   | 2618     | 1014   | 774   | 666   | 2453     |
|         | 80-84 | 489                                   | 382   | 329   | 1200     | 531    | 414   | 356   | 1301     | 779    | 605   | 521   | 1906     | 914    | 704   | 606   | 2224     |
|         | 85-89 | 245                                   | 191   | 164   | 600      | 286    | 223   | 192   | 700      | 368    | 286   | 246   | 901      | 535    | 414   | 357   | 1306     |
|         | 90+   | 122                                   | 95    | 82    | 300      | 163    | 127   | 110   | 400      | 204    | 159   | 137   | 500      | 286    | 223   | 192   | 701      |
|         | Total | 18192                                 | 14196 | 12211 | 44600    | 19194  | 14642 | 12595 | 46431    | 21789  | 15733 | 13721 | 51244    | 25694  | 17523 | 14970 | 58186    |
| Females | 0-4   | 897                                   | 700   | 602   | 2200     | 987    | 732   | 630   | 2349     | 1139   | 783   | 695   | 2617     | 1291   | 868   | 714   | 2873     |
|         | 5-9   | 1061                                  | 828   | 712   | 2600     | 1063   | 796   | 685   | 2543     | 1287   | 873   | 770   | 2930     | 1655   | 1046  | 889   | 3591     |
|         | 10-14 | 1061                                  | 828   | 712   | 2600     | 1180   | 891   | 767   | 2838     | 1303   | 900   | 791   | 2993     | 1647   | 1044  | 891   | 3582     |
|         | 15-19 | 979                                   | 764   | 657   | 2400     | 967    | 732   | 630   | 2329     | 1178   | 826   | 724   | 2728     | 1432   | 917   | 786   | 3136     |
|         | 20-24 | 693                                   | 541   | 465   | 1700     | 672    | 509   | 438   | 1620     | 723    | 498   | 437   | 1659     | 996    | 627   | 539   | 2162     |
|         | 25-29 | 857                                   | 668   | 575   | 2100     | 893    | 668   | 575   | 2137     | 987    | 675   | 597   | 2260     | 1153   | 728   | 610   | 2491     |
|         | 30-34 | 897                                   | 700   | 602   | 2200     | 1029   | 764   | 657   | 2450     | 1223   | 817   | 725   | 2765     | 1434   | 879   | 739   | 3051     |
|         | 35-39 | 1061                                  | 828   | 712   | 2600     | 1151   | 859   | 739   | 2749     | 1437   | 975   | 860   | 3273     | 1745   | 1082  | 920   | 3747     |
|         | 40-44 | 1224                                  | 955   | 821   | 3000     | 1223   | 923   | 794   | 2940     | 1439   | 997   | 875   | 3312     | 1852   | 1183  | 1012  | 4046     |

|  |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |               |              |              |              |               |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
|  | 45-49        | 1509         | 1178         | 1013         | 3700         | 1331         | 1019         | 876          | 3226         | 1411         | 1014         | 883          | 3308          | 1707         | 1132         | 975          | 3814          |
|  | 50-54        | 1591         | 1241         | 1068         | 3900         | 1571         | 1210         | 1040         | 3821         | 1457         | 1072         | 931          | 3460          | 1560         | 1071         | 919          | 3551          |
|  | 55-59        | 1305         | 1019         | 876          | 3200         | 1518         | 1178         | 1013         | 3709         | 1607         | 1219         | 1052         | 3878          | 1520         | 1096         | 946          | 3563          |
|  | 60-64        | 1142         | 891          | 767          | 2800         | 1233         | 955          | 821          | 3010         | 1558         | 1188         | 1026         | 3773          | 1637         | 1214         | 1042         | 3893          |
|  | 65-69        | 1142         | 891          | 767          | 2800         | 1106         | 859          | 739          | 2704         | 1251         | 959          | 827          | 3037          | 1589         | 1200         | 1034         | 3822          |
|  | 70-74        | 1101         | 859          | 739          | 2700         | 1227         | 955          | 821          | 3004         | 1121         | 863          | 744          | 2728          | 1278         | 970          | 833          | 3081          |
|  | 75-79        | 693          | 541          | 465          | 1700         | 899          | 700          | 602          | 2202         | 1155         | 893          | 769          | 2818          | 1095         | 837          | 721          | 2653          |
|  | 80-84        | 571          | 446          | 383          | 1400         | 653          | 509          | 438          | 1601         | 820          | 637          | 548          | 2006          | 1036         | 799          | 688          | 2524          |
|  | 85-89        | 408          | 318          | 274          | 1000         | 449          | 350          | 301          | 1100         | 531          | 414          | 356          | 1301          | 657          | 510          | 439          | 1606          |
|  | 90+          | 286          | 223          | 192          | 700          | 326          | 255          | 219          | 800          | 408          | 318          | 274          | 1000          | 531          | 414          | 356          | 1301          |
|  | Total        | 18478        | 14419        | 12403        | 45300        | 19480        | 14865        | 12786        | 47131        | 22034        | 15924        | 13885        | 51844         | 25816        | 17618        | 15052        | 58486         |
|  | <b>Total</b> | <b>36670</b> | <b>28615</b> | <b>24615</b> | <b>89900</b> | <b>38674</b> | <b>29506</b> | <b>25381</b> | <b>93562</b> | <b>43824</b> | <b>31657</b> | <b>27606</b> | <b>103087</b> | <b>51510</b> | <b>35141</b> | <b>30021</b> | <b>116673</b> |

- 2.18 Across the district as a whole and across each of the sub areas there is expected to be an increase in the number of people in every age group except for those aged 50-54 years. Figure 7 illustrates this growth.

*Figure 7: District wide population change 2017-2031*



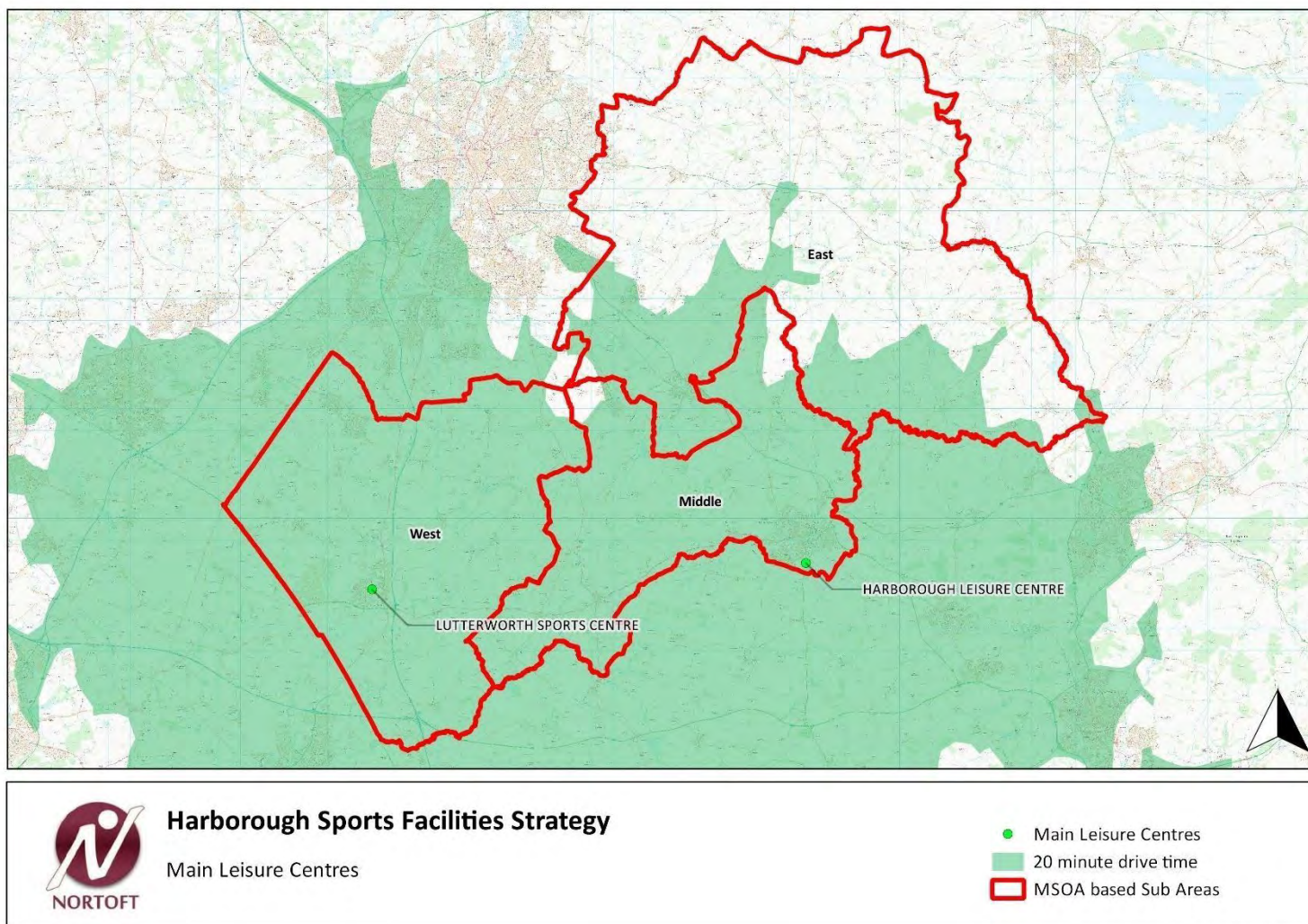
- 2.19 This population change suggests that demographic effects of the planned housing growth will be partially balanced out by the overall aging population in the district, particularly across the rural areas. The strategy therefore needs to consider the justification for additional sports facilities based on these population forecasts, as well as priorities for investment on existing sites. Within the proposed SDAs and housing allocations there is also a need to consider both the capacity and accessibility of the existing and potential sports facilities to accommodate additional users. This will help to determine what provision needs to be on site and what off-site contributions should be expected of the developers.
- 2.20 Where new provision is required on site, it will be essential that sufficient and suitable land and facilities are provided in accordance with the Council's policy and supplementary planning guidance requirements.

## SECTION 3: THE LEISURE NETWORK

- 3.1 This section of the report provides an overview of the built sports facility network in Harborough.
- 3.2 There are two public leisure centre facilities owned by Harborough District Council, at Harborough Leisure Centre and Lutterworth Sports Centre. The management of these facilities changed on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 from the Harborough District Leisure Trust and their managing agent Serco, to Sports & Leisure Management operating under the brand Everyone Active.
- 3.3 The two public leisure centres have 20-minute drive time catchments stretching across most of the district, with the exception of the north east which is bounded by Leicester City, Charnwood, Melton and Rutland. The leisure centres deliver a varied programme of activities and offer the only casual swimming opportunities and full daytime access to sports halls in the district. The 20 minutes' drive time catchments of the two public leisure centres is shown in Figure 8.
- 3.4 Broughton Astley Leisure Centre which is owned by Broughton Astley Parish Council opened most of its facilities in December 2019, with a 3G football artificial turf pitch opening in April 2020. The centre is managed by Parkwood Leisure and has a 4-badminton court hall and fitness facilities in addition to the artificial pitch. The centre is fully open to the public, but the sports hall is hired to Thomas Estley Community College for the delivery of its curriculum requirements, so there are some restrictions on public bookings.
- 3.5 Most of the sports halls in the district are located on secondary school sites. However, there are only a small number of formal agreements which secure the facilities' long-term use by the community, generally at those sites where there has been public funding support, grant aid or lottery funding for the facility(ies).
- 3.6 There is one swimming pool used by the community at a school site, Leicester Grammar, which is restricted to club swimming. There are no commercial swimming pools other than a small pool at Ullesthorpe which forms part of a hotel and golf club leisure complex.
- 3.7 Health and fitness gyms are often commercially provided, though the Harborough Leisure Centre, Lutterworth Sports Centre and Broughton Astley Leisure Centre all have fitness gyms including studio spaces.

- 3.8 There are also a small number of specialist facilities operated by sports clubs, such as the Saddington Sailing Club or the Bowmen of Glen archery site.

Figure 8: District leisure centres and drive time catchment



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## Harborough Leisure Centre

3.9 This public leisure centre is located on the south side of Market Harborough close to the district border with Daventry. Most of the centre was built in 1991 and it has the following facilities:

- 357.5 sq m of water space comprising:
  - 25m x 6 lane pool with limited spectator seating
  - 20 sq m learner pool
  - Beach / leisure water area
- 4 badminton court sports hall
- 70 station fitness gym
- 2 x studio
- Dome with 3 tennis courts/2 netball courts
- 6 rink indoor bowls
- Creche

3.10 The annual total attendance throughput of the site and its facilities for the year ended March 2018 was 822,018. The Key Performance Indicator (KPI) information gathered by the operator provides some additional usage information about the key facilities:

|  |               |         |
|--|---------------|---------|
| Total throughput                       | Swimming pool | 328,402 |
| Dryside including sports hall and dome |               | 186,184 |
| Health and fitness                     |               | 305,180 |

3.11 The operator of the leisure centre changed in April 2019 to Everyone Active and detailed usage information is not yet available for a whole year. Usage of the dome and indoor bowls centre has been estimated for a typical week in autumn 2019 based on the booking records and information provided by the clubs.

3.12 There is no information available from the operator about the separate costs of maintaining the different sports facilities, such as the bowls hall.

## Lutterworth Sports Centre

3.13 The leisure centre is located reasonably centrally to Lutterworth town, immediately adjacent to Lutterworth College. The centre opened in 2004 and has the following facilities:

- 25m x 6 lane pool (325 sq m of water space) without spectator seating
- 4 badminton court sports hall
- 70-station fitness gym
- Studio



- Spin studio
- Meeting room

3.14 The annual total attendance throughput of the site and its facilities for the year ended March 2018 was 499,503. The KPI information provides some additional detail:

|                       |                  |               |         |
|-----------------------|------------------|---------------|---------|
|                       | Total throughput | Swimming pool | 183,499 |
| Dryside (sports hall) |                  |               | 87,989  |
| Health and fitness    |                  |               | 227,665 |

3.15 The operator of the leisure centre changed in April 2019 to Everyone Active and updated detailed usage information is not yet available for a whole year.

## Broughton Astley Leisure Centre

3.16 The new Broughton Astley Leisure Centre on Broughton Way opened in December 2019 and has a 4-court hall, full-size outdoor floodlit 3G football turf pitch (opening April-May 2020), a 63-station fitness gym, 2 studios, creche and outdoor play area.

3.17 The site is owned by Broughton Astley parish council and is made available for hire to Thomas Estley school to help them deliver the curriculum during some of the school hours.

## Schools

3.18 A high proportion of built sports facilities in Harborough are provided on school sites, including 7 of the 10 sports halls which are 3 badminton courts or larger, and 1 of the 3 swimming pools. These are mostly secondary school sites because these were generally built with, or have developed, dedicated sports facilities and playing fields. There is one primary school with a 3-court sports hall, Meadowdale Primary in Market Harborough. Many of the other primary schools in the district have smaller multi-purpose halls and provide for activities such as exercise classes, but do not otherwise have specialist sports facilities.

3.19 A summary of the school sports facilities which are available for community use in Harborough is given in Figure 9. All of the facilities are managed in-house by the schools themselves, sometimes via an external letting agent.

3.20 There is a generally positive approach by the schools towards the community use of their facilities within Harborough district, and most are intending to retain approximately the same level of community use going forwards. Robert Smyth Academy in Market Harborough is the exception and this school is actively exploring ways increase community use, including potentially exploring the option of a hockey surface full-size floodlit AGP as well as possibly other facilities.

3.21 The key findings across the schools are:

- All of the schools restrict their facility use to members of organised clubs and groups, so there is no casual or 'pay-and-play' access.
- There is no community access to the school facilities during the school day.
- The only secure community use sites are those which have received external grant aid or lottery funding within the last few years, where a formal use agreement was a prerequisite for the funding support.
- There are no subsidies to support community use.
- The quality of the school facilities varies from excellent to very poor.
- The quality of the school facilities is strongly reflected in the level of usage by the community.
- All schools require a manager to be on-site during community hours, and to complete the final lock-up procedures.
- Community use of school facilities needs to be financially self-sustaining, and the costs of opening may be more than a school can generate from lettings. This can limit the ability and willingness of a school to open for community use.

Figure 9: School sports facilities

| Site Name                              | Sports Halls:<br>Number of<br>Badminton<br>Courts and<br>quality | Swimming<br>pools   | Artificial<br>pitches  | Other<br>Facilities<br>Available<br>for Hire  | Ownership<br>Type     | Access Type | Management            | Total hours available<br>in the peak period<br>(PP) | Estimate of used<br>capacity at peak<br>time from audit |
|--|--|---|--|---|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------------|---|---|
| Leicester<br>Grammar School<br>LE8 9FL | 6<br><br>Very good<br>quality hall<br>and<br>changing            | 25 x 6 lane<br>(325 sq m)<br><br>Very good<br>quality pool<br>and<br>changing.<br>Limited<br>spectator<br>provision | 1 x full size<br>sand<br>dressed,<br>floodlit<br><br>1 x full size<br>water based<br>floodlit<br><br>Good<br>quality | Fitness gym<br>20 stations<br><br>Studio<br><br>Both good<br>quality and<br>available<br>during<br>opening<br>hours | Independent<br>School | Club        | In house by<br>school | 30.5 hours  | 70% of hall<br>100% of pool<br>50% gym<br>65% studio    |
|  |  |   |  | Hard courts<br>8 tennis/6<br>netball<br>floodlit<br><br>Not<br>regularly<br>hired out                               |                       |             |                       |   | 15%   |
|  |  |   |  | Grass<br>pitches:<br>rugby and<br>cricket   |                       |             |                       |   |   |

| Site Name                                | Sports Halls:<br>Number of<br>Badminton<br>Courts               | Swimming<br>pools | Artificial<br>pitches  | Other<br>Facilities<br>Available<br>for Hire  | Ownership<br>Type | Access Type | Management            | Total hours available<br>in the peak period<br>(PP)                                     | Estimate of used<br>capacity at<br>peak time from<br>audit |
|--|---|-------------------|--|---|-------------------|-------------|-----------------------|---|--|
| Lutterworth<br>College<br>LE17 4EW       | 4<br><br>Poor quality<br>hall and<br>changing                   | x                 | 1 x 97 x 61<br>m sand<br>filled,<br>floodlit<br><br>Floodlights<br>out of order<br>since spring<br>2018. Aging<br>surface. | 26 x 12 m<br>ancillary hall<br><br>Performance<br>hall with<br>stage.<br>Standard<br>quality. | Academy           | Club        | In house by<br>school | 20 hours hall<br><br>Ancillary hall not<br>regularly booked<br><br>3 hours (Sunday) AGP | 25% hall<br><br>0% ancillary hall<br><br>10% AGP           |
| Lutterworth High<br>School<br>LE17 4QH   | x   | x                 | x  | Ancillary hall<br><br>Standard<br>quality.  | Academy           | Club        | In house by<br>school | 2.5 hours   | 80%  |
| Meadowdale<br>Primary School<br>LE16 7QX | 3<br><br>New hall,<br>excellent<br>quality hall<br>and changing | x                 | x  | x   | Academy           | Club        | In house by<br>school | 39 hours  | 80% Mon-Sat,<br>50% Sun                                    |

|                                  |   |   |   |   |         |                       |                    |            |  |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------|--|
| Robert Smyth Academy<br>LE16 7JG | 4 & 3<br><br>Poor quality. 4 court hall dimensions small. Poor quality changing | x | x | Dance / drama studio within main school buildings<br><br>Standard quality | Academy | Club / block bookings | In house by school | 35.5 hours | 25% 4 court hall<br><br>30% 3 court hall<br><br>50% studio |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------|--|

| Site Name                      | Sports Halls:<br>Number of<br>Badminton<br>Courts          | Swimming<br>pools | Artificial<br>pitches  | Other<br>Facilities<br>Available for<br>Hire                                    | Ownership<br>Type | Access Type | Management         | Total hours available<br>in the peak period<br>(PP)         | Estimate of used<br>capacity at<br>peak time from<br>audit |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------------|--|---|-------------------|-------------|--------------------|---|--|
| The Kibworth School<br>LE8 0LG | 4<br><br>Good quality. Limited changing as shared with AGP | x                 | 1 x 3G AGP for U11/U12.<br><br>Good quality but changing shared with sports hall | Ancillary hall within main building<br><br>Shared with dining. Standard quality | Academy           | Club        | In house by school | 28 hours hall<br><br>10 hours ancillary<br><br>35 hours AGP | 40% hall<br><br>10% ancillary<br><br>55% AGP               |

|  |   |   |   |   |         |      |                    |  |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---------|------|--------------------|--|---|
| Thomas Estley Community College<br>LE9 6PT | x | x | x | Ancillary hall within main building. Standard quality<br><br>School performance theatre. Standard quality<br><br>Hard courts Standard quality | Academy | Club | In house by school | 4 hours ancillary hall<br><br>3 hours theatre<br><br>2 hours hard courts | 100% ancillary<br><br>100% theatre<br><br>100% hard courts<br><br>[only open during bookings] |
|--|---|---|---|---|---------|------|--------------------|--|---|

| Site Name                        | Sports Halls:<br>Number of<br>Badminton<br>Courts | Swimming<br>pools | Artificial<br>pitches  | Other<br>Facilities<br>Available for<br>Hire | Ownership<br>Type | Access Type | Management            | Total hours available<br>in the peak period<br>(PP)         | Estimate of<br>used capacity at<br>peak time from<br>audit |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------|--|--|-------------------|-------------|-----------------------|---|--|
| Welland Park Academy<br>LE16 9DW | 4<br><br>Refurbished<br>summer<br>2019            | x                 | 1 x sand<br>filled full<br>size,<br>floodlit.<br><br>Standard<br>quality | Ancillary hall<br><br>Good quality           | Academy           | Club        | In house by<br>school | 37 hours hall<br><br>37 hours ancillary<br><br>37 hours AGP | 80% hall<br><br>30% ancillary<br><br>80% AGP               |

## SECTION 4: SPORTS HALLS

- 4.1 Sports halls are one of the prime sports facilities for community sport because they are able to provide a venue for many different activities (see Figure 10). This strategy section considers sports halls of 3+ badminton court size and larger, primarily those which are designed for sport. Smaller sports hall facilities such as the Fleckney Sports Centre and the Coplow Centre at Billesdon have limitations on their use for sport and are regularly used for other community activities, such as amateur theatre. These facilities are addressed in Section 14 of this strategy report.

*Figure 10: Sports hall activities*

Badminton  
Keep fit/aerobics/step/yoga  
Indoor 5-a-side football/futsal  
Martial arts  
Carpet/mat/short bowls  
Gymnastics  
Basketball  
Netball  
Table tennis  
Dance  
Trampolining  
Indoor hockey  
Tennis/short tennis  
Roller skating/roller blading  
Indoor cricket  
Multi-sport session  
Racquetball  
Volleyball

*Source: Sports Hall Design and Layout Sport England (2012) based on Survey of Sports Halls and Swimming Pools in England (1999) (Sport England, 2012)*

- 4.2 The main tool for assessing the trends in activity up to 2016 was the Active People Survey of Sport England (Sport England , 2016). This has now been replaced by the Sport England Active Lives survey and reports. The latest national trends in the main hall sports for adults over the age of 16 years participating at least twice in the last 28 days over the period November 2015/16 to May 2018/19 (Sport England, 2019) were: a fall in participation in badminton but a steady situation for basketball, netball, volleyball and combat sports (including) martial arts and target sports.



- 4.3 Information about the trends in most hall sports at a more local level are either not available or are too statistically unreliable to be of value in this strategy. Only badminton has been able to provide more detailed information, which is given below. For the other hall sports, the national trends are assumed to be reflected by the local situation in Harborough.
- 4.4 Badminton England reports that Leicestershire is a strong and growing area for participation with strong clubs and sports development infrastructure. In Harborough district the junior participation in badminton has remained steady at about 88 affiliated club members, and the sport is slightly more popular with boys than girls. The district-wide total number of affiliated club senior members is about 40, but there has been an increase of around 28% of the last 3 years.
- 4.5 Sports halls generally have most sports use during the winter months as some activities move outside during the summer months, for example sports hall athletics, or are primarily a winter sport such as football. During the school exam periods, the sports halls on school sites are often unavailable for community use and are therefore both less attractive to community clubs and have lower levels of sports use. The peak time assessment for sports hall use therefore considers the winter months. Sport England regularly reviews its parameters behind the FPM model, and the 2015 report (Sport England and sportscotland, 2015) suggests that, on average, sports halls have the following programming, see Figure 11.

*Figure 11: National average programming*

| Sport                         | Main hall | Ancillary hall |
|-------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Badminton                     | 42%       | 7%             |
| Five-a-side football          | 13%       | 2%             |
| Keep fit                      | 14%       | 53%            |
| Gymnastics                    | 7%        | 2%             |
| Martial arts                  | 8%        | 14%            |
| Basketball                    | 5%        | 2%             |
| All other physical activities | 11%       | 20%            |

- 4.6 Details about the methodology for assessing sports halls including drive times, is given in Appendix 1. In summary the standard methodology for measuring sports halls is by the number of badminton courts contained within the floor area. However, it is recognised that there is extensive use of these types of facility by a wide range of other sports including basketball, volleyball, handball etc. Sports halls are generally considered to be of greatest value if they are of at least 3+ badminton court size, and with sufficient height to allow games such as badminton to be played. This is therefore the minimum size of hall considered in this section of the report.

- 4.7 A spread of 4 court halls is often the most effective way of achieving the greatest accessibility for general community use. However, the space required for many indoor team games exceeds the space provided by a standard 4 court hall and in general terms the higher the standard of play, the larger the space required. At higher levels of performance, the playing area is usually the same size but increased safety margins and clear height may be required, as well as additional space requirements for spectators, teams and officials during competitions. Larger halls i.e. 6 plus courts are therefore able to accommodate higher level training and/or competition as well as meeting day-to-day needs.
- 4.8 Larger halls (6 plus badminton courts) may also provide the opportunity for more than one pitch/court which increases flexibility for both training and competition. The table in Appendix 6 is from the Sport England Design Guidance Note on Sports Hall Design and Layouts (2012) (Sport England, 2012) and identifies the hall size required to accommodate a range of sports at different levels of play. This updates previous guidance. There is also now a strong recommendation for a slightly larger size 4-court hall for schools, to enable more community use as well as more flexibility for education. The new minimum size proposed for 4-court halls by Sport England is 34.5m x 20.0m x 7.5 m, rather than the previous standard of 33m x 18m x 7.5m.

### Current provision

- 4.9 There are 9 sites offering community access to sports halls of 3 badminton court size and above. A new leisure centre was opened in Broughton Astley in December 2019 with a 4-court badminton hall. It is situated across the playing fields from the Thomas Estley College and is operated on behalf of the parish council. This new 4 court sports hall is hired by the school to deliver its curriculum, which means that it is largely unavailable for community use between 10.00 and 17.00 on school days.
- 4.10 The list of sports halls of 3+ badminton court size and above which are available for community use is given in Figure 12 and mapped in Figure 13. The table in Figure 12 also includes the estimated used capacity at peak time from the audit. The estimate of use has generally been provided by the site manager, based on the booking records during January 2019, but for the Broughton Astley site this was w/b 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020. As the Broughton Astley site is still becoming established, the bookings can be expected to increase over the next 12 months from currently estimated 52% used capacity.
- 4.11 This provision gives a current total of 40 badminton courts available for at least some of the peak time, and an adjusted total of 32.2 badminton courts when taking into account the number of hours which each site is open.

The map in Figure 13 gives the location of the 3+ badminton court sites plus an indicative drive time catchment of 20 minutes for each. The green shading represents the catchments of pay-and-play sites such as Harborough Leisure Centre, Lutterworth Sports Centre and Broughton Astley Leisure Centre. The yellow shading

- 4.12 Sport England considers that a sport hall is “busy” if it is used at around 80% of its capacity during the time that a facility is open. From the table in Figure 12 it is clear that some facilities are running close to, or at capacity for much of the peak period, whilst others are used much more lightly. This usage generally reflects the quality of the facility, the main exception being The Kibworth School sports hall which has spare capacity though it is good quality. The pattern of usage of the new Broughton Astley site is still to be fully established.

is the catchment of sites with more restricted access, such as Leicester Grammar. It is clear that most of the district has access to a pay-and-play facility either within or outside of the authority, but there are small rural areas in the east of the district with more limited access.

- 4.13 Harborough Leisure Centre and Lutterworth Sports Centre are the only sites with mid-week daytime community access within the district.

Figure 12: Sports halls 3+ courts - current provision

**Middle Sub Area**

| Site Name                             | Number of badminton courts | Ownership type              | Access type           | Management         | Availability in the peak period. No. hours (max 45.5hrs) | Estimate of used capacity at peak time from audit | Equivalent number of courts scaled by hours open at peak time | Spare capacity in number of courts scaled by hours (80% used assumed full) |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Harborough Leisure Centre<br>LE16 9HF | 4                          | Harborough District Council | Pay and Play          | Commercial         | 45.5   | 80%   | 4   | 0  |
| Meadowdale Primary School<br>LE16 7QX | 3                          | Academy                     | Club                  | In house by school | 39   | 70%   | 3.5   | 0.4  |
| Robert Smyth Academy<br>LE16 7JG      | 4                          | Academy                     | Club / block bookings | In house by school | 35.5   | 25%   | 3.1   | 1.7  |
|                                       | 3                          |                             |                       |                    |  | 30%   | 2.3   | 1.2  |
| Welland Park Academy<br>LE16 9DW      | 4                          | Academy                     | Club / block bookings | In house by school | 37   | 80%   | 3.3   | 0  |

|  |           |  |            |  |             |            |
|--|-----------|--|------------|--|-------------|------------|
|  | <b>18</b> |  | <b>157</b> |  | <b>16.2</b> | <b>3.3</b> |
|--|-----------|--|------------|--|-------------|------------|

## West sub area

| Site Name                             | Number of badminton courts | Ownership type              | Access type  | Management         | Availability in the peak period. No. hours (max 45.5hrs) | Estimate of used capacity at peak time from audit | Equivalent number of courts scaled by hours open at peak time | Spare capacity in number of courts scaled by hours (80% used assumed full) |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Lutterworth Sports Centre<br>LE17 4EW | 4                          | Harborough District Council | Pay and Play | Commercial         | 45.5   | 65%   | 4   | 0.6  |
| Lutterworth College<br>LE17 4EW       | 4                          | Academy                     | Club         | In house by school | 20   | 25%   | 1.8   | 1  |
| *Broughton Astley<br>LE9 6TH          | 4                          | Parish Council              | Pay and Play | Commercial         | 42   | 52%   | 3.7   | 1.0  |
|                                       | <b>12</b>                  |                             |              |                    | <b>107.5</b>   |   | <b>9.5</b>  | <b>2.6</b>   |

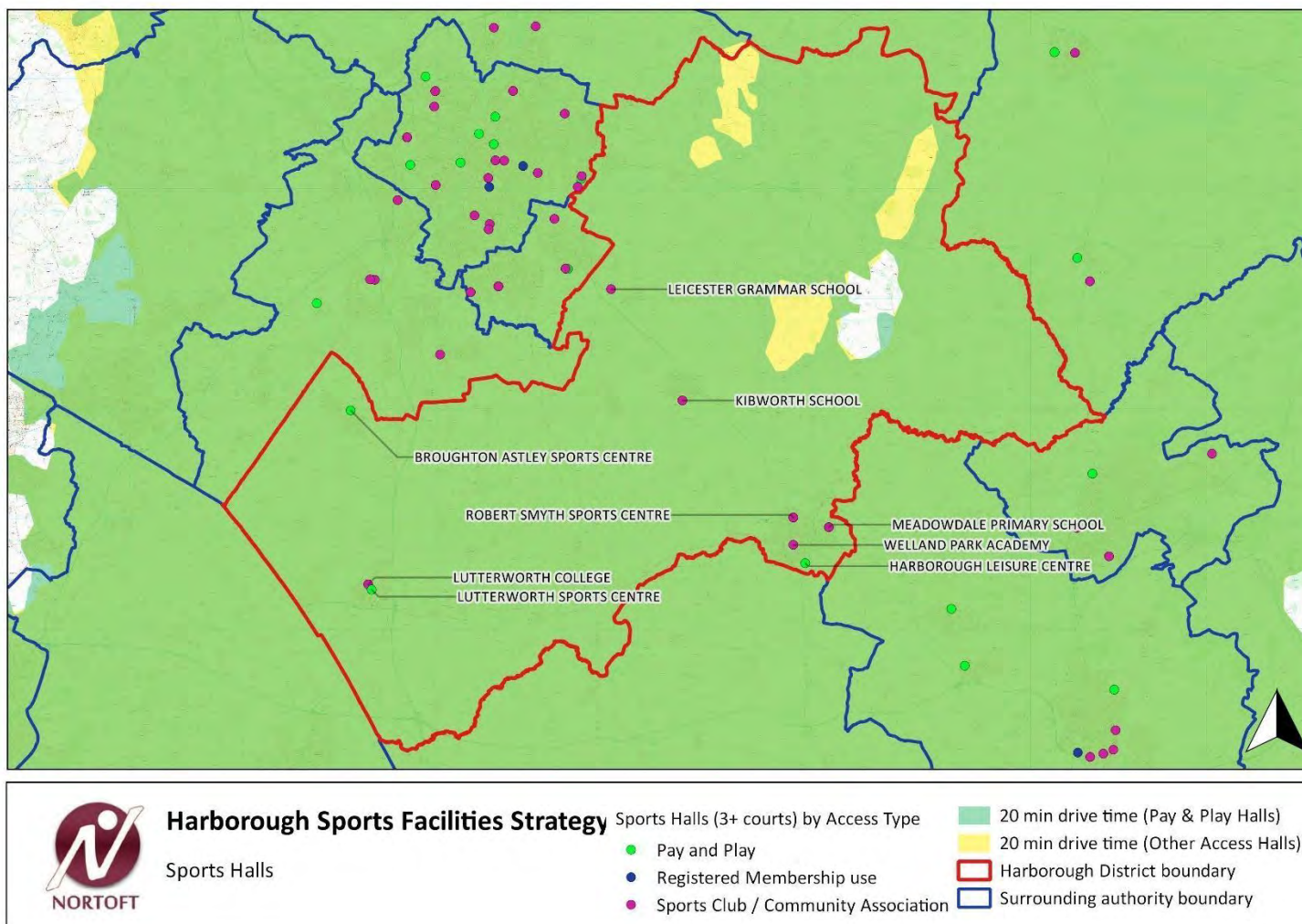
\* Broughton Astley Leisure Centre opened December 2020. Availability for community use and actual usage based on bookings w/b 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

## East sub area

|                                     |           |                    |      |                    |             |     |            |            |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|------|--------------------|-------------|-----|------------|------------|
| Leicester Grammar School<br>LE8 9FL | 6         | Independent School | Club | In house by school | 30.5        | 70% | 4          | 0.4        |
| The Kibworth School                 | 4         | Academy            | Club | In house by school | 28          | 40% | 2.5        | 1          |
|                                     | <b>10</b> |                    |      |                    | <b>58.5</b> |     | <b>6.5</b> | <b>1.4</b> |

*Figure 13: Sports Halls (3+ courts) map*







## Assessment of current supply/demand

- 4.14 Sports halls are one of the primary sports facilities for community activity because they can provide a venue for many different activities. This facility type therefore is and will remain, one of the most important for the district into the long term.
- 4.15 Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM) has modelling parameters which are based on national research, so the FPM's parameters are relevant to the way in which the supply and demand balance for sports halls should be considered in Harborough district. The main FPM parameters are summarised in Figure 14, including the number of hours that the facilities are expected to be open to cover the "peak period", what the "peak period" is, and how long people are usually willing to travel to a sports hall i.e. the catchment.
- 4.16 In relation to the catchment area for sports halls, it should be noted that the accessibility criteria of 20 minutes' travel time is not a fixed boundary, as the formula behind the FPM uses a distance decay function. However, 20 minutes' drive time catchment area is generally considered a good "rule of thumb".

*Figure 14: Facilities Planning Model key parameters halls 2016*

|  |   |
|--|---|
| At one time capacity                             | 24 users per 4-court hall, 13 per 144 sq m of ancillary hall.   |
| Duration of visit                                | 60 minutes  |
| Catchments                                       | <p>Car: 20 minutes</p> <p>Walking: 1.6 km</p> <p>Public transport: 20 minutes at about half the speed of a car</p> <p>NOTE: Catchment times are indicative, within the context of a distance decay function of the model.</p> |
| Peak Period                                      | <p>Weekday: 09.00-10.00; 17:00 to 22:00</p> <p>Saturday: 09:30 to 17:00</p> <p>Sunday: 09:00 to 14:30, 17:00 to 19:30</p> <p>Total: 45.5 hours</p>  |
| Percentage taking place w the Peak Period of use | 62%   |

|  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| Utilised capacity<br>considered “busy” | 80% = “comfort factor” |
|--|------------------------|

### *Quantity*

- 4.17 The current balance in the supply and demand of sports halls by sub area is given in Figure 15. This takes account of the actual opening hours of each facility and the demand as generated from the Sport England’s Sports Facilities Calculator for the sub area’s population.
- 4.18 This shows that there is currently “spare capacity” in the Middle sub area which includes Market Harborough, the equivalent of 1.5 four badminton court halls. However, in the West sub area with the opening of the new Broughton Astley site, the demand and supply is almost in balance, with a very small surplus. In the East, there is again an approximate balance between supply and demand.
- 4.19 The current rate of provision based on the actual amount of space available in the district at peak time for Harborough varies from 0.44 courts per 1,000 population in the Middle sub area, to 0.25 courts per 1,000 population in the East sub area.

*Figure 15: Current sports hall provision by sub area*

| Sub Area | Assessment  | Number of badminton courts at peak time | Population in 2017 |
|----------|---|---|--------------------|
| Middle   | Total amount of sports hall provision with some public use                      | 18                                      |                    |
|          | Total amount of sports hall provision with some public use scaled by hours open | 16.2                                    |                    |
|          | Sub area sports hall demand from Sports Facilities Calculator                   | 10.1                                    |                    |
|          | Balance in supply/demand  | 6.1                                     |                    |
|          | Population in 2017  |   | 36,670             |
|          | Provision per 1,000 (scaled by hours)   | 0.44                                    |                    |
| West     | Total amount of sports hall provision with some public use                      | 12                                      |                    |
|          | Total amount of sports halls with some public use scaled by hours open          | 9.5                                     |                    |
|          | Sub area sports hall demand from Sports Facilities Calculator                   | 7.9                                     |                    |
|          | Balance in supply/demand  | 1.6                                     |                    |
|          | Population in 2017  |   | 28,615             |
|          | Provision per 1,000 (scaled by hours)   | 0.33                                    |                    |
| East     | Total amount of sports hall provision with some public use                      | 10                                      |                    |
|          | Total amount of sports halls with some public use scaled by hours open          | 6.5                                     |                    |
|          | Sub area sports hall demand from Sports Facilities Calculator                   | 6.8                                     |                    |
|          | Balance in supply/demand  | -0.3                                    |                    |
|          | Population in 2017  |   | 24,615             |
|          | Provision per 1,000 (scaled by hours)   | 0.25                                    |                    |

4.20 The headline emerging from the audit of sports halls across Harborough, is that there appears to be a small amount of spare capacity in all areas of the district, see Figure 12. The audit assessment conclusions are compared with the theoretical supply /demand balance in Figure 16 to determine which is the most appropriate basis for the future assessment of the balance between demand and supply.

Figure 16: Theoretical supply/demand balance vs audit

| Sub area | Theoretical supply /demand balance (Figure 15) | Audit findings supply/demand balance (Figure 12) | Comment  |
|----------|--|--|--|
| Middle   | 6.1  | 3.3  | <p>Harborough attracts high numbers of users from Northamptonshire, so use is higher than the theoretical demand which is modelled for the sub area alone.</p> <p>Recommend: use audit findings to assess future requirements.</p>   |
| West     | 1.6  | 2.6  | <p>Some cross-boundary movement, but relatively limited. Recent opening of Broughton Astley Leisure Centre means that usage not yet fully established. Poor quality facility at Lutterworth College.</p> <p>Recommend: use theoretical figure as audit skewed by both the new facility and Lutterworth College</p>             |
| East     | -0.3   | 1.4  | <p>Likely to be some export of sports hall demand from the sub area to adjacent authorities as the catchments of Kibworth School and Leicester Grammar do not reach across all of the sub area, and facilities in adjacent authorities will be closer.</p> <p>Recommend: use audit findings to assess future requirements.</p> |

4.21 The only school sites with secured community use are Meadowdale Primary and Welland Park Academy in Market Harborough, and The Kibworth School.

4.22 There are no known threats to the current community use of the school sites without formal community use agreements.

### Quality

4.23 The quality of the sports halls across the district was assessed as part of the site audit against the following criteria:

- The sports hall including floor, lighting, walls, storage, dimensions etc
- Changing facilities servicing the hall
- Disabled access
- Maintenance and cleanliness
- Car parking and accessibility

4.24 The audit findings are summarised below:

- Good quality halls and facilities: Broughton Astley, Leicester Grammar, The Kibworth School, Meadowdale Primary School, Welland Park Academy.
- Standard quality halls and facilities: Harborough Leisure Centre, Lutterworth Sports Centre.
- Poor quality halls and facilities: Robert Smyth Academy, Lutterworth College.

4.25 The hall at Welland Park Academy underwent major refurbishment during summer 2019.

4.26 Badminton England advises that facility quality has a major impact on the propensity to play badminton. It is likely therefore that the demand and usage have been suppressed to some degree by the poor quality of some facilities. There is therefore a need to improve the existing facilities whilst maintaining the overall level of provision.

4.27 The Broughton Astley Leisure Centre's bookings have a high level of block bookings from badminton and the site is now the home of South Leicestershire Badminton Club, plus running a No Strings Badminton programme and providing junior badminton coaching.

### *Accessibility*

4.28 Sport England's national research has demonstrated that a 20-minute travel time catchment is appropriate for sports halls, equating to 1.6 km walk. The research also concluded that on average across England, 75% of users travel by car to a sports hall (Sport England and sportscotland, 2015).

4.29 The location of the current Harborough Leisure Centre means that only some of the town's residents can reach the facility on foot. The Lutterworth Sports Centre is more centrally located in the town and is therefore relatively more accessible on foot.

- 4.30 The new Broughton Astley site is accessible to most of the village within 20 minutes' walk. It is sited close to the district boundary with Blaby so its 20 minutes' drive time catchment stretches across Blaby into the Hinckley and Bosworth district, as well as across Oadby and Wigston, some of Leicester and into Warwickshire.
- 4.31 Of the other facilities, the ones in Harborough and Lutterworth College are reasonably accessible to the towns' residents on foot, but the other facilities are located in more rural areas and will have a higher proportion of users relying on their car for access. The walking catchments of the facilities in Market Harborough are relatively separate.
- 4.32 The catchments of Lutterworth Sports Centre and Lutterworth College almost entirely overlap as the sites are adjacent. There is also a significant overlap of the drive time catchments between The Kibworth School and Leicester Grammar, which are around 11 minutes' drive apart.
- 4.33** Badminton England's research has shown that being unable to book a court on a casual basis during evenings and weekends is one of the biggest barriers to increasing participation in the sport. Badminton England's comments prior to the opening of the Broughton Astley Leisure Centre included welcoming greater availability of pay and play badminton during evenings and weekends, particularly at the school sites across the district, which all operate on a block booking basis. The opening of the Broughton Astley site has provided a new home for badminton on the West of the authority but has not addressed accessibility elsewhere.

## Consultation findings

- 4.34 Consultation responses were received in relation to sports hall use from both local clubs and national governing bodies of sport. As sports halls can provide for a wide range of activities, the responses recorded below relate to those sports which primarily use the sports hall space in Harborough district.
- 4.35 Those sports who use sports halls as a secondary facility or which require specific consideration are addressed in other sections of this strategy report:

| <b>Sport</b> | <b>Report Section</b>                 |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| Netball      | Indoor netball and tennis             |
| Gymnastics   | Gymnastics and related activities     |
| Table tennis | Community and village halls           |
| Archery      | Other sport and recreation activities |

## Club comments

- 4.36 As part of the strategy process, extensive attempts were made to contact all clubs in the district to give them an opportunity to respond to an online club survey which asked specific questions about the facilities that they use, their club's aspirations and any issues that they face. A number of the clubs who use sports halls responded to the survey and their comments from 2019 are summarised below.
- 4.37 It should be noted that the South Leicestershire Badminton Club relocated to Broughton Astley Leisure Centre from December 2019 and was therefore not included in the club survey of early 2019 or in follow-ups during the production of the strategy.

#### *Badminton*

- 4.38 Harborough Valley Badminton Club uses the sports hall at Robert Smyth Academy and commented that the facility 'provides a high-quality space, but we are unable to book during school holidays or when school needs hall for exams, parent evenings etc'.
- 4.39 Harborough Feathers Badminton Club uses the sports hall at Welland Park Academy and commented that 'the facilities are not well maintained. The floor often requires repairs during sessions. Lighting is poor and badly positioned. Toilets are not clean or maintained to a satisfactory level. Inadequate equipment storage space. Insufficient space around/between courts'. The sports hall has been refurbished since these comments were provided by the club.
- 4.40 Harborough Leisure Centre Junior Badminton Club uses the sports hall at Harborough Leisure Centre and commented that
- 'For Badminton, we really require suitable lighting to be lengthways down the sides of the court and not over the courts. The type of lighting to consider for any new Sports hall should be as at the LBA hall, Babington Academy, Leicester. The current facility really needs a cleaner floor and removal of any lines that are no longer required for other sports that are not carried out at the facility'.
  - 'In the future, we would like to have a sports hall with more than 4 badminton courts (maybe six). Also, a dance studio with mirrors that could be used by Badminton club for footwork and movement exercises without a shuttlecock'.
- 4.41 Lutterworth Badminton Club uses the sports hall at Lutterworth Sports Centre and commented that 'the facility generally is good. The main issue our club has is with the quality and cleanliness of the sports hall floor where we play badminton. It is very slippery and always dirty, affecting our ability to play good badminton. More importantly, it is an accident risk for all players. The wooden floor also has faults (holes, uneven patches/fixes) and has tape regularly put down for other sports that causes trips. The floor is an embarrassment for our club when we host away matches for our Rugby District League, and other clubs have made complaints about it. Lighting, equipment etc otherwise is good'.



## *Basketball*

- 4.42 Market Harborough Basketball Club uses the sports hall at Harborough Leisure Centre and commented that 'it's fit for purpose, a bit tired but ok for what we need. Additional/new court would be nice but not essential'.

## *Dance and drama*

- 4.43 The Lemon Jelly Arts company uses the sports hall at Leicester Grammar. It has around 40 members, all of whom are either minis or juniors, and about 90% live in Harborough district. The membership has stayed the same over the last 5 years but is expected to grow in the future. The main issues restricting growth are the cost of facility hire and the recruitment of members.
- 4.44 Lemon Jelly's home site is the sports hall at Leicester Grammar which is used 3-6 times a week on weekday evenings and weekends daytime. The facility is generally described as good quality.
- 4.45 Lemon Jelly uses as a second site, Kibworth Village Hall 1-2 times per week on weekday evenings. The hall is described as "great" with above average space, good changing and average quality car park, storage etc.
- 4.46 The organisation also uses Kibworth School 1-2 times per week on weekday evenings, using a variety of rooms. The space is described as being above average space with high quality ancillary facilities.
- 4.47 Lemon Jelly also uses Huncote Pavilion in Blaby district 1-2 times per week on weekday evenings,

## *National Governing Body comments*

- 4.48 There are a number of sports and activities which use sports halls and some of these have design requirements. However, none of these have facilities strategies with investment priorities of specific relevance to the district. The following are the most relevant national governing body (NGB) strategies.

## *Badminton*

- 4.49 Badminton England's comments relating to provision in Harborough for the sport were made prior to the opening of Broughton Astley Leisure Centre in December 2019, which is now the home of South Leicestershire Badminton Club which has both adult and junior sections.

- 4.50 Badminton England's National Facilities Strategy 2012-16 (Badminton England, 2012) still provides the framework for the national governing body's investment priorities. The strategy lists the specific requirements of facilities used for badminton:
- The hall should have a sprung floor as a minimum.
  - The lighting must be suitable (no lights above courts and no natural light).
  - There should be appropriate space around the court for safety.
  - The walls must be the right colour (green or blue).
  - The ceiling must be the appropriate height (6.7m).
- 4.51 Badminton England research has shown that facility quality has a major impact on whether individuals are interested in playing the sport. Poor quality sports halls on some of the school sites in the district are therefore likely to be suppressing participation.
- 4.52 The national governing body advises that Leicestershire is a strong and growing area for badminton participation. There is a strong infrastructure of clubs and deliverers that Badminton England are seeking to engage with to deliver a variety of activities in a wide range of communities. Protecting existing provision is therefore essential to continuing this work.
- 4.53 Badminton England is keen for schools to offer their facilities at peak time beyond block/club bookings to provide more opportunities for pay and play, as difficulties accessing courts on a casual basis can be one of the biggest barriers to increasing badminton participation.
- 4.54 The governing body does not have any specific capital or revenue investment planned for Harborough, but the District is an area where Badminton England would like to support the growth of activity, as geographically, the district services both Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. The North West side of Northamptonshire would benefit from continued club development. Harborough Leisure Centre Junior Badminton Club has around 88 members and its numbers have stayed reasonably steady since 2017/18. The leisure centre therefore has the infrastructure to deliver further badminton programmes, such as No Strings Badminton, and junior programmes, particularly as some of the focus has recently been on developing and supporting the workforce.
- 4.55 There have not recently been any club-led projects; Harborough Leisure Centre Junior Badminton Club has in recent years continued to do outreach work in the local schools through its head coach to recruit and offer a signposting opportunity to the club where children want to pursue their badminton further.

- 4.56 Currently, Badminton England understands that the club structures based within Harborough are well sustained and the pathway from junior club to senior club has recently improved. As school engagement appears to have been good across the district, Badminton England would like to look at supporting this delivery further using The Racket Pack offer to improve the exposure of young children to badminton and encourage them to engage long-term. This may also include utilising the leisure centre site to take on centre delivery to offer holiday and weekend sessions, for example.
- 4.57 There are currently two [now three] senior badminton clubs in the district, Harborough Feathers and Feathers. The total membership between the two Market Harborough clubs has increased from 29 in 2017/18 to 37 in 2019/20.
- 4.58 Due to the geographical location of Harborough, the district has a reduced number of workforce (coaches and volunteers) and Badminton England has recently supported new workforce development in the district, to ensure that the existing club structures do not collapse. The process of workforce and young leader development is an area in which badminton needs to be grown in the district specifically. There are also several miles between Harborough's cluster of clubs, and the next available affiliated club (nearest in Northamptonshire and Leicestershire are Guilsborough and Thornby Badminton Club and Leicester Lions, respectively). Badminton England has the capability to support the development of new affiliated clubs and would encourage club who would like to establish or develop to approach Badminton England for further discussion.

### *Basketball*

- 4.59 The Basketball England strategy Growing Basketball Together 2018 – 2024 (Basketball England, 2017) includes facilities objectives to 'enhance the playing experience through an appropriate network of innovative and inspirational facilities and playing environments that not only meet the needs and demands of the game but inspire growth within the sport'.
- 4.60 The Harborough Area Profile produced by Basketball England identifies that:
- There is one club (Harborough Basketball Club) with 78 members based at Harborough Leisure Centre. The membership numbers are higher than Basketball England's projected demand for the district, based on local demography.
  - There are 13 Outdoor Basketball Initiative posts and backboards at 10 (mostly school) sites in the district.
  - Indoor facility supply for basketball in the district is balanced both currently and in 2027.

### *Fencing*

- 4.61 British Fencing confirmed that it does not have a current facilities strategy. The sport generally utilises non-specialist space within sports halls. It also confirmed that Harborough is not a priority area and it is not aware of any current issues or proposals in the district.

### *Handball*

- 4.62 England Handball confirmed that it does not have a current facilities strategy but stated that 'we are in desperate need for facilities that handball can be played in, with courts that are 20m x 35m as a minimum'.
- 4.63 There are no handball clubs in Harborough but 'some investment is being made to increase handball activity across the county, some of which may occur in the Harborough district. This activity has the potential to develop into new community club activity'.

### *Martial arts*

- 4.64 The AKA Market Harborough Martial Arts club responded to the club survey. The club has about 28 members; 10 minis, 10 juniors and 8 seniors. All live in Harborough district with the minis traveling up to about 10 minutes and the others up to about 20 minutes to reach the site. The membership of the club has increased in the last 5 years and is expected to continue to grow. However, there are a number of issues that the club faces including a lack of facilities, limited space and cost of facility hire.
- 4.65 The club uses a site at 67 St Mary's Road, Market Harborough. It has a small matted area and the ceiling is low. There is no changing provision or car park.
- 4.66 The site is leased up to 2020, and it is used 3-6 times a week year-round on weekday evenings.

## **Adjacent authorities' provision and strategies**

- 4.67 A review of the sports hall provision and proposals within the adjacent authorities has been undertaken (see Appendix 5). In summary:
- Blaby District Council does not have a current sports facilities strategy so there is no detailed analysis of sports hall needs.
  - The 'Charnwood Indoor Built Sports Facilities Strategy 2017 - 2036' (Charnwood Borough Council, 2018) concluded that sports hall provision meets all current needs. Two further halls are needed in the future and will be provided as part of two new Sustainable Urban Extensions.

- The 'Corby Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Strategy' (Corby Borough Council , 2017) concluded that sports hall usage is close to capacity, with limited daytime access. Additional provision will be required to meet future needs.
- 'Planning the Future of Open Space, Sport and Recreation in West Northamptonshire' (Daventry District Council , 2017) concluded that sports hall provision in Daventry meets current and future needs, although a further sports hall will be required in Daventry if access to existing education facilities cannot be extended.
- The 'Hinckley and Bosworth Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy' (Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, 2011) concluded that sports hall provision meets all current needs, although the sports hall at Hinckley Leisure Centre should be updated and a new sports hall provided to meet future needs.
- Kettering's 'Sports Facilities Strategy and Action Plan 2011-2021' (Kettering Borough Council , 2011) concluded that there is sufficient provision at present, but Desborough Leisure Centre should be replaced. Additional provision will be required to meet future needs.
- Leicester City Council does not have a current sports facilities strategy so there is no detailed analysis of sports hall needs.
- The 'Melton Sports Facilities Strategy 2016 - 2021' (Melton Borough Council, 2017) concluded that existing sports halls meet current needs, but additional capacity equivalent to two badminton courts will be needed by 2021.
- The Oadby and Wigston 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Study' (Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, 2009) concluded that, based upon the identified standard of provision, there is a current shortfall of sports halls.
- The 'Rugby Open Space, Playing Pitch and Sports Facilities Strategy' (Rugby Borough Council, 2015) concluded that sports hall provision meets all current and future needs.
- The 'Rutland Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy 2015-2036' (Rutland County Council, 2015) concludes that sports hall provision meets all current and future needs.

4.68 In summary, there is limited spare capacity in any neighbouring areas to accommodate additional exported sports hall demand from Harborough district. In terms of imported demand, the sports hall at Leicester Grammar School attracts significant usage from people living outside of the district.



## Summary of current situation

- 4.69 The demand for sports hall space in the West and East of Harborough is approximately in balance with the currently available supply, taking into account the opening hours of the school facilities. The Middle sub area has a theoretical surplus of supply, but the facilities are being used at a higher rate than the modelling suggests, probably due to an import of users from Northamptonshire.
- 4.70 Not all of the East sub area is within a 20-minute drive time of a sports hall within the district, and there appears to be an export of users to the adjacent authorities.
- 4.71 The catchments of Lutterworth Sports Centre and Lutterworth College are the same, whilst the catchments for the sports halls in Market Harborough have similar drive time catchments, although the walking catchments are different. The drive time catchments of The Kibworth School and Leicester Grammar also overlap significantly, which may be impacting upon the level of bookings at Kibworth.
- 4.72 The only sports halls with day-time access are the two public leisure centres.
- 4.73 The new Broughton Astley Leisure Centre with its 4-court hall opened in December 2019. It is available to community use during weekday evenings and weekends, but the sports hall is largely booked out to Thomas Estley Community College from 10.00-17.00 on school days. It has already become a major focus for badminton, with the relocation into the district of the South Leicestershire Badminton Club which has both adult and junior sections. The programming of the new hall is still being established but it is currently being used at about 50% of its capacity at peak time.
- 4.74 The poorer quality facilities at Lutterworth College and Robert Smyth Academy have notably lower usage levels than the better-quality facilities. The Welland Park Academy facilities which were poor underwent major refurbishment in summer 2019 and has high levels of community use.
- 4.75 The only school sites with secure community use are; Meadowdale Primary and Welland Park Academy in Market Harborough, and The Kibworth School.

## Assessment of Future Needs

- 4.76 An important consideration in the modelling to assess future facility needs is to determine what will be the likely growth in participation each year. Participation rates in adult sport (16 years and over) was previously monitored nationally by Sport England through their Active People Survey (Sport England, 2017) and now by its successor survey, Active Lives (Sport England, 2019). This is the mechanism which

Harborough District Council also uses to assess the success of its policy objectives of getting more people active.

4.77 There has been a gradual decline in participation in the main sports hall sports over the last few years. The modelling in the strategy has therefore been based on the assumption that the current (2019) rates of participation per 1,000 population will be sustained in the future.

4.78 The rates of participation in “fashionable” sports activities using sports halls will fluctuate from year to year as the activities gain popularity then reduce again. However, most of these use activity room or studio type spaces, rather than taking up much more sports hall time, so the overall strategic planning for sports halls tends to be largely unaffected.

## Balance in supply and demand

4.79 The Sport England Sports Facilities Calculator (SFC) is an effective way of estimating future demand for sports halls as it can take into account both the population size and demographics. Figure 17 shows the results of the SFC at the sub area level, using the demographics for each sub area at 2031.

4.80 The theoretical SFC estimated additional demand is then offset against the spare capacity of the existing facilities. The findings show either a very small surplus of provision or a very small deficit of space by 2031 in each sub area, but the levels are equivalent to less than 0.5 badminton courts. This suggests that there is sufficient capacity within the current network of sports halls and with the current opening hours to meet the needs of the community at peak time across the district up to 2031.

*Figure 17: Sports hall balance in supply/demand at 2031*

| Sub Area | Assessment  | Number of badminton courts | Population in 2031 |
|----------|---|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Middle   | Total amount of sports hall provision with some public use                      | 18                         |                    |
|          | Total amount of sports hall provision with some public use scaled by hours open | 16.2                       |                    |
|          | Current spare capacity (from audit)   | 3.3                        |                    |
|          | Sub area sports hall demand from Sports Facilities Calculator at 2031           | 13.9                       |                    |
|          | Increase in demand compared to 2019   | 3.8                        |                    |
|          | Balance in supply/demand at 2031 (spare capacity minus new demand)              | -0.5                       |                    |
|          | Population in 2031  |                            | 51,510             |



|      |  |      |        |
|------|--|------|--------|
|      | Provision required per 1,000 population at 2031                        | 0.27 |        |
| West | Total amount of sports hall provision with some public use             | 12   |        |
|      | Total amount of sports halls with some public use scaled by hours open | 9.5  |        |
|      | Current spare capacity (from theoretical balance)                      | 1.6  |        |
|      | Sub area sports hall demand from Sports Facilities Calculator at 2031  | 9.4  |        |
|      | Increase in demand compared to 2019                                    | 1.5  |        |
|      | Balance in supply/demand at 2031 (spare capacity minus new demand)     | 0.1  |        |
|      | Population in 2031   |      | 35,141 |
|      | Provision required per 1,000 population at 2031                        | 0.27 |        |
| East | Total amount of sports hall provision with some public use             | 10   |        |
|      | Total amount of sports halls with some public use scaled by hours open | 6.5  |        |
|      | Current spare capacity (from audit)                                    | 1.4  |        |
|      | Sub area sports hall demand from Sports Facilities Calculator at 2031  | 8.0  |        |
|      | Increase in demand compared to 2019                                    | 1.5  |        |
|      | Balance in supply/demand at 2031 (spare capacity minus new demand)     | -0.1 |        |
|      | Population in 2031   |      | 30,021 |
|      | Provision required per 1,000 population at 2031                        | 0.27 |        |

4.81 This assessment assumes that the dome at Harborough Leisure Centre is either retained or replaced, and that the current netball demand does not need to be accommodated within the existing sports hall network. If netball demand needs to be met within sports halls, this will require an additional 8 court sports hall in order to provide for the two indoor netball courts required for the netball league matches.

## Meeting the needs of the future

4.82 The assessment shows that there is sufficient provision across the existing sports hall network up to 2031 in the district to meet the anticipated community demand. This assumes that the netball requirements can be met via a dome or similar structure.

4.83 The priorities for the future are given below.

### Middle sub area

- 4.84 The Welland Park Academy sports hall planned refurbishment was completed in September 2019.
- 4.85 If Harborough Leisure Centre is replaced there is justification for a full replacement of the 4-court hall plus a dome or equivalent with a minimum of 2 netball courts. Alternatively, a larger size 8 court hall would enable netball league matches to be held. This would provide for some but not all of the existing use (equivalent to 4 courts plus the dome) so additional investment off site would be required to improve the existing hall space (or replacement thereof) at Robert Smyth Academy.

### West sub area

- 4.86 There will be a need for a total of 9.4 badminton courts to meet the demands from the population projected in the West sub area. Almost all of this need can be met by the existing sports hall at Lutterworth Sports Centre together with the new sports hall at Broughton Astley. There does not appear to be sufficient unmet demand for sports hall space to justify significant investment into sports halls other than to maintain and retain the sports halls at Lutterworth Sports Centre and Broughton Astley.
- 4.87 The Lutterworth College sports hall has some community use and the site is adjacent to Lutterworth Sports Centre. The facility is poor quality, has limited opening hours and is lightly used by the community. The completely overlapping catchments with the Sports Centre mean that external investment for community sport into the sports hall at the school is a low priority.
- 4.88 Lutterworth High School has aspirations for a sports hall facility as it currently only has an ancillary hall which is glazed on one side, has no separate storage and has a low ceiling. The site is approximately 10 minutes' walk from Lutterworth Sports Centre and therefore also has a significant overlapping catchment. There is again no clear justification for investment in a sports hall on this site to meet community needs.
- 4.89 The priority for the West sub area is therefore to retain and maintain the existing sports hall facilities at Lutterworth Sports Centre and Broughton Astley Leisure Centre.
- 4.90 In the longer term, the planned housing growth in Blaby district may impact upon the level of demand at Broughton Astley Leisure Centre. There is no spare capacity at Broughton Astley to cater for this housing growth.

### East sub area

- 4.91 There is insufficient new demand by 2031 to justify any new sports hall facility and the eastern edge of the district is likely to remain outside the catchment of any facility within the district even in the long term. However, sports hall facilities in the adjacent authorities of Rutland, Melton, Charnwood, Leicester and Oadby and Wigston are within a 20-minute drive and will continue to meet the needs of Harborough's residents into the long term.
- 4.92 The priorities are to retain in community use and maintain as high quality, the sports halls at The Kibworth School and Leicester Grammar.

## **Justifying developers' contributions**

- 4.93 All new housing will generate new demand for sports hall space. Though additional sports halls are not required in the period up to 2031, there is a general need to retain and maintain most of the existing network at high quality. This includes any replacement sports hall should Harborough Leisure Centre be replaced.
- 4.94 New developments should therefore be expected to contribute towards projects which will improve the existing facilities to make them better able to meet the demand for sports hall space arising from the residents of the new housing.

## *Quantity*

- 4.95 The amount of sports hall space required across each of the sub areas at 2031 has been assessed as 0.27 courts per 1,000 population, see Figure 17.

## *Accessibility*

- 4.96 The majority of sports hall users in Harborough will travel by car and national research shows that sports halls have an approximate drive time catchment of up to about 20 minutes. Almost everyone in the district lives within 20 minutes' drive of a sports hall available for community use. A formal accessibility planning standard of 20 minutes' drive time is therefore proposed.

## *Design and quality*

- 4.97 The quality and design of facilities should reflect current best practice, including design guidance from Sport England and the national governing bodies. Facilities should also have at least a "very good" Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) rating. This policy should apply to refurbishment proposals as well as new build.

## **Recommendations for sports halls**

4.98 It is recommended, subject to resources being available, that the Council and relevant stakeholders consider the following to address sports hall provision in the district:

4.99 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, performance and excellence, it is recommended that the Council continues to support community access to sports halls at its leisure centres and via its partners.

4.100 It is recommended that the Council keeps under review the recommendations contained in this strategy, including changes to the housing proposals upon which this assessment is based which may have an impact on the supply and demand for facilities.

4.101 It is recommended that the identified projects are included in the review of the IDP.

4.102 It is recommended that the Council seeks to utilise a range of funding sources to deliver the identified projects, taking into account: what monies are already available, the capital programme of the Council, the opportunities for funding via S106 and current funding opportunities from a range of external agencies.

4.103 It is recommended that Harborough District Council shares with the adjacent authorities the findings from this Sports Facilities Strategy to support their own planning discussions in relation to sports facility provision associated with planned housing growth.

#### *Protect*

4.104 It is recommended that the existing network of sports halls across the district is generally protected and maintained and that the facilities should remain affordable to clubs and individuals.

4.105 It is recommended that where possible, formalised community use agreements are established with schools to protect community use.

#### *Enhance and Provide*

- 4.106 It is recommended that the following sports hall facilities are improved or provided to enable them to meet future sports hall demand:
- Re-provision of a 4-badminton court hall (at minimum) plus a dome or equivalent with a minimum of 2 netball courts if Harborough Leisure Centre is replaced
  - Robert Smyth Academy: refurbishment of existing 4-court and 3-court halls and the ancillary facilities.
- 4.107 It is recommended that all new or improved facilities supported by capital monies from public sources or grant aid should be secured for community use via a binding legal agreement. The length of the agreement to reflect the size of the public support/grant involved.
- 4.108 It is recommended that schools which offer block bookings for evenings and weekends should be encouraged to consider whether they are also able to offer some casual use time, particularly for badminton.

## SECTION 5: SWIMMING POOLS

- 5.1 Nationally over 4.7 million adults are swimming at least twice a month (Sport England, 2019), but the number of people swimming has fallen since 2015/16.
- 5.2 Swimming pools are one of the most important sports facility type in Harborough as they are used by the very youngest residents, through to people in old age. This assessment considers only indoor pools which are open year-round, which is in line with Sport England's approach to swimming pool assessment.
- 5.3 Swimming is an attractive activity for everyone in the community and swimming is considered to be an important life skill. Primary schools are required to arrange some swimming lessons for pupils, and the public pools are used to cater for schools swimming.

### Pool design and activities

- 5.4 As with sports halls, the aspiration to make swimming as accessible as possible to the largest number of people would suggest that a geographical network of small pools would be best. However, small pools limit flexibility in terms of the range of activities that can be undertaken, the ability to operate more than one activity at any time, and the level of performance that can be accommodated. They can also be proportionally more expensive to operate relative to larger pools. General community swimming needs should ideally also be balanced with the wider sports development requirements, including support to clubs to offer opportunities in a wide range of pool-based activities such as:
- Swimming
  - Water Polo
  - Synchronised Swimming
  - Canoeing
  - Lifesaving
  - Diving
  - Sub Aqua
- 5.5 In general terms, the higher the level of performance, the greater the demands on pool size, depth and specific competition requirements such as spectator capacity and specialist equipment. For example, a 25m x 6 lane pool can accommodate local/club level swimming galas but a 25m x 8 lane pool with electronic timing and spectator space is required for county galas and league events.
- 5.6 Moveable bulkheads that can sub-divide pools and moveable floors that can vary water depth can substantially increase a pool's flexibility, but the design of any new pool will determine what activities can be accommodated.



- 5.7 The national governing body responsible for high performance swimming is British Swimming, and its guidance note, *Reasons for Pool Water Depths and Traditional Profiles* (British Swimming, n.d.) provides a useful summary of the minimum depths of water for different activities (Figure 18).

*Figure 18: Pool depths for range of activities*  
(based on British Swimming, *Reasons for Pool Water Depths and Traditional Profiles*)

| Activity                                  | Minimum water depth |      |      |      |             |
|---|---------------------|------|------|------|-------------|
|   | 1.2m                | 1.5m | 1.8m | 2.0m | 2.4m        |
| Competition swimming (starting blocks)    | x                   |      |      |      |             |
| Teaching shallow dives and racing starts  |                     |      | x    |      |             |
| Synchronised swimming, low level training |                     |      | x    |      |             |
| Synchronised swimming, advanced training  |                     |      | x    |      | 10x12m area |
| Water polo (for some or all of pool)      |                     |      | x    |      |             |
| Sub-aqua training                         |                     | x    |      |      |             |
| Canoe practice                            |                     | x    |      |      |             |
| Lifesaving and practice                   |                     |      | x    |      |             |
| Octopush                                  | x                   | x    | x    | x    |             |

- 5.8 Separate small teaching or learner pools with shallower depths on the same sites as main pools provide the opportunity to offer a wide range of activities catering for the maximum number of users possible. Teaching pools can be maintained at a slightly higher temperature than main pools making them suitable for use by young children, non-swimmers and those with a disability. They offer income generating potential not only through pool parties and other hirings, but also by reducing the impact on programming in the main pool. A teaching pool enhances the local authority's ability to deliver its Learn to Swim programme and therefore it is seen as desirable that there should be at least one in each major centre of population.
- 5.9 A typical 25m x 6 lane pool's area is approximately 325 sq m. With the addition of a learner pool this would typically increase by 160 sq m giving a total water space area of 485 sq m.

## Current provision

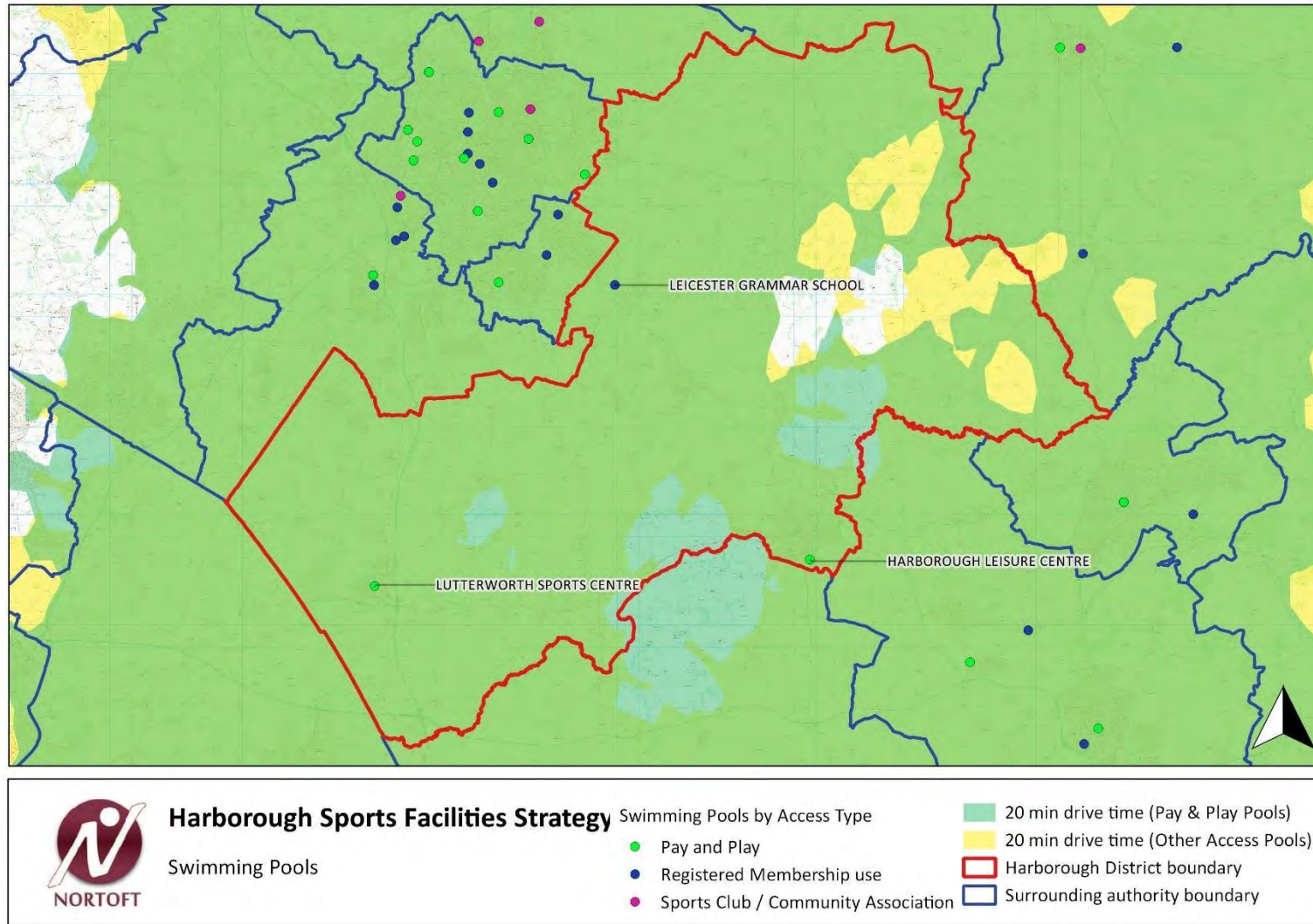
- 5.10 There are three pool sites which are available for community use: Harborough Leisure Centre, Lutterworth Sports Centre and Leicester Grammar. These are mapped in Figure 19 together with a 20-minute drive time catchment.
- 5.11 The two public leisure centres offer casual and club swimming. Harborough pool appears to be operating at maximum capacity for significant periods, whilst Lutterworth has spare capacity.
- 5.12 Leicester Grammar's excellent quality pool (25m x 6 lane, 325 sq m) is only available for hire to external clubs and organisations and it does not offer any casual (pay-and-play swimming). It is owned and managed by the independent school. The school reports that the pool is booked for almost 100% of the available community time (weekday evenings and weekends). There is no security of community use of the site, but use is well-established for a number of facilities including the sports hall and AGPs.
- 5.13 The small Ullesthorpe Court Hotel and Golf Club is only available on a minimum of 3 month membership at £132.00 pp. The pool is within a spa and is not appropriate or available for general swimming. It is therefore not considered further as a facility able to respond to general swimming demand.
- 5.14 The Sport England Facilities Planning Model (FPM) parameters estimate peak community use to be 63% of the community use throughput, which excludes curriculum swimming. As it is not possible to exclude the school swimming from the leisure centre KPIs, it is not possible to directly compare the throughput figures with FPM model's approach.
- 5.15 The FPM 'At One Time Capacity' for community use of pools is 1 person per 6 sq m water. Sport England considers that a pool operating at 70% of its At One Time Capacity is "busy" i.e. effectively full.
- 5.16 The total throughputs for the two leisure centre pools including school curriculum swimming for 2017-18 (March-April) for which there is the latest complete set of information were:

Harborough 328,402

Lutterworth 183,499



Figure 19: Swimming pools map





## Harborough Leisure Centre

- 5.17 The area of Harborough Leisure Centre's pools is 358 sq m comprising 313 sq m of main pool (25 m x 6 lane), approx 20 sq m of learner pool and 25 sq m of leisure water beach area linked into the main pool. Based on Sport England's 'At One Time Capacity' rate, this means that the pool's maximum capacity is at one time is 59.58 people. At 52 hours peak time per week, this gives a max usage of 3,098 people per week, or 161,113 visits per year. 70% of the max capacity per year = 113,568 visits during peak community hours, the level of use which Sport England would consider as "busy", or effectively full.
- 5.18 Comments provided by the manager that the pool is regularly running "at maximum capacity" appear justified.
- 5.19 Swim lessons for 2017-18 were running at over 90% capacity.

## Lutterworth Sports Centre

- 5.20 The area of Lutterworth pool is 325 sq m, so has at one-time capacity of 54.17 people. At 52 hours peak time per week, this gives a maximum usage of 2,817 people per week, or 146,466 visits per year. 70% of this maximum capacity is 102,526 visits during peak community hours.
- 5.21 The comments from the manager were that the site rarely operated at full capacity and that the main restriction was in relation to the number of lifeguards on duty. This seems to be borne out by the usage statistics, which include school swimming.
- 5.22 Swimming lessons are operating at about 91% of capacity.
- 5.23 Overall, Lutterworth Sports Centre's pool is operating at about 61% of the use at Harborough Leisure Centre per sq m of water space.

## Assessment of current supply and demand

- 5.24 Harborough District Council commissioned bespoke modelling for swimming pools in the district using the Sport England Facilities Planning Model (FPM) and the report was produced in June 2019. This report provides the most comprehensive objective assessment of the current swimming pool provision in the district. It was also used to test options for future provision.

- 5.25 The FPM has standardised parameters, see Figure 20 which summarises some of the most important parameters used in the model in relation to pools. It should be noted that the accessibility criteria of 20 minutes travel time is not a fixed boundary as the formula behind the FPM uses a distance decay function. However, 20 minutes' drive time catchment area is generally considered a good "rule of thumb".
- 5.26 The 70% utilised capacity threshold in the FPM parameters is the level beyond which Sport England considers a pool to be operating at an uncomfortable level, i.e. that the pool itself becomes too crowded to swim comfortably, and that the changing and circulation areas also become too crowded. The 70% threshold also takes into account the range of activities which usually take place in pools, for example aqua aerobics will have significantly more participants than lane swimming sessions. Additionally, there may be times and sessions that, whilst being within the peak period, are less busy and so will have fewer users.

*Figure 20: Facilities Planning Model key parameters pools*

|   |  |        |         |         |         |       |      |
|---|--|--------|---------|---------|---------|-------|------|
| At one Time Capacity                                  | 0.16667 per square metre = 1 person per 6 square meters  |        |         |         |         |       |      |
| Catchments  | Car: 20 minutes<br>Walking: 1.6 km<br>Public transport: 20 minutes at about half the speed of a car<br><br>NOTE: Catchment times are indicative, within the context of a distance decay function of the model. |        |         |         |         |       |      |
| Duration  | 60 minutes for tanks and leisure pools   |        |         |         |         |       |      |
| Percentage Participation                              |  |        |         |         |         |       |      |
|   | Age  | 0 - 15 | 16 - 24 | 25 - 39 | 40 - 59 | 60-79 | 80+  |
|   | Male   | 9.92   | 7.71    | 9.48    | 8.14    | 4.72  | 1.84 |
|   | Female   | 13.42  | 14.68   | 16.23   | 12.74   | 7.62  | 1.60 |
| Frequency per week                                    |  |        |         |         |         |       |      |
|   | Age  | 0 - 15 | 16 - 24 | 25 - 39 | 40 - 59 | 60-79 | 80+  |
|   | Male   | 1.13   | 1.06    | 0.96    | 1.03    | 1.25  | 1.43 |
|   | Female   | 0.94   | 0.98    | 0.88    | 1.01    | 1.12  | 1.18 |
| Peak Period   | Weekday: 12:00 to 13:30, 16:00 to 22.00<br>Saturday: 09:00 to 16:00<br>Sunday: 09:00 to 16:30<br><br>Total: 52 Hours<br><br>63%  |        |         |         |         |       |      |
| Percentage of use taking place within the Peak Period |  |        |         |         |         |       |      |

|                                     |                        |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Utilised capacity considered "busy" | 70% = "comfort factor" |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|

### Quantity

- 5.27 The FPM modelling provides a district wide total of the amount of water space available, both overall and as scaled by the number of hours available in the peak period. It should be noted that the FPM baseline information incorrectly recorded Leicester Grammar as being 25m x 10m with a water area of 250 sq m, when its actual size is 25 x 13 m, so with a water area of 325 sq m.
- 5.28 The FPM report's and the actual level of water space provision is given in Figure 21. This change increases the amount of water space per 1,000 population slightly, but this change is not significant in the overall strategy for community swimming nor in relation to the findings and conclusions of the FPM assessment.

*Figure 21: Water space in Harborough district*

|   | FPM    | Actual (taking into account larger water area at Leicester Grammar) |
|---|--------|---|
| Number of pools   | 3      | 3   |
| Number of pools   | 4      | 4   |
| Supply of total water space in sq m   | 933    | 1,008   |
| Supply of water space in sq m, scaled by hours available in the peak period | 810    | 885   |
| Supply of total water space in visits per week peak period                  | 7,027  | 7,678   |
| Population of Harborough in 2019  | 92,565 |   |
| Water space per 1,000 population  | 10.1   | 10.9  |

- 5.29 Although there is a relatively low level of water space per 1,000 population in Harborough district compared to the East Midlands average of 12 sq m, and England average of 13 sq m, the availability of pools outside of the district means that most residents can access at least one swimming pool within 20 minutes' drive.



- 5.30 The “satisfied demand” for swimming in Harborough district is therefore high according to the FPM assessment at around 92%, with around 41% of the residents’ swimming demand being exported to adjacent authorities’ pools. Most of this exported demand from the district goes to Oadby and Wigston (14%) and to Leicester (9%).
- 5.31 Almost all of the unmet demand for swimming in the district (about 8% in total) is due to living too far away from a pool to walk, and individuals not having access to a car.
- 5.32 The FPM report estimates the used capacity of the pools at peak time; evenings and weekends. Harborough Leisure Centre is estimated to be used at about 63% capacity at peak time, whilst Lutterworth Sports Centre is estimated to be used at 46% capacity. The existing KPI information for the two pools does not differentiate between community and school use, so these theoretical estimates cannot be checked against the actual throughputs of the pools. However, the anecdotal evidence of the managers in January 2019 suggests that the FPM usage estimates are about correct.
- 5.33 The FPM suggests that around 24% of the visits to the Harborough pools are from people living outside of the district. This importation of demand is spread across the adjacent authorities, with the most coming from Daventry (6%) followed by Kettering (4%) and Oadby & Wigston (3%).

### *Quality*

- 5.34 The quality of the swimming pools were assessed as part of the site audit against the following criteria:
- The swimming pool
  - Changing facilities
  - Disabled access
  - Maintenance and cleanliness
  - Car parking and accessibility
- 5.35 The Leicester Grammar pool is a standard tank and its ancillary facilities are high quality, but there is very limited spectator seating. Disabled access is via a hoist.
- 5.36 The Harborough Leisure Centre is standard quality and it has a small amount of spectator seating next to the café. The facilities are aging and car parking is a significant problem during much of the leisure centre’s opening hours. Disabled access to the pool is reasonable, in part because of the beach area.

- 5.37 Lutterworth Sports Centre pool, which is overall of standard quality, has a standard tank, but with a moveable floor at the deep end. Disabled access is via a hoist. There is no direct pool side spectator seating. The changing is standard quality. Car parking is not usually a problem, even at peak times.

### *Accessibility*

- 5.38 The FPM report of June 2019 found that almost 90% of all visits to the pools in Harborough were by car, whilst about 7% of visits was by walkers and about 3.5% of visits was by public transport.
- 5.39 The location of the current Harborough Leisure Centre means that a proportion of the town's residents can reach the facility on foot. The Lutterworth Sports Centre is more centrally located in the town and is therefore relatively more accessible on foot.
- 5.40 Leicester Grammar is close to the border with Oadby and Wigston and its 20-minute catchment extends across that authority together with much of Leicester and Blaby.

## **Consultation findings**

### *Club comments*

- 5.41 As part of the strategy process extensive attempts were made to contact all clubs in the district to give them an opportunity to respond to an online club survey which asked specific questions about the facilities that they use, their club's aspirations and any issues that they faced. There are two swimming clubs in Harborough, and both responded:
- Market Harborough Swim Club based at Harborough Leisure Centre.
  - Leicester Sharks Swimming Club based at Leicester Grammar School and Lutterworth Sports Centre.
- 5.42 A summary of their consultation returns is provided below together with that from Lutterworth Sub Aqua Club.

### *Market Harborough Swimming Club*

- 5.43 This is a large club with around 250 members. 85% of the members are drawn from Harborough district. The club has stayed the same size over the last 5 years but has waiting lists totalling around 50 swimmers. A lack of facilities is the main restriction on growth.



- 5.44 The club uses Harborough Leisure Centre 3-6 times a week during the evenings. The facility is in the club's preferred location, but the equipment is described as being in urgent need of replacement, storage is very poor, and the overall facility is rated as below average.
- 5.45 The club also uses Corby Swimming Pool for training. It is used 1-2 times a week year-round on weekday evenings.

#### *Leicester Sharks Swimming Club*

- 5.46 The Leicester Sharks Swimming Club has about 300 members covering all ages, but the majority of swimmers are aged 11-15 years. Because of its proximity to Leicester, only 35% of members are drawn from Harborough district. The club has grown over the last 5 years and is currently operating at close to capacity due to no further availability of pool time. The club has a development plan.
- 5.47 The club uses the pool at Leicester Grammar School 3-6 times a week on weekday evenings and at weekends. It finds booking easy. The site is described as good quality and the club has not raised any issues about its use.
- 5.48 The club also uses Lutterworth Sports Centre pool for training, again on weekday evenings and 3-6 times a week. This pool is fairly easy to book and the site quality is considered to be above average.

#### *Lutterworth Sub Aqua Club*

- 5.49 This club has around 40 members, most of which are seniors. About 60% of the divers are from Harborough, but the club also draws from Blaby, Rugby and Charnwood. The club has stayed the same size over the last 5 years but anticipates growing in the next 5 years. There are no issues restricting its growth.
- 5.50 The club uses Lutterworth swimming pool as its home site, which it uses 1-2 weekday evenings throughout the year. The pool and access to a meeting room are the club's main requirements and these are met by the site. The quality is considered to be average. The main problem reported is a lack of storage.

### National Governing Body comments

#### *Swim England*

- 5.51 Dennis Freeman-Wright, Swim England's Head of Facilities, expressed the following views on provision in the district:

'Although we are aware of some of the issues in Harborough District Council we cannot understand why the two community facilities in question at 27 years old

(Harborough LC) and 15 years old (Lutterworth LC) are being considered for replacement as they are both relatively new builds and should not have deteriorated to that extent’.

‘It is acknowledged that the two community pools have limited use for competitive swimming, but they do provide the expected range of community activities’.

‘Leicester Sharks use the Harborough District pools simply because there is limited supply in Leicester’.

‘Harborough District is bounded on the north by the City of Leicester, which although it has a water deficit provides a number of substantial leisure centres with swimming pools; and Corby District is to the east and provides a 50-metre pool complex for major competition’.

‘With a current population of nearly 92,000 Harborough District has a water deficit of approximately 125m<sup>2</sup> but only has two major population conurbations at Market Harborough and Lutterworth and even with a significant population increase is unlikely to require a third community swimming facility. Inevitably there will be ‘swimmer export’ to the pools in Leicester and Corby’.

‘From Swim England’s perspective the obvious solution would be to develop one of the two existing facilities. Lutterworth could certainly do with an additional learner pool’.

‘If there is some pressing reason why one of the current facilities must be replaced then an enlarged main pool would be the obvious option. With Market Harborough being the largest population base in the District it would make sense to have a 25m x 8-lane pool plus learner pool with some spectator seating there’.

‘With regards to the development at Scraptoft, clearly this area is orientated towards Leicester and residents are extremely unlikely to consider Harborough District as their leisure and recreation provider; pressure will undoubtedly grow for Leicester to provide extra facilities in the east of the city’.

### British Sub Aqua Club

- 5.52 This is the main national governing body for the sport. No comments were received in relation to the strategy.

### Adjacent authorities’ provision and strategies

- 5.53 A review of the swimming pool provision and proposals within the adjacent authorities has been undertaken (see Appendix 4). In summary:

- Blaby District Council does not have a current sports facilities strategy so there is no detailed analysis of swimming pool needs.
- The 'Charnwood Indoor Built Sports Facilities Strategy 2017 - 2036' (Charnwood Borough Council , 2018) concluded that additional water space is needed to meet current demand and that further space equivalent in size to a learner pool will be required to cater for the extra demand up to 2036.
- The 'Corby Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Strategy' (Corby Borough Council , 2017) concluded that swimming provision meets all current and projected future needs.
- 'Planning the Future of Open Space, Sport and Recreation in West Northamptonshire' (2017) concluded that swimming pool provision meets current needs, although a further pool will be required to meet future needs as part of a shared project with Northampton BC and South Northants DC.
- The 'Hinckley and Bosworth Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy' (Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, 2011) concluded that swimming provision meets all current needs, although the pool at Hinckley Leisure Centre should be updated and a new pool provided to meet future needs.
- The 'Kettering Sports Facilities Strategy and Action Plan 2011-2021' (Kettering Borough Council , 2011) concluded that there is a shortfall of swimming provision in the borough, which should be addressed through expanded pool space at Kettering Swimming Pool.
- Leicester City Council does not have a current sports facilities strategy so there is no detailed analysis of swimming needs.
- The 'Melton Sports Facilities Strategy 2016 - 2021' (Melton Borough Council, 2017) concluded that there is a current swimming pool shortfall equivalent to 54sq.m. A new 6-lane 25m pool with learner facilities should be provided by 2021, to replace an existing ageing facility.
- The Oadby and Wigston 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Study' (2011) concluded that, based upon the identified standard of provision, there is a shortfall of pool space.
- The 'Rugby Open Space, Playing Pitch and Sports Facilities Strategy' (Rugby Borough Council, 2015) concluded that swimming pool provision meets all current and future needs.

- The 'Rutland Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy 2015-2036' (Rutland County Council, 2015) concluded that additional pool provision is needed in Oakham to meet current and future needs.

5.54 In summary, several of the adjacent districts have shortfalls in swimming pool provision, which are likely to lead to imported demand to Harborough, particularly from Kettering to Harborough Leisure Centre.

## Summary of current situation

5.55 Swimming in Harborough is a popular activity. There are two public pools which offer casual swimming as well as club opportunities; Harborough Leisure Centre and Lutterworth Sports Centre. There is one other pool in the district, and this is owned and managed by the independent school Leicester Grammar. The school pool only provides for club swimming.

5.56 The quality of the pools at Harborough Leisure Centre and Lutterworth Sports Centre are both standard. There is a need to consider the future of both public facilities, Harborough Leisure Centre in the short-medium term and Lutterworth Sports Centre in the longer term as this facility ages.

5.57 The FPM assessment of June 2019 demonstrated that Harborough district has a low level of pool water space per 1,000 population compared to the regional and national average, but because there are relatively high rates of car ownership and there are pools in the adjacent authority areas, the level of "satisfied demand" for swimming is high. Around 41% of the current demand is exported out of the district whilst about 24% of the visits to the Harborough pools is from people living in the surrounding authorities, giving a net export of around 1,184 visits per week, mostly to Oadby & Wigston and Leicester.

5.58 Harborough Leisure Centre is estimated by the FPM to be running at about 63% full at peak times, whilst the pool at Lutterworth is running at about 46%. This difference was confirmed by the views of the managers expressed in January 2019, but the available KPI information is not available to reality-check the theoretical figures.

## Assessment of Future Needs

5.59 As with sports halls, an important consideration in the modelling to assess future facility needs is to determine what will be the likely growth in participation each year. Participation rates in adult sport (16 years and over) was previously monitored nationally by Sport England through their Active People Survey (Sport England, 2017) and now by its successor survey, Active Lives (Sport England, 2019). This is the mechanism which Harborough District Council also uses to assess the success of its policy objectives of getting more people active.

5.60 There has been a gradual decline in swimming participation at national level over the last few years. The modelling in the strategy has therefore been based on the assumption that the rates of participation per 1,000 population will remain at the current (2019) levels over the next few years. Generally, there will higher rates of facility demand from younger families, but this will be offset by lower demand from older people.

5.61 The rates of participation in “fashionable” sports activities using pools will fluctuate from year to year as the activities gain popularity then reduce again. This will change the programming of pools but is unlikely to impact on the overall demand for swimming pool space.

### Balance in supply and demand by 2031

5.62 The FPM June 2019 report modelled two options for the period up to 2031:

#### Option A

Replacement leisure centre for Market Harborough with:

- 25 m x 8 lane main pool (425 sq m)
- 10m x 8 m leisure pool (80 sq m)
- 5m x 4m learner/teaching/training pool (20 sq m)

The replacement Harborough Leisure Centre site is proposed to be within the North West Market Harborough SDA.

#### Option B

Pool network remains unchanged.

5.63 The other pools (Lutterworth Sports Centre and Leicester Grammar) remained unchanged in the modelling.

### *Demand for swimming*

5.64 By 2031 there is expected to be an increase in demand for swimming of around 21%, slightly below the increase in population. This is largely due to the fact that, although there is some new housing, the demands from the new younger age population attracted to the housing developments will in part, be balanced out by an aging population across the rest of the district. As older people swim less frequently than younger people, the increase in swimming demand is lower than the increase in population.

### *Option A – replacement leisure centre with more pool space*

5.65 The key findings from the modelling are that the replacement Harborough Leisure Centre would result in the following at 2031:

- Very little change in the overall rate of satisfied demand for swimming across the district
- There would be an increase in the percentage of swimming visits retained within the district, increasing from about 58% to 66%. The fall in the number of exported visits changes most in relation to Oadby & Wigston and Leicester.
- The percentage of visits to the pools from people living outside of the district (imported) will fall from about 24% to 21%.
- The New Harborough Leisure Centre pool would be expected to be used at about 66% of its capacity.
- The proposed location of the New Harborough Leisure Centre would be less accessible on foot to the town's residents than the current site.
- The Lutterworth Sports Centre pool will reach about 56% used capacity.

### *Option B – no change in the pool network*

5.66 If no changes were to be made to the pool network, the implications by 2031 are:

- Very little change in the overall rate of satisfied demand for swimming across the district.
- Very slight increase in the number of swimming visits retained within the district at about 2.4%.
- An increase in the number of visits exported each week (about 300 visits) but a fall in the percentage of demand exported as most housing growth is around Market Harborough and there is relatively little pool choice for residents here.
- The used capacity of the Harborough Leisure Centre pool would be around 77%.
- There would be a slight fall in the percentage of visits being imported from elsewhere, as the Harborough Leisure Centre pool becomes increasingly busy and less attractive compared to other pool options.
- Overall there is a shortage of pool supply.

5.67 The primary issue with the “do nothing” option is the lack of pool space in the Market Harborough area, resulting in the fact that the Harborough Leisure Centre pool would be operating, on average across the peak period, at levels well above the 70% level Sport England considers to be comfortably full.

### *FPM conclusions*

- 5.68 The FPM report concludes that the proposed swimming pool provision at the replacement Harborough Leisure Centre is appropriate to meet the needs of the future:

*The combination of individual swimming pools at the new centre provide for ALL swimming activities and for this to take place in separate and dedicated pools. The increase to a 25m x 8 lane main pool, from the 25m x 6 lane main pool at the existing centre, is much more suited to meeting swimming competition programmes. It does however also provide more water space for (say) lane and fitness swimming and recreational swimming to take place at the same time.*

*The addition of a leisure pool will provide a pool to develop confidence in water and provide for fun and family-based activities.*

*Overall, it is a very balanced swimming pool project in scale and facility mix - it provides for all swimming activities and meets swimming competition needs. The facilities planning model supply and demand assessment supports a project of this scale, to meet the projected demand for swimming in Harborough District up to 2031.*

- 5.69 The FPM notes that the proposed location of the replacement Harborough Leisure Centre would be less accessible on foot than the current location for the town's residents.
- 5.70 The findings of the FPM report also confirm that there is no need for additional water space in Lutterworth up to 2031 and that a new pool in the east of the district is not justified.

## Meeting the needs of the future

- 5.71 Given the findings of the FPM report, the site audits, and the consultation feedback undertaken as this strategy has developed, the priorities for swimming are:
- The increase in the amount of swimming pool space in Market Harborough, most likely through a replacement leisure centre with the following:
    - 25 m x 8 lane main pool (425 sq m)
    - 10m x 8 m leisure pool (80 sq m)
    - 5m x 4m learner/teaching/training pool (20 sq m)
  - Retention at good quality the swimming pool at Lutterworth Sports Centre. However, to keep under review the long-term options for the refurbishment or replacement of the Sports Centre from 2031 onwards. The Sports Centre should



remain within the existing town area of Lutterworth to maximise sustainable transport by the Sports Centre's users.

- Encourage Leicester Grammar school to retain the existing levels of club and swimming lesson use of its site, ideally through an agreement to secure community use.

## **Justifying developers' contributions**

- 5.72 All new housing will generate additional demand for swimming pool space. New developments should therefore be expected to contribute towards projects which will help meet this demand, either via a new facility or extension, or improvements to existing facilities.

### *Quantity*

- 5.73 The amount of water space needed to meet the demand from swimming required by 2031 in total across the district, as calculated in the FPM report, is 1,118 sq m, or 9.6 sq m per 1,000 population. A formal standard of 9.6 sq m per 1,000 is therefore recommended.

### *Accessibility*

- 5.74 The majority of swimming pool users in Harborough district will travel by car and national research shows that swimming pools have an approximate drive time catchment of up to about 20 minutes. Almost everyone in the district lives within 20 minutes' drive of a swimming pool available for community use. A formal planning standard of 20 minutes' drive time is therefore proposed.

### *Design and quality*

- 5.75 The quality and design of facilities should reflect current best practice, including design guidance from Sport England and the national governing bodies. Facilities should also have at least a "very good" BREEAM rating. This policy should apply to refurbishment proposals as well as new build.

## **Recommendations for swimming pools**

5.76 It is recommended, subject to resources being available, that the Council and relevant stakeholders consider the following to address swimming pool provision in the district:

5.77 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, performance and excellence, it is recommended that the Council provides attractive swimming facilities available to the whole community which complements the wider provision of recreation opportunities in the private, education, community and voluntary sectors.

5.78 The leisure centres at Market Harborough and Lutterworth should, as far as possible, be financially self-sustaining.

5.79 It is recommended that the identified projects will be included in the review of the IDP.

5.80 It is recommended that the Council seek to utilise a range of funding sources to deliver the identified projects, taking into account: what monies are already available, the capital programme of the Council, the opportunities for funding via S106, and current funding opportunities from a range of external agencies.

#### *Protect*

5.81 It is recommended that:

- Lutterworth Sports Centre pool is retained and maintained at good quality. If the facility is to be replaced after 2031, this should be to a site within the existing town area of Lutterworth, in order to maximise sustainable transport options for users.
- Leicester Grammar School's pool is retained and maintained at good quality and that the current levels of community use remains long term. If possible, an agreement should be put in place to secure this long-term community use.

#### *Provide*

5.82 It is recommended that the following provision is sought in Market Harborough, subject to feasibility assessments including site availability for a replacement leisure centre:

- 25 m x 8 lane main pool (425 sq m)
- 10m x 8 m leisure pool (80 sq m)
- 5m x 4m learner/teaching/training pool (20 sq m)

## **SECTION 6: HEALTH AND FITNESS**

- 6.1 This section considers indoor fitness facilities, both the provision of fitness gyms and the provision of studio space. The latter are multi-purpose rooms used for a range of fitness activities and dance and are usually an integral part of any leisure centre or commercial fitness site. There are a range of types of fitness gym established in Harborough district, from what might be called “standard” fitness gyms to those specialising in particular types of fitness e.g. the CrossFit site in Lutterworth or providing for particular sectors, such as the women only Curves gym in Market Harborough. The private sector plays a major role in health and fitness provision and is likely to continue to do so in the future.
- 6.2 Indoor gyms and studios attract all socio-economic groups and a wide spread of ages and overall there are more women users than men (Sport England, 2019). The provision of health and fitness facilities (typically including fitness stations) is therefore potentially a key element in achieving increased participation in physical activity. However, there is no simple way of assessing rates of participation in individual gym and fitness activities, nor the spaces they need. One method is the analysis of the provision per 1,000 population of the health and fitness facilities which have a number of ‘stations’ (one station might be for example a single treadmill), together with the number of studio spaces.
- 6.3 There are no National Governing Bodies which cover all aspects of fitness and gym activities.

## Current provision

- 6.4 At the time of the main strategy audit in spring 2019 there were 11 health and fitness sites with public access in Harborough, all of which had fitness station equipment and five of them also had studios. Since then the Broughton Astley Leisure Centre has opened with an additional 63-station fitness gym and 2 studios. Current provision therefore comprises a total of about 575 stations and 9 studios. The fitness gyms vary in size, from the largest with about 80 stations at two commercial sites, Snap and Gym11 both in Market Harborough, down to 8 stations at the CrossFit gym. About 63% of the fitness stations are at commercial fitness sites.
- 6.5 Some of the secondary schools also have a small fitness gym usually with around 6 stations. Only Leicester Grammar school allows community use, but this is by clubs hiring other facilities on site. Elsewhere, the fitness gyms are for school use only and have been provided to support the delivery of the curriculum.
- 6.6 The health and fitness sites are listed in Figure 22 and mapped in Figure 23. With the geographical spread of sites within and on the border of the authority, almost everyone with access to a car can reach a site within 15 minutes’ drive, though there are some gaps in the more rural areas of the district, see Figure 23.

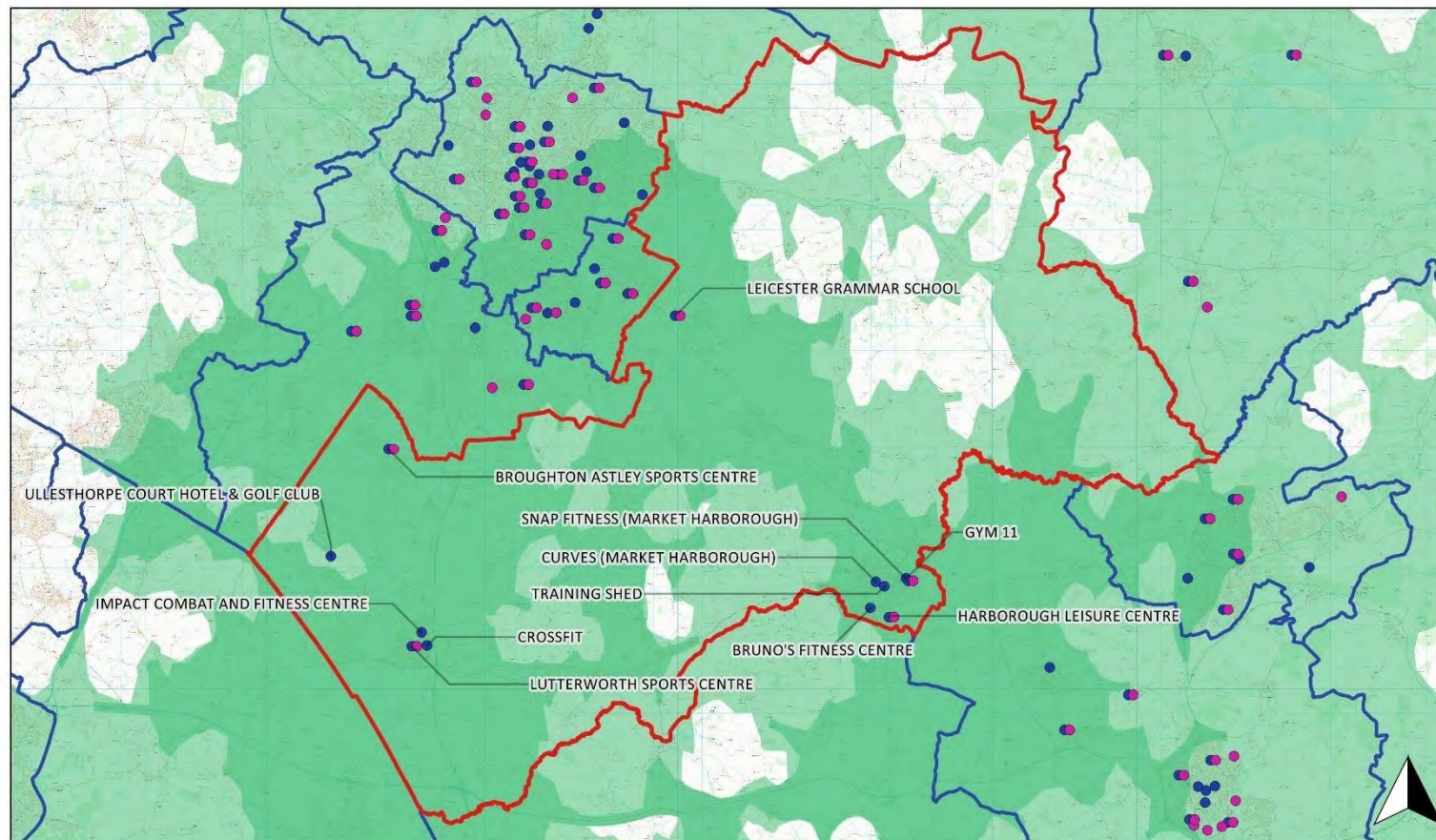
Figure 22: Health and fitness- current provision

| Site Name  | Number of stations | Number of studios | Ownership Type/ Nature of Site | Access Type                 | Management | Specialism/comment  |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---|
| Broughton Astley Leisure Centre<br>LE9 6AZ                     | 63                 | 2                 | Leisure centre                 | Pay and play and membership | Commercial | New facility. One studio dedicated to spin.   |
| Bruno's Gym<br>Market Harborough LE16 9PL                      | 30                 | 0                 | Commercial                     | Pay and play and membership | Commercial | Older equipment and separate weights area. On street parking.                             |
| CrossFit<br>Lutterworth LE17 4DY                               | 8                  | 1                 | Commercial                     | Membership                  | Commercial | Specialist cross fit site with small number of stations in large area.                    |
| Curves<br>Market Harborough LE16 7FS                           | 12                 | 0                 | Commercial                     | Membership                  | Commercial | Small gym for women only. Within industrial area. Limited parking.                        |
| Gym11<br>Market Harborough LE16 7PT                            | 80                 | 0                 | Commercial                     | Pay and play and membership | Commercial | Large number of stations. Very limited mat area. Within industrial area. Limited parking. |
| Harborough Leisure Centre<br>Market Harborough LE16 9HF        | 70                 | 2                 | Leisure centre                 | Pay and play and membership | Commercial | Standard fitness gyms and studio space.   |
| Impact Combat and Fitness Centre<br>Market Harborough LE17 4NY | 40                 | 1                 | Commercial                     | Membership                  | Commercial | Site specialises in martial arts and includes large area with matting and cage.           |

|  |                           |                          |   |                             |                   |  |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Leicester Grammar School<br>Great Glen<br>LE8 9FL          | 20                        | 1                        | Independent school                        | Club                        | School in house   | Only available to clubs using site.                              |
| <b>Site Name</b>   | <b>Number of stations</b> | <b>Number of studios</b> | <b>Ownership Type/<br/>Nature of Site</b> | <b>Access Type</b>          | <b>Management</b> | <b>Specialism/comment</b>  |
| Lutterworth Sports Centre<br>Lutterworth<br>LE17 4RB       | 70                        | 2                        | Leisure centre                            | Pay and play and membership | Commercial        | One studio used permanently for spin. Standard type fitness gym. |
| Snap Fitness<br>Market Harborough LE16 7QE                 | 80                        | 1                        | Commercial                                | Membership                  | Commercial        | Standard type fitness gym.                                       |
| Training Shed<br>Market Harborough LE16 7DS                | 35                        | 0                        | Commercial                                | Pay and play and membership | Commercial        | Basic gym but with large open area for free weights and classes. |
| Ullesthorpe Hotel and Golf Club<br>Ullesthorpe<br>LE17 4NY | 35                        | 0                        | Part of golf club/hotel                   | Membership                  | Commercial        | Poor disability access. High membership costs.                   |

*Figure 23: Health and Fitness sites with fitness stations map*





## Harborough Sports Facilities Strategy

Health and Fitness Facilities

Health and Fitness Facilities

- Health and Fitness Suite
- Studio

15 minute drive time

Harborough District boundary

Surrounding authority boundary

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## Assessment of current supply/demand

- 6.7 Health and fitness facilities are often co-located with other sports facilities because as a net income earner, they can support the financial viability of other facilities, particularly swimming pools. However, most of the facilities in Harborough are commercial fitness sites with no pools.
- 6.8 There is no easy way of assessing the balance in supply and demand, as no throughput information is available from the commercial facility operators. However as about 63% of the fitness gyms with fitness stations and studios are based at commercial sites, it can be assumed that the demand for these facilities balances the supply.
- 6.9 Health and fitness facilities are major elements of the leisure centres and the throughput information from the centres for the year ended March 2018 (the latest full year available) is given in Figure 24. Although the overall throughput at the two leisure centres for health and fitness was significantly different as the figures cover the studio use in addition to the fitness gyms, the average number of members per fitness station across the year is the same.

*Figure 24: Health and fitness throughput at leisure centres*

| Leisure Centre | Visits in 2017-18 for health and fitness | Members per station |
|----------------|--|---------------------|
| Harborough     | 305,180                                  | 30                  |
| Lutterworth    | 227,665                                  | 30                  |

- 6.10 The operator for the two leisure centres changed in April 2019 and there was significant investment into the fitness equipment on both sites. It is too early to assess the impact of this investment.

## Consultation findings

- 6.11 There are no independent sports clubs for health and fitness and there are no overarching national governing bodies.

## Adjacent authorities' provision and strategies

- 6.12 The fitness provision situation within the adjacent authorities to Harborough is:
- The 'Charnwood Indoor Built Sports Facilities Strategy 2017 - 2036' (Charnwood Borough Council, 2018) concluded that existing levels of provision should be at least maintained. The commercial sector is likely to cater for additional needs to 2036.



- The 'Corby Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Strategy' (2017) concluded that supply and demand are currently balanced, so additional provision will be required to meet future needs.
- 'Planning the Future of Open Space, Sport and Recreation in West Northamptonshire' (2017) concluded that provision meets current needs, although a further 331 fitness stations will be required to meet future needs
- Leicester City Council does not have a current sports facilities strategy so there is no detailed analysis of health and fitness needs.
- The 'Melton Sports Facilities Strategy 2016 - 2021' (Melton Borough Council, 2017) concluded that there was a current shortfall of 27 stations, rising to 30 stations by 2021.
- The 'Rugby Open Space, Playing Pitch and Sports Facilities Strategy' (Rugby Borough Council, 2015) concluded that provision meets current needs, although a further 185-260 fitness stations will be required to meet future needs.
- The 'Rutland Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy 2015-2036' (Rutland County Council, 2015) concluded that provision meets all current and projected future needs.

6.13 Health and fitness requirements were not addressed in the relevant strategies for Hinckley and Bosworth, Kettering, Oadby and Wigston, and there are no current published strategies for Blaby or Leicester.

6.14 As health and fitness facilities have an approximate 15 minutes' drive time catchment, the cross-boundary movement of users is less than for swimming or sports halls.

## Modelling

### Comparator authorities' provision

6.15 Using Active Places Power (Sport England, 2019) data it has been possible to calculate the current level of provision of fitness stations and the number of studios per 1,000 head of population for Harborough's CIPFA comparators together with the provision for the East Midlands region and England as a whole, see Figure 25. For this assessment all sites with public access have been included in the figures.

- 6.16 In relation to the number of fitness stations, this comparator authority analysis suggests that the current rate of provision in Harborough is higher than the CIPFA comparators, between the regional and national averages.
- 6.17 For studio space, the provision in Harborough is broadly similar to that of the local authority comparators and to the regional average. All of these are however higher than the national average.
- 6.18 These findings are likely to reflect the nature of the communities in Harborough and their relative affluence, as it is known that affluence correlates closely with levels of activity (Sport England, 2019).

*Figure 25: Health and fitness - comparator authorities*

| CIPFA comparator       | Estimated population at 2019 (ONS 2016 baseline) | Health and Fitness (number of stations) |                      | Studios (number of) |                      |
|------------------------|--|---|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
|                        |  | Total                                   | Per 1,000 population | Total               | Per 1,000 population |
| <b>Harborough</b>      | 92,600   | 575                                     | 6.21                 | 9                   | 0.10                 |
| Ribble Valley          | 59,300   | 186                                     | 3.14                 | 7                   | 0.12                 |
| South Northamptonshire | 92,000   | 391                                     | 4.25                 | 8                   | 0.09                 |
| Maldon                 | 64,300   | 267                                     | 4.15                 | 6                   | 0.09                 |
| Daventry               | 82,500   | 357                                     | 4.33                 | 7                   | 0.08                 |
| <b>East Midlands</b>   | 4,816,800  | 29,055                                  | 6.03                 | 508                 | 0.11                 |
| <b>England</b>         | 56,357,500                                       | 360,053                                 | 6.39                 | 6,503               | 0.03                 |

## Summary of current situation

- 6.19 There are 12 health and fitness sites across Harborough with a total of approximately 575 fitness stations and 9 studios. Most of the sites are in Market Harborough and Lutterworth, but the 15-minute drive time catchment for these types of facilities means that most residents have access to a site, either within the district or in an adjacent authority.
- 6.20 The fitness and gym provision in Harborough in terms of the number of studios is broadly in line with the CIPFA comparator authorities. The district has more fitness stations than the comparators, but the rate is similar per 1,000 population to the regional average.

- 6.21 About 63% of the provision is via commercial fitness facilities, and the largest sites are in the commercial sector, with around 80 stations. Harborough Leisure Centre and Lutterworth Sports Centre both had an average of around 30 members per fitness station for the year 2017-18, but the overall health and fitness throughput at Harborough was much higher than at Lutterworth.
- 6.22 There are a wide variety of types of fitness facility in the district, catering for different markets, either providing specialist environments e.g. cross fit or martial arts or targeting specific markets e.g. women.
- 6.23 The fitness market is probably at a fine balance between supply and demand. As the market in fitness gyms responds rapidly to demand, it is likely that there will continue to be regular changes to the total supply and its nature in the future.

## Assessment of Future Needs

- 6.24 Although the fitness market and the “supply” of facilities tends to change fairly rapidly, the modelling is based on an assumption that there are no major anticipated changes to the facility network within or on the boundaries of the authority. It should also be noted that because the fitness trends are fast changing, the number of fitness stations identified in the assessment below should be taken as a guide to the scale of potential need, rather than as a definitive figure.
- 6.25 The population projections used in the assessment below are those set out in Figure 6, a total of 116,673 by 2031.

## Extrapolating current demand and current supply

- 6.26 The current rate of provision in Harborough is 6.21 fitness stations and 0.1 studios per 1,000 population. Sport England’s latest Active Lives Survey report of May 2019 (Sport England, 2019) does not provide trends information for fitness activities because the monitoring methodology changed recently. The assessment of future need for Harborough is therefore based on two scenarios, one with no change in the rate of participation, and one with a 0.5% growth per annum.
- 6.27 The district has been treated as a whole because of the concentration of health and fitness facilities in the Market Harborough and Lutterworth areas. If there was no increase in participation the calculations in Figure 26 suggests that there would be a need for an extra 150 fitness stations and 3 extra studios by 2031. If there was a growth in participation, then the demand could be expected to rise by around 237 stations and 4 studios.

6.28 The forecast demand associated with each of the SDAs is given in Figure 27. This suggests that the amount of demand generated by each of the SDAs is for a maximum of 22 fitness stations, but that the increase in population is not enough by itself to generate demand for any extra studio space.

*Figure 26: Health and fitness supply/demand to 2031*

| Demand per 1,000 population retained at same rate as 2019 |         | Demand   |         | Current supply |         | Balance supply/demand |         |
|---|---------|----------|---------|----------------|---------|-----------------------|---------|
| Stations  | Studios | Stations | Studios | Stations       | Studios | Stations              | Studios |
| 6.21  | 0.10    | 725      | 12      | 575            | 9       | -150                  | -3      |

| Demand per 1,000 population (increased at 0.5% pa from 2019) |         | Demand   |         | Current supply |         | Balance supply/demand |         |
|--|---------|----------|---------|----------------|---------|-----------------------|---------|
| Stations   | Studios | Stations | Studios | Stations       | Studios | Stations              | Studios |
| 6.96   | 0.11    | 812      | 13      | 575            | 9       | -237                  | -4      |

*Figure 27: Health and fitness demand linked to SDAs*

| SDA                          | Forecast population at completion | Demand with no increase in participation |         | Demand with 0.5% increase in participation |         |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---------|--|---------|
|                              |                                   | Stations                                 | Studios | Stations                                   | Studios |
| North West Market Harborough | 3,312                             | 21                                       | 0       | 22   | 0       |
| East of Lutterworth          | 3,312                             | 21                                       | 0       | 22   | 0       |
| Scraptoft                    | 2,650                             | 16                                       | 0       | 18   | 0       |

## Meeting the needs of the future

- 6.29 The facility network is expected to alter over time as the commercial facilities open and close according to the market, but with the housing growth there will be a need for new provision. A high proportion of this new provision could be met via the commercial sector, but there is justification for the leisure centres, particularly any replacement Harborough facility to have a large fitness gym and studio spaces to help offset the costs of the swimming pools. The leisure centre fitness facilities would still need to compete effectively with the purely commercial fitness sites.
- 6.30 The new Broughton Astley sports centre with its 63 station fitness gym and 2 studios is approximately 14 minutes' drive from Lutterworth Sports Centre, so there is some overlapping catchment. However, it is also close to the district boundary and its catchment extends into Blaby district, including the new planned development at Whetstone Pastures, much of which will be within 10 minutes' drive of the new sports centre. This suggests that there is likely to still be demand at Lutterworth, including in association with the SDA.
- 6.31 The Kibworth School is considering converting an existing building close to the road into a small fitness gym which would have community access. This project is still at an early stage. The site is within about 10 minutes' drive of the proposed location for the replacement Harborough Leisure Centre so is well within the approximately 15-minute drive time catchment. It is not therefore likely to be a high priority for community investment, though it would potentially offer new opportunities for residents of some of the East sub area such as Billesdon, which would be just within the 15-minute drive time catchment.
- 6.32 Future options for Fleckney Sports Centre are currently being considered. Provision may include a fitness gym, but the details are still to be confirmed.

## Justifying developers' contributions

- 6.33 All new housing will generate demand for health and fitness stations and studio space. New developments should therefore be expected to contribute towards projects which will help meet this demand, either via a new facility or extension, or improvements to existing facilities.

### *Quantity*

- 6.34 The modelling findings suggests that the demand for health and fitness provision which will be generated per 1,000 population at 2031 and including a participation rate of growth of 0.5% per annum over the period is:
- 6.96 fitness stations
  - 0.10 studios

### *Accessibility*

- 6.35 A 15-minute drive time catchment is appropriate for indoor fitness facilities and reflects the maximum travel time of most of the residents in the district, either to a facility within the authority, or over the border.

#### *Design and quality*

- 6.36 The quality and design of facilities should reflect current best practice, including design guidance from Sport England. This should apply to refurbishment proposals as well as new build.
- 6.37 The area for each indoor fitness station is taken to be an average of 5 sqm. It is appropriate that developers should be asked for a contribution towards the building cost for the health and fitness space at public leisure centres as well as the equipment itself.

### **Recommendations for health and fitness**



- 6.38 It is recommended, subject to resources being available, that the Council and relevant stakeholders consider the following to address health and fitness provision in the district:

- 6.39 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, it is recommended that the Council provides attractive health and fitness facilities which are available to the whole community which complements the wider provision of recreation opportunities in the education, commercial, community and voluntary sectors. This provision will be made in association with the public leisure centres, where the revenue generated from health and fitness can help balance the cost of maintaining the centres.
- 6.40 It is recommended that the identified public projects will be included in a review of the IDP.
- 6.41 It is recommended that the Council seeks to utilise a range of funding sources to deliver the identified projects, taking into account: what monies are already available, the capital programme of the Council, the opportunities for funding via S106 and current funding opportunities from a range of external agencies.

#### *Sites*

##### *Protect*

- 6.42 It is recommended that the existing network of health and fitness sites which have 50 stations, or more are generally protected and maintained.

##### *Enhance*

- 6.43 It is recommended that the health and fitness facilities at Harborough Leisure Centre and Lutterworth Sports Centre are refurbished, improved, expanded or replaced.

##### *Provide*

- 6.44 It is recommended that the priority for new delivery (which needs to be confirmed through detailed feasibility work) is the possible replacement leisure centre for Market Harborough. This should include a large fitness gym and a number of studio spaces. Site and details to be confirmed.
- 6.45 It is recommended that appropriate land for the leisure centres should be identified through the planning process and made available free of charge.

## **SECTION 7: INDOOR NETBALL AND TENNIS**

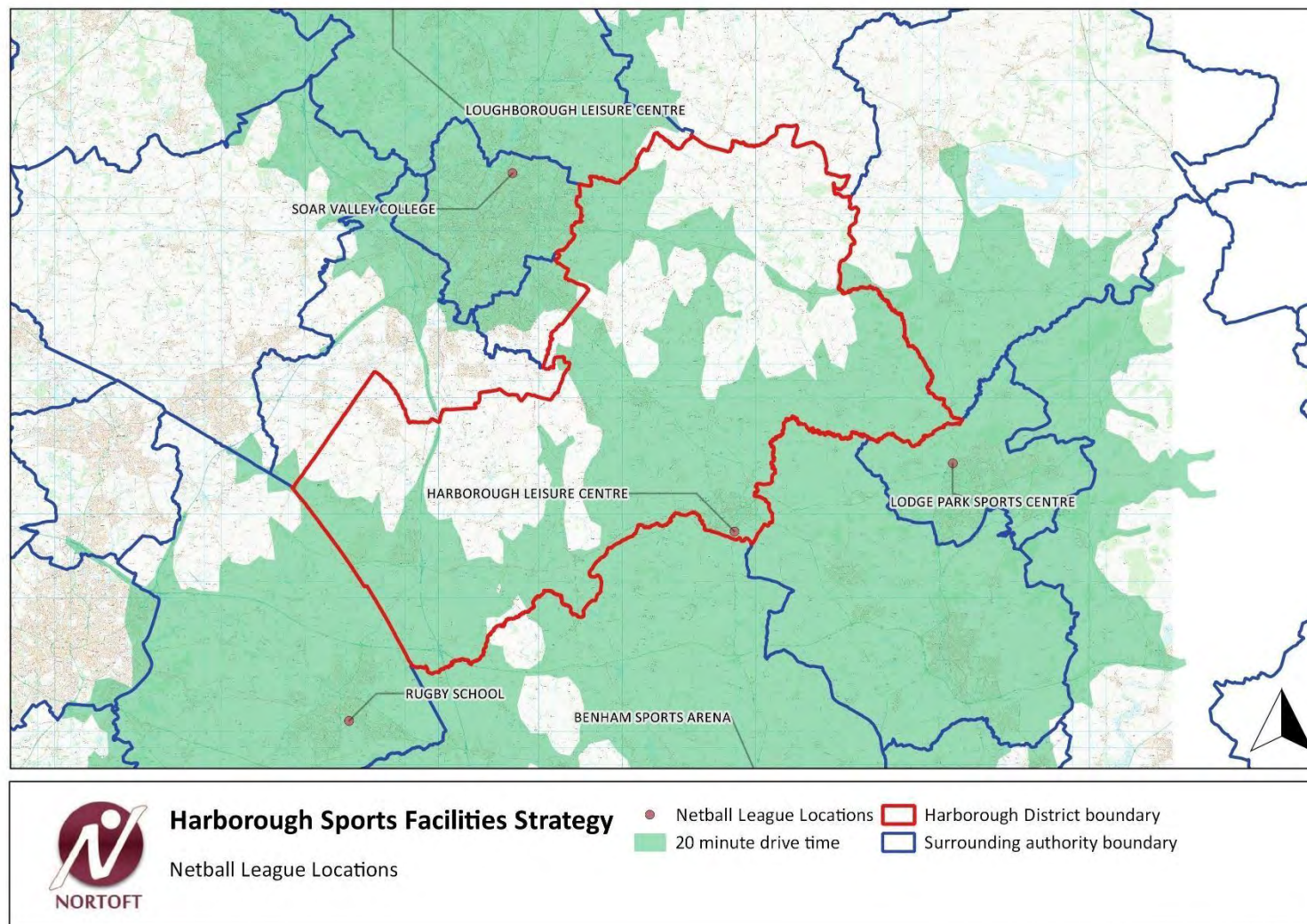


- 7.1 There is only one indoor netball/tennis facility in Harborough district, located at the Harborough Leisure Centre, which was built in 2004. It is an aging air hall which is marked out for 3 tennis courts, 3 small-sided football and 2 netball courts. It is floodlit but does not have direct access to changing facilities. The primary use of the dome is for tennis and netball.

### **Assessment of current supply/demand**

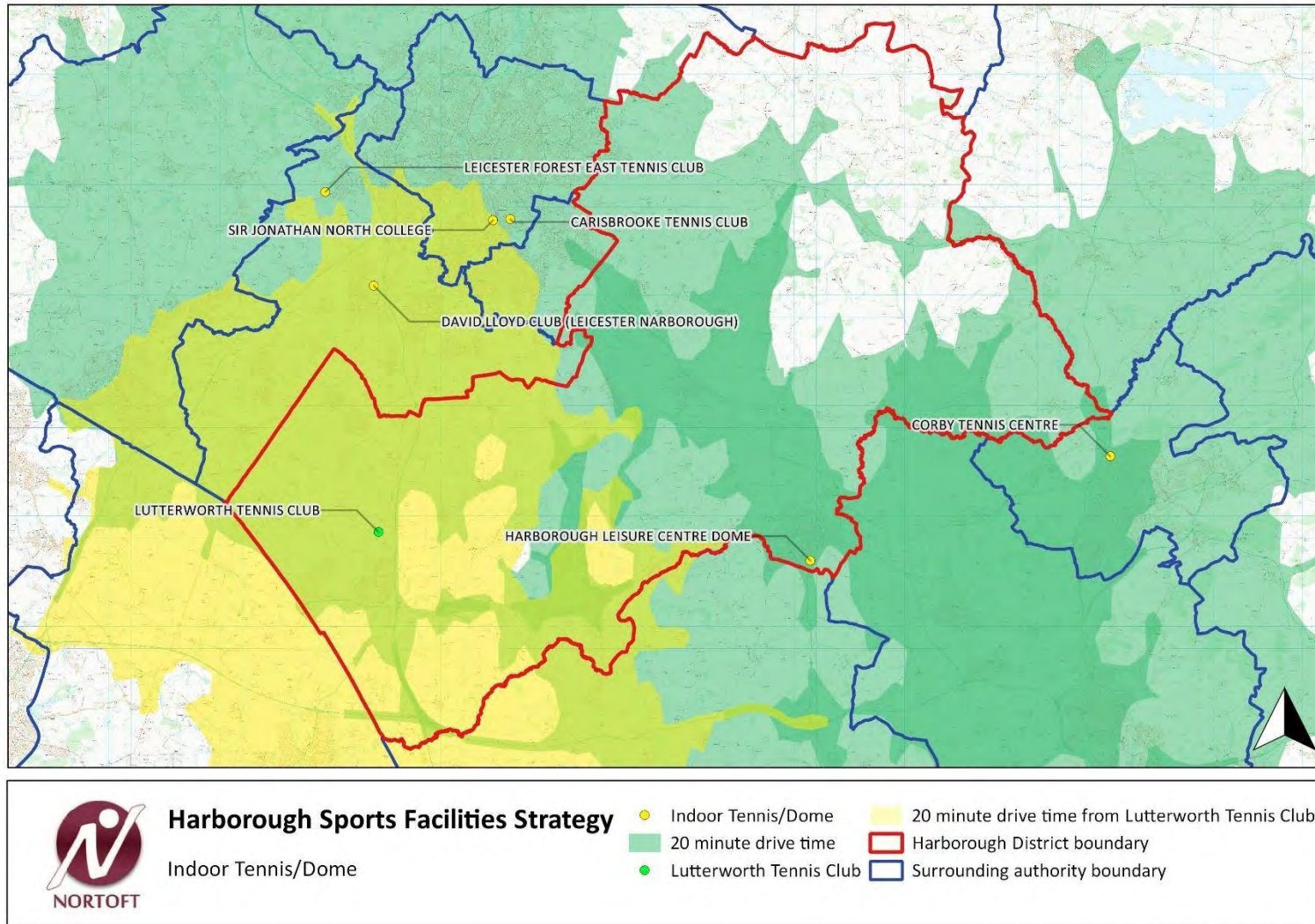
- 7.2 The drive time catchment for netball is around 20 minutes and the map in Figure 28 shows a 20 minute' drive time catchment from the dome at Harborough Leisure Centre and also those from the next nearest league locations. This map shows that some of the more rural areas to the west and east of the district are outside the catchment of the existing netball league locations. If the dome was to close, the next nearest netball league location is in Corby, but this is already at capacity and is 20 minutes' drive from Market Harborough.
- 7.3 Although the drive time is approximately 20 minutes, the youth netball league reports that a high proportion of junior netball players, coaches and volunteers live close enough to the dome to be able to walk.
- 7.4 For tennis, the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) advises that in rural areas the drive time for indoor tennis is up to 30 minutes, though 20 minutes is preferred and is the objective in urban areas (Lawn Tennis Association , n.d.)
- 7.5 The catchment of the dome at 20 minutes' drive time is given in Figure 29 and at 30 minutes' drive time in Figure 30. The maps also include the site of the proposed covered courts at Lutterworth Tennis Club, for which grant aid has recently been offered to the club by Harborough District Council.
- 7.6 These maps show that everyone in Harborough is already within a 30 minute drive of a centre providing indoor tennis, but at 20 minutes' drive time the proposed Lutterworth Tennis Club's courts play an important role for part of the west of the district. Parts of the east of the district cannot reach a covered tennis court within 20 minutes' drive but can do so within 30 minutes.
- 7.7 The current and proposed indoor tennis provision therefore meets the objectives of the LTA, and the dome is an important part of the network. The next nearest covered courts to Market Harborough are at the Corby Tennis Centre, approximately 25 minutes' drive.

Figure 28: Netball league locations and catchment



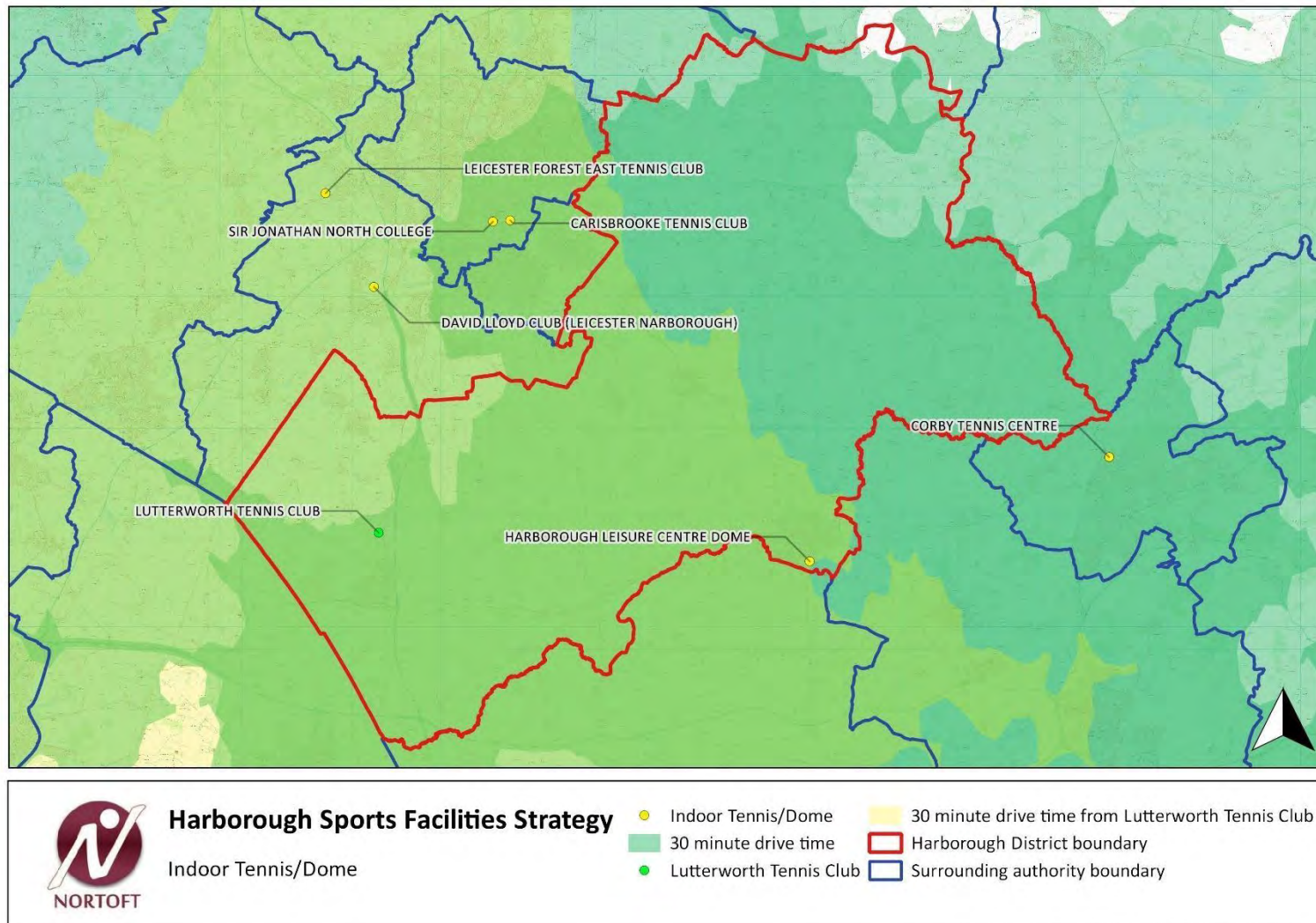


*Figure 29: Indoor tennis map 20 minutes' drive catchment*



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Figure 30: Indoor tennis map 30 minutes' drive time catchment





## Usage of the dome

7.8 Most of the use of the dome is for block bookings, for tennis and netball during the winter months. It is estimated that the facility has around 38,246 visits per year from the block bookings plus casual use, based on typical weeks in the winter months (Oct-March) and summer months (Apr-Sept), see Figure 31. This estimate is derived from the block booking information provided by the operator Everyone Active in October 2019 and the booking records for the week Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019 which can be considered a typical winter week, other than for the weekend (Figure 32).

*Figure 31: Dome block bookings and usage*

| Winter block bookings (typical week) |             |  |             | Summer block bookings (typical week) |             |  |          |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|--|-------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|--|----------|
|                                      |             | Number of tennis courts in use (NB 3 tennis courts = 2 netball courts) |             |                                      |             | Number of tennis courts in use (NB 3 tennis courts = 2 netball courts) |          |
| Day                                  | Time        | participants   | Activity    | Day                                  | Time        | participants   | Activity |
| Monday                               | 11.00-12.00 | 3  | Tennis      | Monday                               | 11.00-12.00 | 3  | Tennis   |
|                                      | 18.00-19.00 | 3  | Tennis club |                                      | 18.00-19.00 | 3  | Mixed    |
|                                      | 21.00-22.00 | 2  | Tennis      |                                      | 21.00-22.00 | 2  | Tennis   |
| Tuesday                              | 09.00-11.00 | 1  | Tennis      | Tuesday                              | 09.00-11.00 | 1  | Tennis   |
|                                      | 16.00-19.00 | 3  | Tennis club |                                      | 16.00-19.00 | 3  | Netball  |
|                                      | 19.00-21.00 | 3  | Netball     |                                      | 19.00-21.00 | 3  | Netball  |
| Wednesday                            | 16.00-18.00 | 3  | Tennis      | Wednesday                            | 16.00-18.00 | 3  | Tennis   |
|                                      | 18.00-21.00 | 3  | Netball     |                                      | 18.00-21.00 | 3  | Netball  |
| Thursday                             | 18.00-19.00 | 3  | Tennis      | Thursday                             | 18.00-19.00 | 3  | Tennis   |
| Friday                               | 09.00-10.00 | 3  | Tennis      | Friday                               | 09.00-10.00 | 3  | Tennis   |
| Saturday                             | 09.00-11.00 | 3  | Netball     | Saturday                             | 11.00-12.00 | 1  | Tennis   |
|                                      | 11.00-12.00 | 1  | Tennis      |                                      | 17.00-20.00 | 3  | Netball  |
|                                      | 17.00-20.00 | 3  | Netball     |                                      | 17.00-20.00 | 3  | Netball  |
| Sunday                               | 09.00-11.00 | 3  | Tennis      | Sunday                               | 16.00-19.00 | 3  | Netball  |
|                                      | 16.00-19.00 | 3  | Netball     |                                      | 16.00-19.00 | 3  | Netball  |
| Total use                            |             |  |             | Total use                            |             |  |          |
| Total block bookings                 |             |  |             | Total block bookings                 |             |  |          |
| Tennis block bookings                |             |  |             | Tennis block bookings                |             |  |          |
| Netball block bookings               |             |  |             | Netball block bookings               |             |  |          |
| Football block bookings              |             |  |             | Football block bookings              |             |  |          |
| Casual bookings (estimated)          |             |  |             | Casual bookings (estimated)          |             |  |          |
| Brook House College (estimated)      |             |  |             | Brook House College (estimated)      |             |  |          |
| Freedom Club (estimated)             |             |  |             | Freedom Club (estimated)             |             |  |          |
| Six month total Oct-March (26 weeks) |             |  |             | Six month total Apr-Sept (26 weeks)  |             |  |          |
| Total use in year                    |             |  |             | Total use in year                    |             |  |          |

- 7.9 Brook House College also uses the dome on a block booking basis, for three hours per week during school hours. It has been estimated that they account for a total of 20 visits as one use is for football and the other is for tennis.
- 7.10 All of the casual bookings are for tennis, so the number of people playing at any one time is low. Assuming that there is on average 3 people per court, then the 24 casual court bookings for the week beginning Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December was 72. Assuming use at a similar rate through the winter months, then the casual use generates 1,872 visits per annum. The dome is available for casual/pay and play usage up until the Harborough Leisure Centre closing time.
- 7.11 During the summer months it is estimated that there are about 40% fewer block bookings as tennis moves more outside and it is outside of the main “season” for netball. It is likely that almost all of the casual tennis bookings during the school day would also relocate elsewhere.
- 7.12 The small amount of football use, 1 hour on Fridays with 32 participants, continues throughout the year.
- 7.13 The peak time for the dome appears to be Monday-Friday 16.00-21.00 but daytime usage is significant. Figure 32 shows the usage for a typical winter week, beginning Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December. The weekday usage shows both block bookings and a number of casual tennis bookings. The weekend however was somewhat unusual as the dome was booked out for Saturday and part of Sunday for a non-sport event, so the normal block bookings during that period did not take place.

#### **Provision for indoor tennis and indoor netball elsewhere in the district**

- 7.14 The sports halls in the district are too small to provide for 2 netball courts at a single site so although there is training in some other sports halls in the district, there are no club competitions except in the dome.
- 7.15 There are no other indoor tennis venues in the district.

*Figure 32: Dome usage typical week  
2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> December 2019*

| Time | Monday 2nd Dec       |       |   |  | Tuesday 3rd Dec |   |   |  | Weds 4th Dec |   |   |  | Thurs 5th Dec |   |   |  | Fri 6th Dec |   |   |  | Sat 7th Dec |   |   |  | Sun 8th Dec |   |   |  |
|------|----------------------|-------|---|--|-----------------|---|---|--|--------------|---|---|--|---------------|---|---|--|-------------|---|---|--|-------------|---|---|--|-------------|---|---|--|
|      | Court use            |       |   |  | Court use       |   |   |  | Court use    |   |   |  | Court use     |   |   |  | Court use   |   |   |  | Court use   |   |   |  | Court use   |   |   |  |
|      | 1                    | 2     | 3 |  | 1               | 2 | 3 |  | 1            | 2 | 3 |  | 1             | 2 | 3 |  | 1           | 2 | 3 |  | 1           | 2 | 3 |  | 1           | 2 | 3 |  |
| 7 0  |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 15   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 30   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 45   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 8 0  |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 15   | Cas                  |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 30   | Tennis               |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 45   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 9 0  |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 15   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 30   | Brooke House College |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 45   | Tennis               |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 10 0 |                      | Block |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 15   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 30   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 45   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 11 0 |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 15   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 30   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 45   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 12 0 |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 15   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 30   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 45   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 13 0 |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 15   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 30   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 45   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 14 0 |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 15   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 30   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 45   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 15 0 |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 15   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 30   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 45   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 16 0 |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 15   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 30   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 45   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 17 0 |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 15   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 30   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 45   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 18 0 |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 15   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 30   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 45   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 19 0 |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 15   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 30   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 45   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 20 0 |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 15   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 30   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 45   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 21 0 |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 15   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 30   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 45   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 22 0 |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 15   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |
| 30   |                      |       |   |  |                 |   |   |  |              |   |   |  |               |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |             |   |   |  |

## Consultation findings

### Club comments



- 7.16 As part of the strategy process extensive attempts were made to contact all clubs in the district to give them an opportunity to respond to an online club survey which asked specific questions about the facilities that they use, their club's aspirations and any issues that they face. The online survey was followed by more detailed information provided in writing by the clubs and netball league.

## Netball

- 7.17 Market Harborough Netball League uses the dome at Harborough Leisure Centre and commented that the facilities are 'generally ok, the floor can sometimes be slippery dependant on weather conditions and timing of the heating. Heating is an issue in winter, it's either off and can be extremely cold, alternatively can be too warm when it's on - no temperature control. Occasionally not all the lights are working. The League has contributed to the cost of sunken posts being installed'.

- 7.18 Market Harborough Youth Netball League uses the Dome at Harborough Leisure Centre and commented that:

441 'We have been at full capacity for two years and cannot take more members or deliver more sessions as there are no facilities available for us at the leisure centre'.

- 'The surface is worn and slippery and the temperatures in winter can be too cold for youngsters'.

441 'We cannot let young people use the changing rooms and showers unattended as there are often adults showering or using the facilities who are not leisure centre users'.

- 7.19 The following information is provided by the two netball leagues within their survey returns and provides more information about the users.

|                                 | Number of members in each age group Feb 2019 |        |         |      |
|---------------------------------|--|--------|---------|------|
|                                 | Mini   | Junior | Seniors | Vets |
| Mkt Harb Netball League         | 0  | 15     | 200     | 0    |
| Mkt Harb Juniors Netball League | 50   | 120    | 20      | 0    |

- 7.20 Both of the leagues draw from a wide area, but about 70-75% of the members come from within Harborough district.

## Tennis

### *Market Harborough Lawn Tennis Club*

- 7.21 The Market Harborough LTC provided detailed feedback to the second round of consultation on the draft strategy in October 2019. The key points are drawn out below.
- 7.22 Market Harborough Tennis Club states that it uses the indoor facility for 19 hours per week throughout the year to offer a varied coaching programme which includes: juniors of all ages and abilities; adults of all ages and abilities as well as an inclusive tennis programme which offers regular opportunities for adults with learning difficulties; children with special needs; adults with mental health issues. The 19 hours per week does not include individual tennis lessons or social play by club members.
- 7.23 The current coaching programme sees approximately 100 juniors and around 60 adults receiving tennis coaching every week. Due to limitations on when the dome can be used, this is restrictive, and the coaching programme could be grown further to allow more juniors and adults the opportunity to take part in tennis if greater facility capacity was available.
- 7.24 It is increasingly difficult for the club's tennis coach and tennis club to make bookings in the dome at peak times because of the increase in use by netball. Understandably it is easier for the Leisure Centre to work with these repeat bookings, but netball always plays at peak times of evenings and weekends. Some casual tennis play and some coaching takes place during school hours.
- 7.25 The club provided a detailed list of weekly coaching-led bookings for the dome. Although broadly similar to the information provided by the operator in October 2019, there are a number of sessions which are not recorded as block booked sessions, such as on Wednesdays: 09.00-10.00 cardio tennis, 13.00-14.00 freedom support, 14.00-15.00 Birkett House special school *[not specifically identified in the dome bookings for week beginning 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019]*.
- 7.26 The dome can be very cold, but the playing surface, although it does show wear, it is considered by the tennis club to be adequate.
- 7.27 It is recognised by the club that the current dome in Market Harborough is nearing the end of its life span and will need replacing. The club does not wish to remove netball from any future indoor facilities but feels that it should be possible to construct a modern dome, which will accommodate both sports and a booking system, which fairly allows access for both.

### *Welland Park Tennis Club*

- 7.28 Welland Park Tennis Club responded to the draft strategy in October 2019.

- 7.29 The remit of WPTC is to encourage adult participation for new and returning players. The club provides low cost access, primarily via promoting and developing park tennis which is a key tenet of the LTA strategy. Club members regularly use the dome.
- 7.30 WPTC has a block booking in the dome every weekend for 3-4 months over the winter. The club would not be able to hold coaching or matches in the winter without the dome.

### *Lutterworth Tennis Club*

- 7.31 Lutterworth Tennis Club has a desire for both more courts and to cover two of the club's existing courts at Bitteswell. Its justification is that there is insufficient capacity both for juniors and adults. Covering courts and extending them would enable the club to further expand. The Bitteswell site is approximately 30 minutes from both the current Harborough Leisure Centre site and the preferred leisure centre replacement site to the north of the town.
- 7.32 Harborough District Council allocated £120,000 to the Lutterworth TC towards the covering of their courts on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019.

## National Governing Body comments

### Netball

- 7.33 Netball is one of the fastest growing sports in the country, and this is mirrored at Harborough Leisure Centre. The following membership information has been provided by England Netball from their affiliation records, and all use the dome.

| <b>Adult Clubs</b>  | <b>2018/19</b> | <b>2017/18</b> | <b>2016/17</b> |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Aircare Compressors | 30             | 29             | 29             |
| Club Correze        | 28             | 24             | 29             |
| Harborough BC's     | 27             | 22             | 39             |
| Harborough Harriers | 21             | 22             | 22             |
| Lutterworth Robins  | 39             | 29             | 28             |
| RuralTrading Foxton | 28             | 27             | 33             |
| Siamo Sirens        | 21             | 0              | 0              |

|              |            |            |            |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Snow Finders | 25         | 18         | 22         |
| Webbs        | 18         | 19         | 20         |
|              | <b>237</b> | <b>190</b> | <b>222</b> |

### Juniors

|                                  |            |            |            |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Market Harborough Juniors League | 168        | 150        | 139        |
|                                  | <b>405</b> | <b>340</b> | <b>361</b> |

7.34 England Netball advises that nationally, on balance most players train indoors and play outdoors, but there is a preference for indoor provision. Their research shows that changing facilities are often not used, so are not a high priority. England Netball is keen to see the retention of a dome or similar provision which will enable the clubs to further expand in the future. It considers that provision of outdoor courts alone would not be as attractive.

7.35 England Netball confirmed that:

- 'It is a priority for England Netball to protect and support the improvements of key venues to sustain and grow our core market. Market Harborough Leisure Centre is the home venue for a number of Clubs who compete in the Harborough Netball League and so is a key venue that we would wish to protect and support improvements to'.
- 'There is an active senior and junior netball league currently operating from Harborough Leisure Centre (within the Dome) and we are aware that both leagues would like to expand. The adult league for example would like to deliver programmes such as walking netball. We would envisage the Junior League being engaged in the delivery of 'Bee Netball' which is an under 11 product'
- 'If the Leagues could find access to suitable replacement facilities, and a greater number of courts, the sport has the potential for growth'.
- 'Both adults and junior membership levels have increased over the past 3 years. Adult growth -7%, Junior growth - 21%'

7.36 England Netball confirms the local leagues' comments that additional time is being sought by them and also by the teams for training, but that this is not available. There are therefore waiting lists for the youth league. There is also a wish to introduce Walking Netball on site

## Tennis

- 7.37 The Lawn Tennis Association provided detailed updated comments in October 2019. The following summarises the key points which are not otherwise addressed under the feedback from the local tennis clubs.
- 7.38 It is a priority of the LTA to increase the amount of indoor and floodlit tennis facilities as this increases the number of court hours available for more people to play more often. The LTA has highlighted 72 optimal locations for additional indoor facilities in England, primarily based on filling the gaps in provision that restrict the access that people have to indoor tennis. The locations have been identified on the basis that the existing indoor stock will where possible remain in place, with the new facilities enhancing and supporting this current infrastructure, most of which is already operating at a high level of utilisation.
- 7.39 The LTA's key metrics that have been adopted to establish the base list are:
- A target location must demonstrate a demand threshold of at least 12,500 adult players within a 20 minute drive time for urban areas and up to 30 minutes for rural areas
  - Potential catchments with more than three existing covered courts will be excluded.
- 7.40 LTA insight highlights that within a twenty minute drive time there is a potential tennis demand of 35,692.
- 7.41 The target locations for new indoor court facilities do not include Harborough but do include the adjacent authorities of Leicester City and Rugby.
- 7.42 Participation growth in Leicestershire and in the Harborough district is an LTA priority. The LTA's new vision 'Tennis Opened Up' aims to grow the numbers of adults and juniors participating in tennis. The activity at Market Harborough Tennis Club and within the dome at the leisure centre is a key element.
- 7.43 The proposed development at Lutterworth Tennis Club is for two indoor courts that would primarily serve the members of the club and surrounding community. Although clear demand exists for this facility in Lutterworth and surrounding areas, which is supported by the LTA, this centre will not provide enough capacity to serve both Lutterworth and Market Harborough. This development ideally should take place alongside the existing indoor facilities at Market Harborough to enhance the local market, a market where there is proven latent demand.
- 7.44 There were initial discussions with Leicester Grammar School about a proposed indoor site for tennis, but this is no longer being progressed.
- 7.45 The only other community accessible indoor tennis centre within the twenty minute catchment is Corby Tennis Centre, a privately operated facility, which is already

operating at high capacity. If the indoor courts at Harborough Leisure Centre were to close, there would be an under supply of indoor courts within the twenty minute catchment.

- 7.46 The LTA would strongly oppose the loss of the indoor courts at Harborough Leisure Centre as this is a key facility for the area, with no other local venues providing community access to indoor courts.
- 7.47 Market Harborough Tennis Club reports that it would like to use the dome for other tennis sessions but that it is unable to do so. It reports greater demand for tennis coaching and match play, demand which could be met if additional time was available to them indoors.

### **Adjacent authorities' provision and strategies**

- 7.48 The situation within the adjacent authorities to Harborough is as follows:

- Daventry's 'Planning the Future of Open Space, Sport and Recreation in West Northamptonshire' (Daventry District Council, 2017) concluded that current needs are met in part by the covered courts at Harborough Leisure Centre. Two indoor courts will be required in Daventry to meet future needs.
- The 'Hinckley and Bosworth Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy' (Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, 2011) concluded that current needs are met by facilities outside the district, including the covered courts at Harborough Leisure Centre. Provision will be required in Hinckley and Bosworth to meet future needs.
- The 'Melton Sports Facilities Strategy 2016 - 2021' (Melton Borough Council, 2017) concludes that there is no strategic priority for indoor tennis/netball provision.
- The 'Rugby Open Space, Playing Pitch and Sports Facilities Strategy' (Rugby Borough Council, 2015) concludes that two indoor tennis/netball courts are required in Rugby to meet current and future needs.
- The 'Rutland Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy 2015-2036' (Rutland County Council, 2015) concludes that current needs in Rutland are met in part by the covered courts at Harborough Leisure Centre and there is insufficient future local demand to justify providing an indoor tennis centre in Rutland.

- 7.49 In summary, there is an overt recognition in the needs assessments of several neighbouring areas that the indoor courts in the dome at Harborough Leisure Centre meet the needs of their residents. The need for additional indoor court provision has been recognised in Daventry, Hinckley and Rugby.



- 7.50 Indoor tennis has not been addressed in the latest sports strategies for Charnwood, Corby, Kettering, Oadby and Wigston, and there are no current published sports strategies for Blaby or Leicester which provide an assessment of how important or otherwise the dome is for their authorities.

## Modelling

### Comparator authorities' provision

- 7.51 Using Active Places Power (Sport England, 2019) data it has been possible to review the provision of indoor tennis sites and number of courts across Harborough's CIPFA benchmark authorities, the region and England, and also to calculate the current level of provision per 1,000 head of population. For this assessment all sites with public access have been included in the figures. There is no separate assessment for the number of facilities primarily used for netball.
- 7.52 This shows that Harborough's current provision is unusual amongst the benchmark authorities, with only Ribble Valley having a higher level of provision. The rate of provision per 1,000 population in terms of number of tennis courts is also higher in Harborough, including in relation to the regional and national averages, again other than Ribble Valley.

*Figure 33: Indoor tennis facilities/dome type provision - comparator authorities*

| CIPFA comparator       | Estimated population at 2019 (ONS 2016 baseline) | Indoor tennis/dome facilities incl seasonal |                      | Indoor tennis (number of courts) |                      |
|------------------------|--|---|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
|                        |  | Total                                       | Per 1,000 population | Total                            | Per 1,000 population |
| <b>Harborough</b>      | 92,600   | 1   | 0.01                 | 3                                | 0.03                 |
| Ribble Valley          | 59,300   | 2   | 0.03                 | 4                                | 0.07                 |
| South Northamptonshire | 92,000   | 0   | 0.00                 | 0                                | 0.00                 |
| Maldon                 | 64,300   | 0   | 0.00                 | 0                                | 0.00                 |
| Daventry               | 82,500   | 0   | 0.00                 | 0                                | 0.00                 |
| <b>East Midlands</b>   | 4,816,800  | 26  | 0.01                 | 108                              | 0.02                 |
| <b>England</b>         | 56,357,500                                       | 359   | 0.01                 | 1373                             | 0.02                 |

### Summary of current situation

- 7.53 The estimated total throughput of the dome is 38,246 visits per annum, most of which take place between October and the end of March. Most use is for tennis and netball.



- 7.54 The tennis block bookings plus tennis casual users total around 668 visits per week, and there are around 335 netball players. The one other regular community sport booking is for football, for 1 hour on Friday evenings with 32 participants.
- 7.55 Brook House College books the facility for 9 court hours per week, and the Freedom Club books one court for one hour per week.
- 7.56 Both the netball leagues and tennis clubs comment that they are unable to book more time in the dome over the winter months, and there are few available slots between 16.00 and 21.00 Monday-Thursday, Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon. This is confirmed by the booking records of the dome for a typical week in early December
- 7.57 Netball is played by women and girls, and the dome is used for the adult and junior leagues during the winter months. Increasing participation in sport by women and girls is a key priority for Harborough District Council.
- 7.58 Tennis attracts both males and females. Much of the tennis coaching taking place at the dome is for junior players. There were however 29 court hours booked for tennis use on a casual basis plus 6 hours of block bookings during the school day over the 'typical' winter week of 2<sup>nd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> December, so it is also clearly providing a facility for adults.
- 7.59 The current facility is aging and expensive to retain and maintain, but the surface at the present time is not causing problems for the tennis players using the site. Netball players are however more concerned about the floor and report it as being slippery on occasion. Both the netball and tennis feedback comment that the dome is too cold at times.
- 7.60 There are no other indoor facilities in the district which can accommodate 2 indoor netball courts and are therefore suitable to host a netball league. There are 6 outdoor netball courts overmarked with 8 tennis courts at Leicester Grammar school, but these are located about 200m from the main sports centre building and are not regularly hired out.
- 7.61 There are currently no other covered tennis courts in the district, but Lutterworth Tennis Club has recently received a grant from Harborough District Council towards the covering of two courts at their site.

## Assessment of Future Needs

### Netball

- 7.62 Alternative sites have been considered for netball use, based on the findings from the audit. There are no sports halls larger than 6 courts in the district (a minimum size of 8 badminton courts is required) and the options for moving the leagues outdoors are very limited.
- 7.63 Leicester Grammar's 6 floodlit outdoor netball courts are not generally hired out and are only used for around 20% of their available time. The netball leagues have previously contacted the school to explore the option of more regular hire, but have been informed that this is not possible, in part because the hard courts are permanently used for tennis during the summer term and summer holiday.
- 7.64 Leicester Grammar's 6 court hall could provide for one netball court but is already booked for about 80% of the available time during weekday evenings.
- 7.65 Leicester Grammar is more than 20 minutes' drive from Harborough Leisure Centre. Given that the majority of netball players live within 20 minutes of the leisure centre site, moving as far as the Leicester Grammar site would be likely to have a major impact on the league's ability to retain and further grow their membership.
- 7.66 In summary, the dome is the only venue which can host the netball leagues in the district.

### Indoor tennis

- 7.67 There are high levels of tennis use of the current dome facility, with almost 600 block booking visits each week over the winter. The early December 2019 'typical week' booking information showed that there were also about 72 casual visits, even though the dome was unavailable for hire on most of Friday afternoon and evening, all day Saturday and Sunday morning. During the summer the tennis use falls to around 260 visits per week through block bookings and most of the casual bookings would move to other outdoor venues.
- 7.68 The proposed covered tennis courts at Lutterworth Tennis Club would not be able to absorb any demand which may be displaced from Market Harborough should the dome be closed, as that tennis club is already close to capacity. The Lutterworth Tennis Club is also within about 9 minutes' drive of the proposed Whetstone Pastures housing development in Blaby, so new demand can be expected from that area.
- 7.69 The LTA reports that the Corby Tennis Centre is similarly operating close to capacity, so would also be unable to absorb any displaced use if the dome was to be closed and not replaced.

- 7.70 The drive time between Lutterworth Tennis Club and the dome is around 30 minutes, so some people playing at the dome would be discouraged from travelling to Lutterworth TC. The Corby Tennis Centre is closer at around 20 minutes' drive time, but this is close to the preferred travel time recommended by the LTA.
- 7.71 The opportunities for casual tennis could be expected to be more limited at Lutterworth TC than currently available in the dome.

## Meeting the needs of the future

- 7.72 Given the current levels of demand for both tennis and netball at Harborough Leisure Centre's dome, it seems that retaining the current dome or replacing it is justified. This would be in addition to covering some of existing tennis courts at Lutterworth Tennis Club.
- 7.73 Should the Harborough Leisure Centre be replaced, then replacement of the dome with an indoor facility which can provide for at least 3 tennis courts/2 netball courts plus ideally 2 outdoor netball courts which are also marked out for 3 tennis courts, seems justified as integral part of any replacement leisure centre for Harborough, or potentially on an alternative site.
- 7.74 If the dome is to be replaced, there several design alternatives which might provide effectively for indoor netball and for indoor tennis, plus other sports such as basketball, wheelchair basketball and futsal. Sport England has recently produced guidance "Designing for Physical Activity, Covered Outdoor Spaces" (Sport England , 2019), but detailed advice is also available from England Netball and the Lawn Tennis Association. The specification should be suitable for both community netball leagues and community club tennis.
- 7.75 Any replacement dome provision should enable significant levels of community use during the school day for tennis and also enable access by others such as Brooke House College and the Freedom Club. However, it is recognised that almost all of the school day use is on a casual basis, is during the winter months and the levels of use will reflect the weather conditions at any one time, with higher levels of use likely during wet weather, frost or snow. The costs/benefits of alternative site options therefore need to be considered as part of a feasibility exercise.

- 7.76 Robert Smyth Academy in Market Harborough is one potential alternative site and is already used by some netball teams for training. The site has one 4-badminton court hall and one 3 badminton court hall, so it could not provide for 2 indoor netball courts. The 4 court hall dimensions are also too small to allow safe umpiring and cannot therefore be used for matches. The school's outdoor hard courts are not adjacent to the sports hall, are not floodlit and the surface is poor. Use of Robert Smyth Academy as an alternative location for the netball leagues and for indoor tennis would therefore require significant investment to improve / replace the outdoor courts and to cover and floodlight them.
- 7.77 Lutterworth Tennis Club is proposing to cover two of its existing courts and the project has recently received grant aid from Harborough District Council. The LTA has confirmed its support of the scheme.

### **Justifying developers' contributions**

- 7.78 All new housing will generate demand for netball and tennis. New developments should therefore be expected to contribute towards projects which will help meet this demand, either via a new facility or extension, or improvements to existing facilities.
- 7.79 If the dome and its associated facilities (changing, car parking etc) at Harborough Leisure Centre is lost to development, then there would be a planning requirement for it to be "replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location" (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019). However, any upgrade/improvements to the facility provision could be part funded by developers' contributions from developments elsewhere which the facility would serve.

### *Quantity*

- 7.80 The modelling findings suggests that the demand for indoor netball is 2 netball courts and the recommendation for 2 floodlit outdoor netball courts (also marked for 2 tennis) adjacent to the indoor facility. The demand for indoor tennis is 5 tennis courts. This gives rates of provision of:

Across the district:

- 0.02 indoor netball courts per 1,000 population
- 0.02 outdoor netball courts per 1,000 population adjacent to any replacement dome
- 0.05 indoor tennis courts per 1,000 population

### *Accessibility*

- 7.81 District wide catchment for indoor netball facilities.

7.82 A 30-minute drive time catchment for indoor tennis facilities.

*Design and quality*

7.83 The quality and design of facilities should reflect current best practice, including design guidance from Sport England and the national governing bodies of sport.

## **Recommendations for indoor netball and indoor tennis**

7.84 It is recommended, subject to resources being available, that the Council and relevant stakeholders consider the following to address provision in the district:

7.85 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, it is recommended that the Council in association with its partners seeks to provide for both netball and tennis indoors.

7.86 It is recommended that projects which are proposed to be supported by public funds are included the IDP.

7.87 It is recommended that, as appropriate, the Council seeks to utilise a range of funding sources to deliver the identified projects, taking into account: what monies are already available, the capital programme of the Council, the opportunities for funding via S106 and current funding opportunities from a range of external agencies.

### *Sites*

#### *Protect*

7.88 It is recommended that the existing dome facility with 3 tennis/2 netball courts is retained and maintained at high quality, or else replaced with a suitable and accessible alternative of at least the same size. If replaced, the site should have secure long-term community use.

#### *Enhance*

7.89 It is recommended that 2 outdoor floodlit netball courts (also marked out for 2-3 tennis courts) are provided immediately adjacent to any replacement dome facility.

#### *Provide*

7.90 It is recommended that the priority for delivery is the replacement dome facility together with changing facilities and car parking if the Harborough Leisure Centre including the dome is relocated. This should have a minimum of 2 covered netball/3 tennis courts and be designed to be suitable for a range of sports, including netball leagues and community club tennis.

7.91 If the dome is proposed to be replaced, it is recommended that the costs/benefits of alternative site options are considered, including the potential accessibility or otherwise for community use during the school day.

7.92 It is recommended that 2 courts are covered at Lutterworth Tennis Club.

## **SECTION 8: INDOOR BOWLS CENTRE**



- 8.1 This section of the report considers indoor bowls, primarily specialist indoor bowls centres such as the one at Harborough Leisure Centre. Although there is some cross-over between indoor and outdoor bowls as some players are active year-round, and some sites have both indoor and outdoor rinks, many players only either play indoors or outside.
- 8.2 Of the 277 clubs in England that are affiliated to the Sport England recognised national governing body for “Level Green Indoor Bowls” the English Indoor Bowling Association (EIBA), over 180 clubs are open at some time in the summer months (May to mid-August). With the summer weather of late being either very hot or very wet which make the grass greens difficult to play on, indoor clubs are finding that there is an increasing demand during the summer period, particularly from older people.
- 8.3 Indoor bowling greens are also used by people with disabilities, in particular those that use wheelchairs or have visual impairments. A number of clubs have also created boccia clubs which are becoming increasingly popular. Boccia is a Paralympic sport but there is only one club in Leicestershire, which is at Hinckley. There are no boccia clubs in Northamptonshire, Rutland or Warwickshire.
- 8.4 Indoor bowls greens at specialist centres normally have multiple rinks, but these can vary in number. Two rinks is probably the smallest usable size but would generally only be built where there are other facilities or adjacent outdoor greens. Otherwise a facility with 4 rinks is usually the smallest viable size. The larger sites often have 8 rinks or more.
- 8.5 Sport England estimates that nationally about 304,000 adults aged 16 and over take part in bowls at least twice a month, but there is no split between different types of bowling, so this figure covers crown green outdoors and indoors, flat green outdoor and indoors, short mat, carpet and boules (Sport England, 2019). There has been a reduction in the number of participants since November 2015, of 0.1%.
- 8.6 Market Harborough Indoor Bowls Club (MHIBC) (aka Harborough and District) has actually seen a slight rise in their numbers since 2016, to 148 on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019. However, the membership figures for the closest local clubs to Market Harborough, namely Desborough, Kettering Lodge, Kingsthorpe, Northampton and District and Wellingborough have together experienced a fall in membership by 4% (96 players) for the period 2016-2018. The national trend in bowls therefore seems to be reflected in this wider area.
- 8.7 The sport draws the largest proportion of its players from the higher socio-economic groups. According to the Sport England Active People Survey (Sport England , 2016), over 77% of players are aged 65 years and over and 19% are aged 55-64 years. Only 4% of players are aged under 55 years.

- 8.8 Non-member regular use of the Harborough Leisure Centre indoor bowls facility includes players from opponent teams for league matches and players in the outdoor bowls club friendly league on Monday evenings. The bowls hall is also available for casual/pay and play use, both by MHIBC members and others.
- 8.9 In relation to short mat bowls, the village and community hall network is providing important opportunities for many people and there appear to be a number of clubs operating on an informal basis. Short mat bowls in Leicestershire is organised on an informal basis, and there is no Leicestershire contact for the recognised national governing body, the English Short Mat Bowling Association.
- 8.10 Short mat bowling does not directly compare to indoor bowls played at a specialist facility, but introduction to bowling via short mat can encourage participants to progress to bowling at a specialist centre. For short mat bowls, both the length and width of the rinks are much smaller than the specialist centre rink dimensions and the environment is very different. The comparative dimensions of the rinks are given below, together with the minimum recommended ceiling height.

|                   | Rink length | Rink width | Ceiling height |
|-------------------|-------------|------------|----------------|
| Specialist centre | 36.5m min   | 4.6-5.8m   | 4.5-6m         |
| Short mat         | 12.2-13.75m | 1.83m      | No restriction |

## Current provision

- 8.11 The indoor bowls centre at Harborough Leisure Centre is the only specialist facility in the district. It was built in 1999 with the support of a Sports Lottery award and was built as a largely self-contained facility with its own lounge with bar and basic kitchen, changing rooms and toilets. Although it received a large grant, the time since it was awarded means that there are no grant aid restrictions remaining for the site.
- 8.12 Although the facility was designed to be a largely independent space, it is maintained by the leisure centre operator, Everyone Active (EA). The actual use of the hall is largely managed by the club.

## Usage

- 8.13 The indoor bowls club membership rose to 250 by the year 2002 but has since declined.

- 8.14 The Market Harborough Indoor Bowls Club (MHIBC) recorded use for a typical week during the winter months on 25<sup>th</sup> November – 1<sup>st</sup> December 2019. This showed a total of 434 visits, mostly from Monday to Friday. There were 23 visits on Saturday and the bowls centre was not used (closed) on Sunday. This gives monthly throughput during the winter months of approximately 1,736 visits, or winter play over 30 weeks (mid Sept-end April) of around 13,020 visits. Use during the summer months is much more limited.

- 8.15 The membership of the bowls club over recent years has been:

|          |            |
|----------|------------|
| 2015     | 122 approx |
| 2016     | 122        |
| 2017     | 150        |
| 2018     | 156        |
| 2019 Feb | 170 approx |
| 2019 Dec | 148        |

- 8.16 In addition to the visits by club members the main uses are opponent teams for league matches and by the Outdoor Bowling Clubs' friendly league held on Monday evenings. This friendly league has up to 20 teams with 36 players from outdoor bowls clubs around Harborough district.
- 8.17 The Harborough indoor bowls centre is available for casual bowling to both members and non-members of the MHIBC. This use is charged for non-members at £4.55 and at £3.00 for members for a session lasting up to 2 hours. In the week 2<sup>nd</sup> December-8<sup>th</sup> December 2019, the Leisure Centre reception recorded 41 casual/pay and play visits of which 39 were non-members, and 27 visits for the week beginning 11<sup>th</sup> November 2019 of which 24 were non-members.
- 8.18 A combined weekly programming /usage for the bowls hall is given in Figure 34, based on both the club's survey and Everyone Active's booking records for the week 25<sup>th</sup> November-1<sup>st</sup> December. There appears to be some discrepancy about the number of visits to the bowls hall as recorded by the MHIBC and that recorded by Everyone Active, with the club numbers being higher. This is likely to be because a number of the 'non-member' players recorded by MHIBC are from opponent clubs playing in the leagues.
- 8.19 MHIBC has largely relied on the leisure centre management for bowls promotion, both in relation to the club membership and casual use. However, this has been very limited over several years and is unlikely be a major focus for Everyone Active in the future.

*Figure 34: Bowls hall usage typical winter week*  
Usage combined information from MHIBC and Everyone Active bookings

| Day                        | Time  | Rink 1         | Rink 2         | Rink 3         | Rink 4         | Rink 5         | Rink 6         |
|----------------------------|-------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Monday<br>25th<br>November | 10.00 | M + C          | League         | League         | League         | League         |                |
|                            | 12.00 |                |                |                |                |                |                |
|                            | 14.00 |                | M+C            | M              |                |                |                |
|                            | 16.00 |                |                |                |                |                |                |
|                            | 18.30 | Outdoor league | Outdoor league | Outdoor league | Outdoor league | Outdoor league | Outdoor league |
| Tues 26th<br>November      | 10.00 |                | M+C            | M              | M+C            | M+C            | M+C            |
|                            | 12.00 |                |                | C              | C              |                |                |
|                            | 14.00 |                | League         | League         | League         | League         |                |
|                            | 16.00 |                |                |                |                |                |                |
|                            | 18.30 |                |                | M              | M              |                |                |
| Weds 27th<br>November      | 10.00 | M              | League         | League         | M+C            | M+C            |                |
|                            | 12.00 |                |                |                |                | M+C            | M+C            |
|                            | 14.00 | M+C            | C              | M+C            | M+C            | M+C            | M+C            |
|                            | 16.00 |                | M+C            |                |                |                |                |
|                            | 18.30 | League         | League         | League         | League         | League         | League         |
| Thurs 28th<br>November     | 10.00 | C              | League         | League         | M              | M+C            | M+C            |
|                            | 12.00 | M+C            |                |                |                |                | M              |
|                            | 14.00 | M+C            | M              | M              |                |                |                |
|                            | 16.00 |                |                |                |                |                |                |
|                            | 18.30 | League         | League         | Coach          |                |                |                |
| Fri 29th<br>November       | 10.00 |                | M+C            | League         | League         | C              | M+C            |
|                            | 12.00 |                |                |                |                |                |                |
|                            | 14.00 | League         | League         | League         | League         | League         | League         |
|                            | 16.00 |                |                |                |                |                |                |
|                            | 18.30 |                |                |                |                |                |                |
| Sat 30th<br>November       | 10.00 |                |                |                |                |                |                |
|                            | 12.00 |                | C              |                |                |                |                |
|                            | 14.00 |                |                | M              | C              |                |                |
|                            | 16.00 | C              | M              | C              |                |                |                |
|                            | 18.30 |                |                |                |                |                |                |





- 8.25 Lounge/lack of social space/kitchen –The club has monthly meetings with the leisure centre operator (Everyone Active) to address facility matters.

#### Indoor bowls provision outside of Harborough district

- 8.26 There are specialist indoor bowls facilities in some adjacent and nearby authorities which also meet the needs of parts of the district at: Desborough (6 rinks), Kettering Lodge (4 rinks), Rugby (6 rinks), Barwell in Leicester (6 rinks), Blaby (Enderby Leisure and Golf Centre) (6 rinks), Leicester (9 rinks), Kingsthorpe (Daventry district but edge of Northampton) (6 rinks), Northampton (8 rinks), and Wellingborough (6 rinks). Uppingham has a 2-rink facility, but this is not considered to comply with the English Indoor Bowling Association (EIBA) technical specifications and is therefore discounted.
- 8.27 Of the indoor bowls centres in the surrounding authorities, only the Enderby Leisure and Golf Centre at Blaby offers casual bowling for non-members, for which one rink is usually made available. On a typical week in November 2019 the number of casual non-member bowling visits at Enderby was around 20 across the week, though this may be depressed by current refurbishment works at the leisure centre.
- 8.28 The other indoor bowls facilities listed in para 8.26 are all membership clubs and casual bookings are restricted to members.

#### Network of indoor bowls centres

- 8.29 The drive time catchment for indoor bowls centres is given in the Sport England Indoor Bowls Design Guidance Note of 2005 (Sport England , 2005) as not more than 20 minutes, with the assumption that about 90% of users will travel by car and 10% on foot.
- 8.30 The EIBA is currently reviewing the guidance and considers that the travel time should perhaps be extended to 30 minutes for these specialist centres. The map in Figure 35 shows the off-peak drive time catchment for the indoor bowls centre at Harborough Leisure Centre by 5 minute intervals together with the other indoor bowls centres within the 30 minute catchment. This suggests that the specialist indoor bowls centre at Desborough is within 15 minutes' drive of Harborough Leisure Centre, that the Kettering Lodge facility is about 20 minutes' drive, the two Northampton bowls sites are within 25 minutes' drive, and Wellingborough is within 30 minutes' drive.
- 8.31 The Uppingham indoor bowls site is included in the Sport England map, but is not considered to meet the technical specifications of the EIBA and therefore has been excluded from the following maps and analysis.



- 8.32 The location and catchments of the indoor bowls centre in Harborough and the adjacent authorities are mapped in Figure 36 with a 20 minutes' drive time catchment and in Figure 37 with a 30 minutes' drive time catchment. The maps show that at a drive time catchment of 20 minutes, much of the rural eastern area of the district and some of the rural west area does not have access to a specialist bowls centre. However, at a 30 minutes' drive time catchment, all of the district currently has access to a specialist indoor bowls centre.
- 8.33 The maps in Figure 38 are based on a 20 minutes' drive time catchment from the two sites offering non-member pay-and-play bowling; Harborough Leisure Centre and Enderby Leisure and Golf Centre. The accessibility coverage of the two sites at 20 minutes' drive time is complementary, with the Enderby site meeting the demand from Lutterworth and much of the west of the authority, whilst the Market Harborough facility provides for the middle area of the authority. Neither site meets the needs of the northern part of the district.
- 8.34 The maps in Figure 39 show the non-member pay-and-play drive times for Harborough indoor bowls centre (as in Figure 35) and Enderby Leisure and Golf Centre at 30 minutes. The two catchments overlap significantly at 20-30 minutes' drive time, with both sites meeting the needs of the Lutterworth area. The 30 minutes' catchment of Enderby just touches the northern edge of Market Harborough and does not cover the eastern side of the district. The catchment of Harborough reaches the northern and eastern parts of the district.

Figure 35: Drive time 30 mins' catchment of Harborough indoor bowls centre

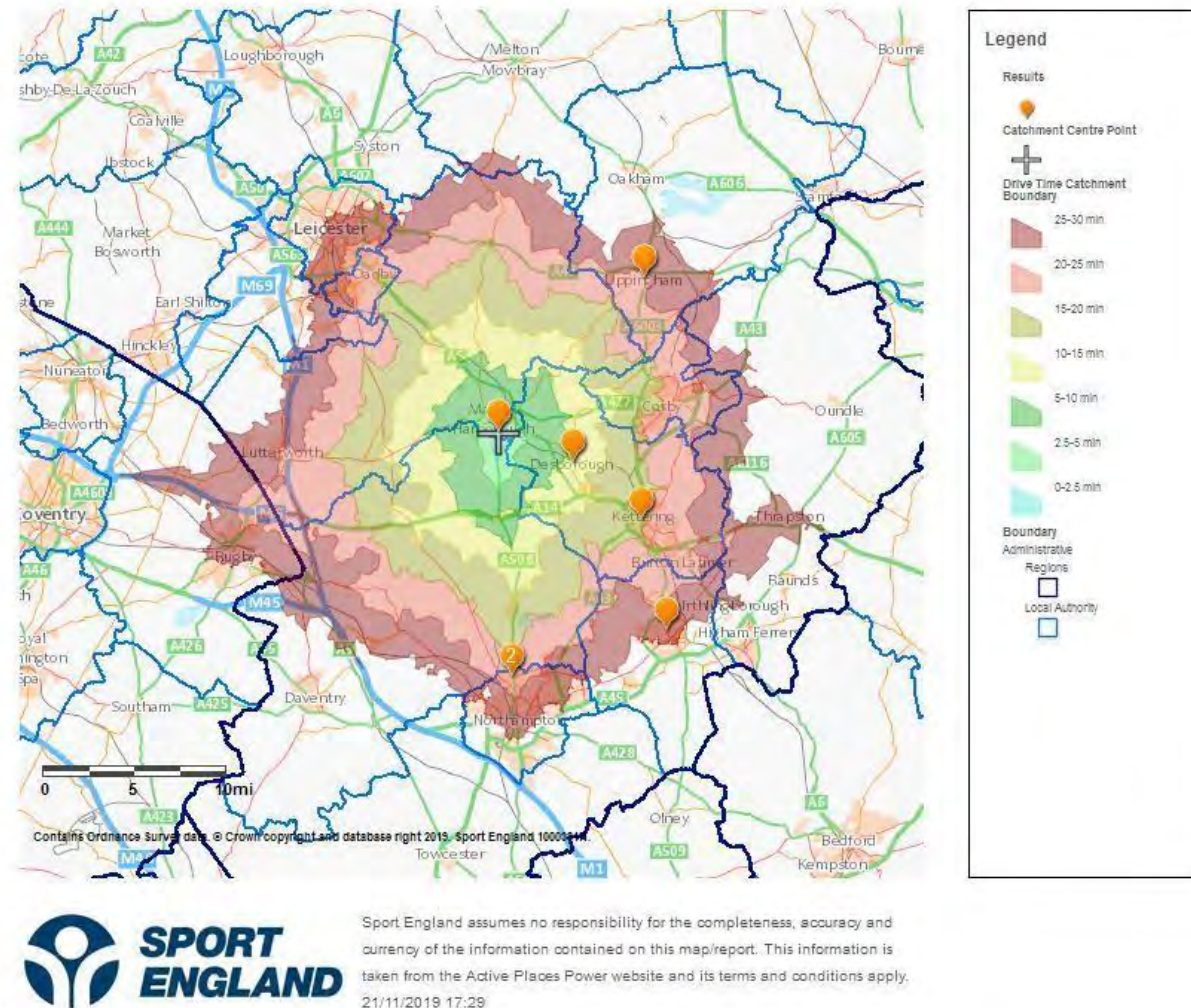


Figure 36: Indoor bowls with 20 minutes' drive time catchment map

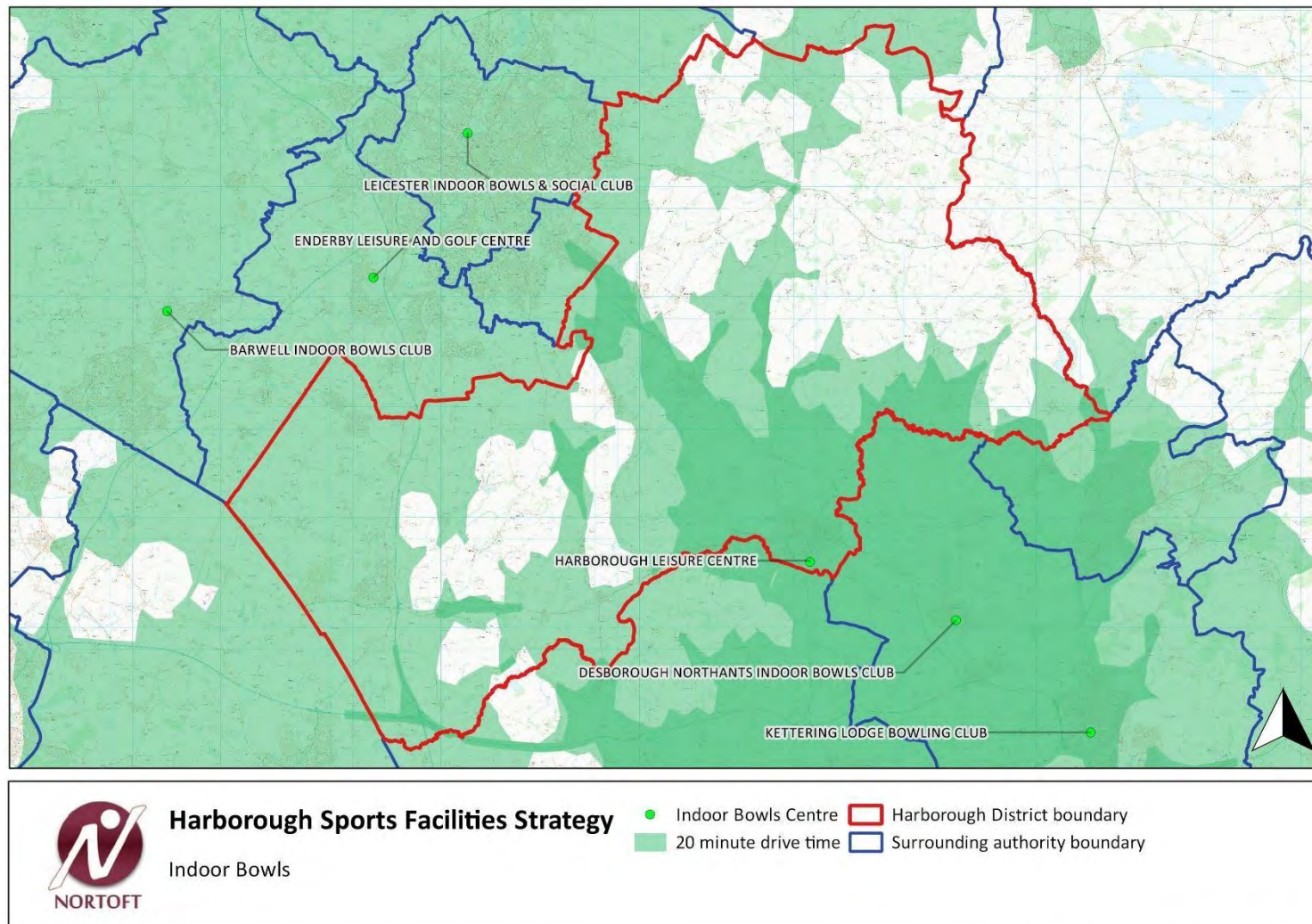




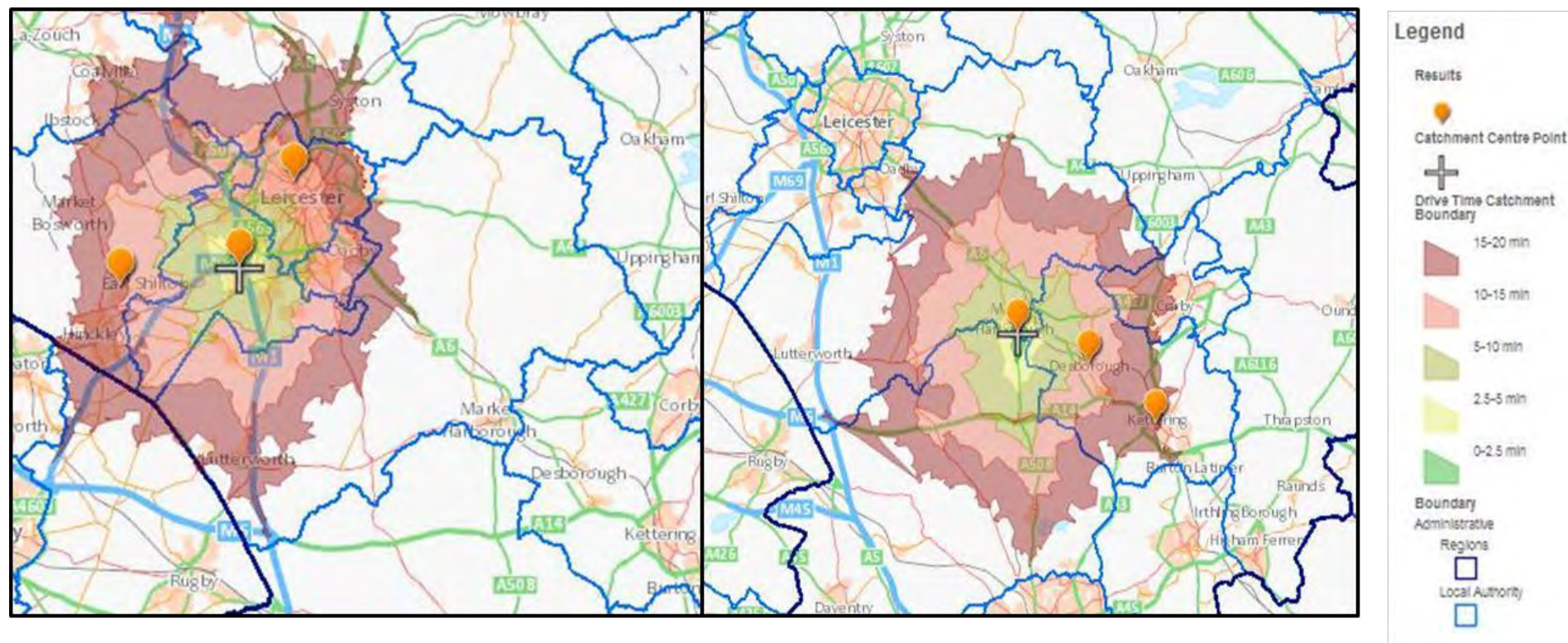


Figure 37: Indoor bowls with 30 minutes' drive time catchment map



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right. 2019

Figure 38: Non-member indoor bowls 20 minutes' drive catchment

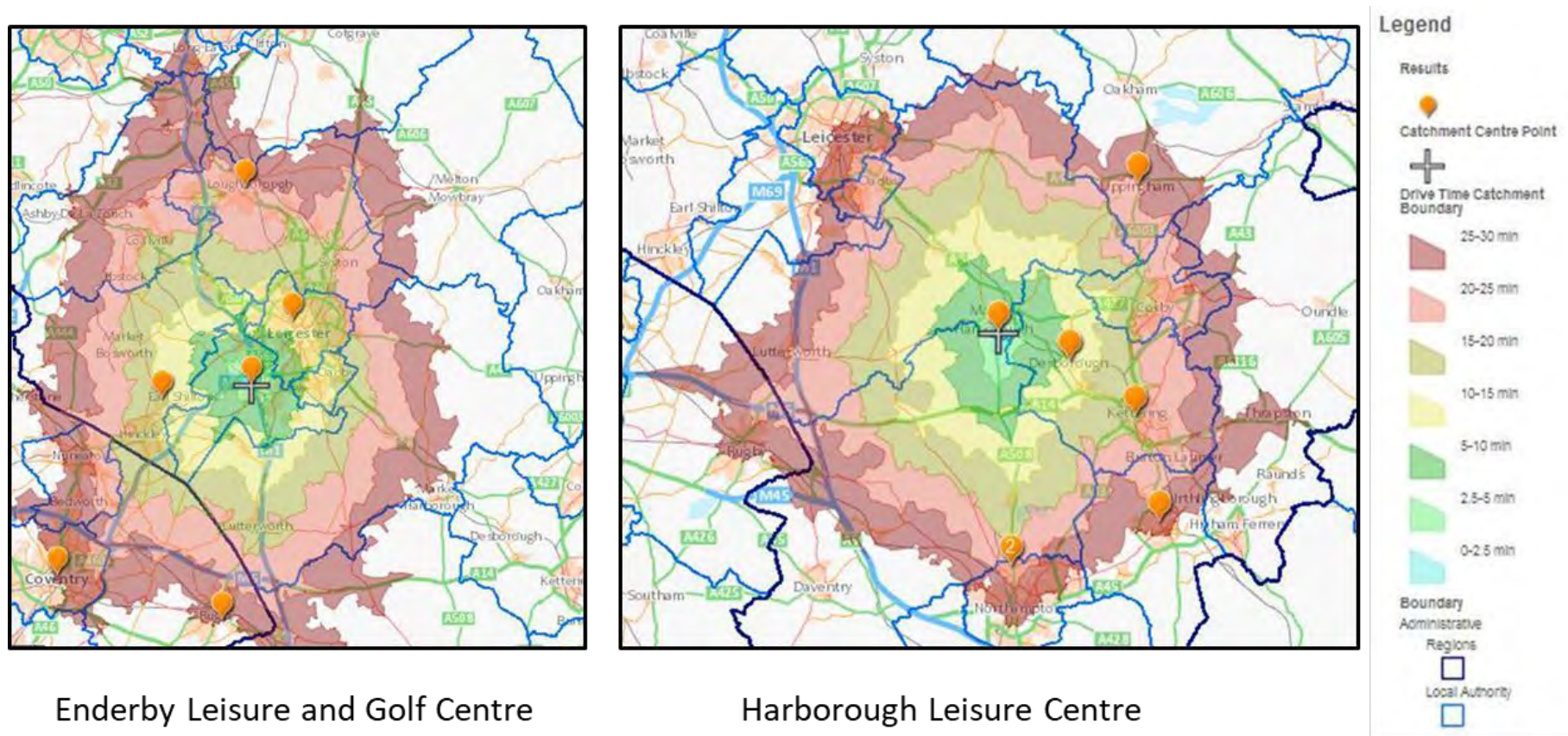


Enderby Leisure and Golf Centre

Harbrough Leisure Centre



Figure 39: Non-member indoor bowls 30 minutes' drive catchment



Enderby Leisure and Golf Centre

Harbrough Leisure Centre

### Assessment of current supply/demand

- 8.35 The current membership of MHIBC as at December 2019 was 148 and almost all are veterans. The club membership reflects the national trend of higher numbers of men playing indoor bowls than women, and the club has moved from 56% men in 2014 to 76% men in 2019.
- 8.36 The indoor bowls hall is made available for non-member pay and play bowling as well as the club members. The cost of a session (up to 2 hours) is either £3.00 for the club members, or £4.55 for all non-member use. Club membership is managed via the Leisure Centre operator (Everyone Active) and the cost is £52 for 2019/20 for the year starting in October.
- 8.37 The bowls hall is available to the club and non-member bowlers most of the time that the leisure centre is open (07.00-22.30 Monday-Thurs; 07.00-21.30 Fri; 07.00-19.00 Sat; 07.00-21.00 Sun).
- 8.38 The national governing body, the English Indoor Bowling Association (EIBA) usually considers that indoor facilities have a capacity of around 80-100 members per rink (Sport England , 2005) but the actual level of use will depend on the individual programming of the club, the number of junior members, regularity of matches etc. The level of the indoor bowls membership at Harborough Leisure Centre is therefore well below the potential capacity of 480-600 and has not changed significantly over recent years.
- 8.39 The Harborough indoor bowls centre is however unusual in that it offers pay-and-play for non-members and also has a non-member league. If it is assumed that these non-members play once a week, they could be added to the membership total to assess the overall used capacity of the centre. The Monday friendly league had 28 players on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, so this has been used in the table below. The non-member casual use was recorded by the MHIBC as 94 visits for the week 2<sup>nd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> December excluding the Monday night league. This figure seems much higher than the leisure centre reception desk throughput for pay-and-play for non-members which was 39 in one week and 24 for another week.
- 8.40 This discrepancy may be because league opponents are counted within the MHIBC figures whilst the leisure centre reception does not record these players as they are part of organised leagues. If this is the case, the Everyone Active casual play visit figures are a more useful comparator since all indoor bowls clubs run inter-club leagues.

8.41 EIBA advises that the casual bowling use should be considered in addition to the membership use of a site. The two sets of figures, one from the MHIBA and one from Everyone Active, have been therefore been used to calculate the 'used capacity' of the indoor bowls centre, at Figure 40. This shows that at best, the bowls facility is running at about 45 members per rink, and at worst may be as low as 35 members per rink. This compares to the national average of 54 members per rink (see para 8.64) during the winter months. During the summer months the usage is much lower, but there is no information available either from MHIBC or the operator which can confirm the actual levels of use during the summer months.

*Figure 40: Harborough indoor bowls used capacity*

*Using MKIBC usage figures*

| Site  | Number of rinks | Capacity of site @ members per rink |                              | 2019 club membership/ casual use nonmembers | No. members/ users per rink | Used capacity % (at 80 per rink) | Used capacity % (at 100 per rink) |
|---|-----------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|   |                 | @ 80 members/ users per rink        | @ 100 members/users per rink |   |                             |                                  |                                   |
| Market Harborough Indoor Bowls Club members | 6               | 480                                 | 600                          | 148   | 45                          | 56%                              | 45%                               |
| Casual non-member users 28 Monday 94 other  |                 |                                     |                              | 122   |                             |                                  |                                   |

*Using Everyone Active pay and play figures (average of 2 weeks, 33 visits)*

| Site  | Number of rinks | Capacity of site @ members per rink |                              | 2019 club membership/ casual use nonmembers | No. members/ users per rink | Used capacity % (at 80 per rink) | Used capacity % (at 100 per rink) |
|---|-----------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|   |                 | @ 80 members/ users per rink        | @ 100 members/users per rink |   |                             |                                  |                                   |
| Market Harborough Indoor Bowls Club members | 6               | 480                                 | 600                          | 148   | 35                          | 44%                              | 35%                               |
| Casual non-                                 |                 |                                     |                              |   |                             |                                  |                                   |

|  |  |  |  |    |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|----|--|--|--|
| member<br>users 28<br>Monday<br>33 other |  |  |  | 61 |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|----|--|--|--|

## Facility financial implications

- 8.42 The Market Harborough indoor bowls club estimates that the total income for the bowls centre could be approximately £50,200 for the 6 months October – March. This total includes the affiliation fees for EIBA of around £650 per annum. This is based on the club generated Finance Budget of January 2020, and includes:
- new projected income from short mat bowls of £1,050 per annum which is dependent upon the club first achieving a grant of £1,000 towards equipment.
  - 149 casual bowls visits per week from non-members at £4.55.
- 8.43 However, there is no information available about costs of running the bowls hall as part of the leisure centre as Everyone Active does not differentiate between individual facilities in their business. It is not therefore possible to judge the financial implications of retaining the facility or not. Further information is required on this point before a judgement can be made on the financial sustainability of the existing facility.

## Consultation findings

### Club comments

- 8.44 As part of the strategy process extensive attempts were made to contact all clubs in the district to give them an opportunity to respond to an online club survey which asked specific questions about the facilities that they use, their club's aspirations and any issues that they face.
- 8.45 The Market Harborough Indoor Bowls Club (MHIBC) provided club survey returns to the first round of consultation in January 2019. It was clear from the comments made that the club liked the location of the facility in a general sense. However, the club was not happy with the facility for a number of reasons.
- 8.46 The club provided a further detailed response in November 2019, which included the commitment of the club to survey the use of the bowls hall for one week at the end of November/early December 2019. This took place from 25<sup>th</sup> November to 1<sup>st</sup> December, and the results have been used to inform this assessment.



- 8.47 The club had previously met District Council representatives together with a representative of EIBA in June 2017, about the justification for a replacement bowls hall facility should the leisure centre as a whole be replaced. The club agreed at the meeting to produce a 12-month business plan to generate new membership and to monitor the club's progress.
- 8.48 A meeting was held with the club on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019 with Harborough District Council and the English Indoor Bowling Association to discuss the issues associated with the current facility and the concerns of the club about the future.
- 8.49 In January 2020 the MHIBC produced a Finance Budget for the bowling season based on October – March, see para 8.42. This is partially dependent on the club receiving grant aid of £1,000 towards short mat bowling equipment. No costs are identified in this budget.

### *Club membership*

- 8.50 Club membership is directly managed by the leisure centre and membership is £52 for the calendar year. Of this sum, £7 is returned to the club by the leisure centre to help fund their activities.
- 8.51 The club has been provided with a list of members' names but does not have any other information or contact details because of GDPR restrictions. There has been a reduction of about 22 members since February 2019. The reduction is likely to be for a variety of reasons, including: failure to renew membership though still playing; no longer playing at the club/no longer playing; died or moved away.
- 8.52 The operator Everyone Active (EA) is not responsible for finding out the reason for the non-renewals.
- 8.53 EIBA recommended at the meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> December that the club became fully proactive in relation to its membership, following up those who had not renewed, and promoting the club more widely.

### *Club sports development*

- 8.54 MHIBC has led some initiatives, such as the friendly league on Monday evenings which brings together several outdoor bowls clubs. This has been very successful. However, the players in this league do not have to be MHIBC members and are also not recorded as "casual players" by Everyone Active.
- 8.55 Contact was made by the club with schools some month ago, but this had not resulted in new players.

- 8.56 There was recognition at the meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019 by the club that it could offer more opportunities for people with disabilities, but this may require specialist equipment. There may be also be opportunities to link to special schools, as well as adult disability groups. The club has been made aware that it should seek funding support from local charities, lottery funders and potentially Harborough District Council, towards any equipment which may be required to deliver these opportunities.
- 8.57 The club is considering whether to explore short mat bowls opportunities which could be offered with some additional equipment. It estimates that it would require a grant of around £1,000 for the equipment required.
- 8.58 EIBA had previously provided the club with a template for the club's sports development plan and recommended that the club complete this as soon as possible.
- 8.59 EIBA also recommends that the club take the lead in seeking to promote much greater participation, particularly at weekends when the centre is busy, but the bowls hall is almost unused.

#### *Future of indoor bowls provision*

- 8.60 MHIBC expressed the view at the meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019 and in other feedback on the draft Sports Facilities strategy, that it did not feel it would be reasonable for either members or non-member bowlers to travel to any alternative site in Northamptonshire, or to take up short mat bowling instead. The bowlers would not consider driving to Northampton for a 2 hour game as "reasonable" and consider that bowlers progress from short mat bowling to indoor bowls in specialist centres.

#### *NGB comments*

- 8.61 The English Indoor Bowling Association (EIBA) provided detailed information throughout the project, both to inform the draft strategy and during the autumn of 2019 as the findings and recommendations about the future of the Harborough indoor bowls centre were discussed and developed. EIBA was represented at the meeting with the Market Harborough Indoor Bowls Club on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019.
- 8.62 The English Indoor Bowling Association (EIBA) does not have a facility strategy but the EIBA and Bowls England are in discussion with Sport England regarding its 'sports facility interventions'. EIBA is part of the Bowls Development Alliance.
- 8.63 The EIBA has 277 affiliated clubs with a total membership of 83,788 (56,660 men, 27,228 women). There was a fall in membership between 2017 and 2018 of 1,812 members. However, 90 clubs increased their membership over the same period.



- 8.64 The national average rate for ‘members per rink’ was 54 in 2018 (2017 average was 55, 2016 average was 56). This compares to 25 members per rink as at December 2019 at Harborough indoor bowls centre. However, if the non-member casual bowling taking into account, the usage increases to around 35-45 “members/users” per rink, see Figure 40.
- 8.65 The EIBA has a national objective to seek to develop ‘effective partnerships with local authorities/leisure providers’, from which it will ‘develop an overall facility strategy/action plan’. The Harborough indoor bowls centre has been included as part of an EIBA project which focuses on these relationships. This work is ongoing and the first draft document is currently being reviewed by the EIBA and the consultants.
- 8.66 EIBA has also confirmed that:
- ‘We consider the Indoor Bowls facility at the Harborough Leisure Centre, and the facilities in adjoining areas are sufficient to meet present and future needs’.
  - Membership of Harborough and District club increased from 122 in 2015 to 156 in 2018.
- 8.67 EIBA confirms that there are five clubs within a 30 minutes’ drive time of the Market Harborough indoor bowls centre:
- Desborough (Northants)
  - Kettering Lodge
  - Kingsthorpe
  - Northampton & District
  - Wellingborough
- 8.68 EIBA is currently reviewing the guidance on travel time to specialist indoor bowls centres, which was given in the Sport England 2005 guidance note as 20 minutes (Sport England , 2005). EIBA feel that the following additional criteria/parameters are now appropriate:
- Travel time – consider an extension to 30 minutes. It anticipates that there will be regional variations, depending upon the current provision of indoor bowls sites AND if travel is necessary during “peak travel periods”
  - Means of travel – we consider that the provision of “public transport” will be relevant in some parts of the country – especially the rural areas.
  - Members per rink ratio – this figure is still relevant, but “spare rink capacity” for each session played also needs to be factored in, bearing in mind that the older population is not keen on travelling in the dark.

8.69 The EIBA has provided the membership information for each of the bowling clubs in the nearby authority areas, see Figure 41. The memberships have been compared with the potential capacity of each site and it is clear that there may be some spare capacity at most indoor bowls centres in the adjacent authorities. Desborough and Kingsthorpe which are the two closest sites to Market Harborough are running at somewhere between 64% and 80% capacity overall. The Northampton and District club, the only one really operating at full capacity, is too far away from the district to serve Harborough residents.

*Figure 41: Indoor bowls and capacity*

| Site  | Number of rinks | Capacity of site @ members per rink |                        | Club membership (incl nonmembers for Harborough) | No. members/users per rink | Used capacity % (at 80 per rink) | Used capacity % (at 100 per rink) |
|---|-----------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|   |                 | @ 80 members per rink               | @ 100 members per rink |  |                            |                                  |                                   |
| Market Harborough                               | 6               | 480                                 | 600                    | 209-270  | 35-45*                     | 44-56%                           | 35-45%                            |
| Barwell, Hinckley                               | 6               | 480                                 | 600                    | 462  | 77                         | 96%                              | 77%                               |
| Carlton, Enderby Golf and Leisure Centre, Blaby | 6               | 480                                 | 600                    | 309  | 52                         | 64%                              | 52%                               |
| Desborough, Northants                           | 6               | 480                                 | 600                    | 383  | 64                         | 80%                              | 64%                               |
| Kettering Lodge                                 | 4               | 320                                 | 400                    | 229  | 57                         | 72%                              | 57%                               |
| Kingsthorpe, Daventry district                  | 6               | 480                                 | 600                    | 385  | 84                         | 80%                              | 64%                               |
| Leicester                                       | 9               | 720                                 | 900                    | 612  | 68                         | 85%                              | 68%                               |
| Melton and District                             | 8               | 640                                 | 800                    | 585  | 73                         | 91%                              | 73%                               |
| Northampton and District                        | 8               | 640                                 | 800                    | 760  | 95                         | 119%                             | 95%                               |
| Rugby Thornfield                                | 8               | 640                                 | 800                    | 356  | 45                         | 56%                              | 45%                               |

\* Estimated, see Figure 40

8.70 In addition to these sites is a two-rink indoor facility at Uppingham which has an unaffiliated club.

- 8.71 The simple assessment of “spare capacity” based on the 80-100 members per rink should be confirmed by assessing whether there is spare capacity at the usual session times at the alternative indoor bowls sites outside of Harborough district. EIBA has therefore extended the programming and usage information for Harborough indoor bowls centre from Figure 34 and compared it with information from the other sites, see Figure 42. EIBA has not been able to obtain any information from the Northampton and District club and there remain a number of gaps in the information for each of the other clubs.
- 8.72 The EIBA advises that this assessment of the programming suggests that although on first sight, there appears to be sufficient capacity to absorb the current membership and users of the Market Harborough indoor bowls centre, that this is not actually the case. The usage of the existing bowls centre seems unlikely to be able to be absorbed elsewhere unless players are prepared to play later in the evenings or at weekends. Late evening play for indoor bowls is not usually an attractive option for older people who make up the large majority of participants. The closure of the indoor bowls centre may therefore result in a reduction in participation rather than relocation.
- 8.73 Should the indoor bowls centre at Harborough be closed or not replaced, then the EIBA advises that the following barriers to the relocation of current members and users will need to be considered:
- Travel and additional cost
  - Entering leagues in time for new Indoor Winter Season (from Sept) or Indoor Summer Season (from April)
  - Integration into existing teams at new club, likely to take 1-2 years to achieve
  - Ability to take sufficient MHIBC members with them to the new club to form teams to enter the leagues
  - Playing at different times than present
  - Alternatives for the non-member casual players.
- 8.74 Most of these factors have been included in the assessment in Figure 46.

Figure 42: Programming at Harborough indoor centre and spare capacity elsewhere

| Day                  | Time  | Usage of the Market Harborough indoor bowls centre |          |          |          |          |          | Rink availability at alternative sites |           |                  |          |                 |
|----------------------|-------|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--|-----------|------------------|----------|-----------------|
|                      |       | Rink 1   | Rink 2   | Rink 3   | Rink 4   | Rink 5   | Rink 6   | Desborough                             | Kettering | Kingsthorpe      | North'on | Welling         |
| Monday 25th November | 10.00 | M + C  | League   | League   | League   | League   |          | 2 rinks avl                            | NIL       | League           | ?        | NIL             |
|                      | 12.00 |  |          |          |          |          |          | casual play, rearranged leagues, comps | ?         | League           | ?        | ?               |
|                      | 14.00 |  | M+C      | M        |          |          |          | Ladies match/Bowls Drive               | NIL       | Ladies 4's       | ?        | NIL             |
|                      | 16.00 |  |          |          |          |          |          |  | ?         | Ladies fixture   | ?        | NIL             |
|                      | 18.30 | O-League   | O-League | O-League | O-League | O-League | O-League | 2 rinks avl                            | NIL       | League           | ?        | 3 avl and 20:30 |
| Tues 26th November   | 10.00 |  | M+C      | M        | M+C      | M+C      | M+C      | 3 rinks avl                            | NIL       | League           | ?        | NIL             |
|                      | 12.00 |  |          | C        | C        |          |          | casual play, rearranged leagues, comps | ?         | ?                | ?        | ?               |
|                      | 14.00 |  | League   | League   | League   | League   |          | NIL                                    | NIL       | ?                | ?        | 2 avl           |
|                      | 16.00 |  |          |          |          |          |          | ?                                      | ?         | Australian Pairs | ?        | ?               |
|                      | 18.30 |  |          | M        | M        |          |          | 20:30?                                 | NIL       | League           | ?        | 3 avl           |
| Weds 27th November   | 10.00 | M  | League   | League   | M+C      | M+C      |          | 1 rink avl                             | NIL       | League           | ?        | ?               |
|                      | 12.00 |  |          |          |          | M+C      | M+C      | casual play, rearranged leagues, comps | ?         | ?                | ?        | ?               |
|                      | 14.00 | M+C  | C        | M+C      | M+C      | M+C      | M+C      | Matches                                | NIL       | Ladies Fixture   | ?        | ?               |
|                      | 16.00 |  | M+C      |          |          |          |          |  | ?         |                  | ?        | ?               |

|  |       |        |        |        |        |        |        |             |     |        |   |     |
|--|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------------|-----|--------|---|-----|
|  | 18.30 | League | League | League | League | League | League | 2 rinks avl | NIL | League | ? | NIL |
|--|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------------|-----|--------|---|-----|

| Day                 | Time  | Usage of the Market Harborough indoor bowls centre |        |        |        |        |        | Rink availability at alternative sites |           |             |          |         |
|---------------------|-------|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--|-----------|-------------|----------|---------|
|                     |       | Rink 1   | Rink 2 | Rink 3 | Rink 4 | Rink 5 | Rink 6 | Desborough                             | Kettering | Kingsthorpe | North'on | Welling |
| Thurs 28th November | 10.00 | C  | League | League | M      | M+C    | M+C    | NIL                                    | ?         | League      | ?        | NIL     |
|                     | 12.00 | M+C  |        |        |        |        | M      | NIL                                    | ?         | ?           | ?        | ?       |
|                     | 14.00 | M+C  | M      | M      |        |        |        | Friendly match                         | NIL       | ?           | ?        | NIL     |
|                     | 16.00 |  |        |        |        |        |        |  | NIL       | ?           | ?        | NIL     |
|                     | 18.30 | League   | League | Coach  |        |        |        | 20:30?                                 | ?         | League      | ?        | 3 avl   |
| Fri 29th November   | 10.00 |  | M+C    | League | League | C      | M+C    | NIL                                    | NIL       | League      | ?        | NIL     |
|                     | 12.00 |  |        |        |        |        |        | 1 rink avl                             | ?         | ?           | ?        | ?       |
|                     | 14.00 | League   | League | League | League | League | League | 2 rinks avl                            | NIL       | League      | ?        | 3 avl   |
|                     | 16.00 |  |        |        |        |        |        | NIL                                    | NIL       | League      | ?        | ?       |
|                     | 18.30 |  |        |        |        |        |        | 2 rinks plus 20:30?                    | NIL       | League      | ?        | NIL     |
| Sat 30th November   | 10.00 |  |        |        |        |        |        | 3 rinks avl                            | NIL       | ?           | ?        | ?       |
|                     | 12.00 |  | C      |        |        |        |        | 5 rinks avl                            | ?         | ?           | ?        | ?       |
|                     | 14.00 |  |        | M      | C      |        |        | Friendly match                         | NIL       | Fixture     | ?        | ?       |
|                     | 16.00 | C  | M      | C      |        |        |        |  | NIL       |             | ?        | ?       |
|                     | 18.30 |  |        |        |        |        |        | ?                                      | ?         | ?           | ?        | ?       |

|                     |       |  |  |  |  |  |  |                   |     |   |   |       |
|---------------------|-------|--|--|--|--|--|--|-------------------|-----|---|---|-------|
| Sun 1st<br>December | 10.00 |  |  |  |  |  |  | ?                 | NIL | ? | ? | 2 avl |
|                     | 12.00 |  |  |  |  |  |  | ?                 | ?   | ? | ? | ?     |
|                     | 14.00 |  |  |  |  |  |  | Friendly<br>match | NIL | ? | ? | ?     |
|                     | 16.00 |  |  |  |  |  |  |                   | NIL | ? | ? | ?     |
|                     | 18.30 |  |  |  |  |  |  | ?                 | ?   | ? | ? | ?     |

M Member pay and play  
C Casual pay and play including “away”  
players in leagues  
? Information not available or uncertain



## Adjacent authorities' provision and strategies

8.75 The situation within the adjacent authorities to Harborough is as follows:

- The 'Charnwood Indoor Built Sports Facilities Strategy 2017 - 2036' (Charnwood Borough Council, 2018) concluded that additional capacity should be provided to meet future demand.
- 'Planning the Future of Open Space, Sport and Recreation in West Northamptonshire' (2017) which covered Daventry district concluded that there is a current spare indoor bowls capacity, which should also be sufficient to meet all future needs.
- The 'Hinckley and Bosworth Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy' (Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, 2011) concluded that provision meets all current and projected future needs.
- The 'Melton Sports Facilities Strategy 2016 - 2021' (Melton Borough Council, 2017) concludes that existing provision can meet all current and future needs.
- The 'Rugby Open Space, Playing Pitch and Sports Facilities Strategy' (Rugby Borough Council, 2015) concludes that existing provision can meet all current and future needs.
- The 'Rutland Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy 2015-2036' (Rutland County Council, 2015) concludes that existing provision can meet all current and future needs.

8.76 Indoor bowling was not addressed in the relevant strategies for Corby, Kettering, and Oadby and Wigston, and there are no current published strategies for Blaby or Leicester.

## Modelling

### Comparator authorities' provision

8.77 Using Active Places Power (Sport England, 2019) data it has been possible to calculate the current level of provision of specialist indoor bowls centres and number of rinks per 1,000 head of population for Harborough's CIPFA comparators together with the provision for the East Midlands region and England as a whole, see Figure 43. For this assessment all sites with public access have been included in the figures.

- 8.78 This comparator authority analysis suggests that there is a range of provision. Daventry's provision is skewed because although one of the sites is within Daventry town, the other is on the immediate border with Northampton and primarily serves the residents of that town.
- 8.79 The current rate of provision is slightly above that for the East Midlands region but is almost double the national average.

*Figure 43: Indoor bowls - comparator authorities*

| CIPFA comparator       | Estimated population at 2019 (ONS 2016 baseline) | Number of indoor bowls centres |                      | Number of rinks |                      |
|------------------------|--|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
|                        |  | Total                          | Per 1,000 population | Total           | Per 1,000 population |
| Harborough             | 92,600   | 1                              | 0.01                 | 6               | 0.06                 |
| Ribble Valley          | 59,300   | 0                              | 0.00                 | 0               | 0.00                 |
| South Northamptonshire | 92,000   | 1                              | 0.01                 | 5               | 0.05                 |
| Maldon                 | 64,300   | 1                              | 0.02                 | 7               | 0.11                 |
| Daventry               | 82,500   | 2                              | 0.02                 | 12              | 0.15                 |
| <b>East Midlands</b>   | 4,816,800  | 36                             | 0.01                 | 226             | 0.05                 |
| <b>England</b>         | 56,357,500                                       | 314                            | 0.01                 | 1663            | 0.03                 |

## Summary of current situation

- 8.80 The indoor bowls facility at Harborough Leisure Centre is used by both members of the Market Harborough Indoor Bowls Club (MHIBC) and non-members, many of which play in an organised friendly league between outdoor bowls clubs. The exact level of regular use is uncertain because the records of usage from a survey held by the club are different from the total casual usage recorded by the Leisure Centre reception. The membership of the MHIBC at 4th December 2019 was 148. The number of non-member visits per week during the winter appears to be between 60 and 122, but the higher figure includes visiting players from opponent clubs playing in leagues. If each non-member plays on a weekly basis, probably similar to the average member, then the number of members/users is approximately 210-270.
- 8.81 Given that the site can provide for between 480-600 members/users, this gives a used capacity of between 35%-56% during the winter months, or a 'member per rink' figure of between 35 and 45 (including non-member visits). This compares to a national average of around 54 members per rink. The usage during the summer months is much lower, but there is no available information to confirm the actual levels of use.

- 8.82 The Harborough indoor bowls site is unusual in that it offers pay-and-play bowls opportunities for non-members. The take is approximately 33 visits per week during the winter months, but there is also a winter friendly league for outdoor bowls clubs. The next nearest site offering casual non-member bowling is at the Enderby Golf and Leisure Centre, which is also the home site of Carlton indoor bowls club.
- 8.83 The Harborough indoor bowls centre was opened in 1999 and the management of the facility is via the leisure centre operator. The operator (Everyone Active) is also responsible for the club membership records and for pay-and-play use, whilst the club organises leagues etc. The club plays a very limited role in sports development or promotion of the activity.
- 8.84 The facility is expensive to retain and maintain, and there have been issues with the carpet, lighting, heating and the lounge/catering over many years. The carpet and lighting were improved in 2019 with the change of operator, and the heating was improved in January 2020. However, the catering remains a significant concern for the club.
- 8.85 The temperature of the facility during the winter months has often been well below the national governing body recommended temperature of 21 degrees, and for some of December 2019 and January 2020 was 12 degrees or colder. This effectively closed the bowls hall to use. However, during hot summer days the temperatures inside the bowls hall can be very high.
- 8.86 In the opinion of the bowls club members the leisure centre café is too far away from the bowls centre to be usable by players and spectators during matches, but the originally provided bar/catering area has been reduced to minimum facilities and is considered by the club to be insufficient to support the players and spectators.
- 8.87 The operator, Everyone Active is unable to provide an estimated running cost for the bowls hall, but the club has estimated that it should be able to achieve around £50,200 income per annum. Further information is therefore required before the financial sustainability of the facility can be assessed.
- 8.88 It is difficult to assess the impact of the quality of facilities on the participation in bowls at Market Harborough, but the club has struggled to retain both the existing members and encourage new members. The membership has fallen since 2002 when it was 250.
- 8.89 Although the club recognises that there have been issues associated with the current site, the club members are keen to retain a facility in the Market Harborough area which is relatively easy to access.

- 8.90 The English Indoor Bowling Association (EIBA), the national governing body for the sport, has provided support to the club and recognise the issues that the club faces. It is keen to ensure that the options for indoor bowling at a specialist in the Market Harborough area are retained if possible, including ideally access for non-member bowling. The EIBA is of the view that with improvements to the heating and the support of Everyone Active, that the club should be able to increase its membership and activity.
- 8.91 The drive time catchment for specialist indoor bowls centres is 20-30 minutes. At 20 minutes' drive, the majority of residents currently have access to a facility either within the district or outside, with the exceptions of some rural areas, particularly to the east. At a drive time of 30 minutes, all of the district can currently reach an indoor bowls centre.
- 8.92 The EIBA undertook research relating to the capacity of bowls clubs within 30 minutes' drive time of Market Harborough. The advice from EIBA based on this research is that much of the existing activity at Harborough indoor bowls centre cannot be accommodated elsewhere and the bowls centres have too limited capacity during the daytime and early evenings. However, there are a number of gaps in the programming information provided by these alternative clubs, and further confirmation is required to determine if an overall lack of capacity is a key issue.

## Assessment of Future Needs

- 8.93 Indoor bowls is primarily played by people aged 60 years and over, so the level of future demand for bowls can be assessed by considering the forecast change in the number of people over 60 years in the period up to 2031.

*Figure 44: Increase in 60+ years population to 2031*

|   | District wide population 60+ years | District wide % growth |
|---|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>2019</b><br>(ONS, 2016 base)               | 26,500                             | 50%                    |
| <b>2031</b><br>(Agreed forecast demographics) | 39,622                             |                        |

- 8.94 With a current membership of around 148 members, this suggests that the demand for indoor bowls might rise to around 222 members by 2031, reflecting the aging population of the authority (i.e. 150% of the current 148 membership) and assuming that current participation rates remain at existing levels. If the non-member bowls participation increased at the same rate, then there could be 92-183 players, giving a total of 314-405 members. This would be 52-68 users per rink in a 6-rink facility, or 79-101 members/users for a 4-rink facility.

- 8.95 However, both nationally and locally the rates of participation in bowling have declined over recent years, resulting in the number of people actually bowling remaining relatively constant or actually decreasing, as has been the case across the nearby clubs.
- 8.96 There are several scenarios for Harborough:
- Scenario A  
If it was possible to return to a membership level of around 250 and both the membership and non-members bowling then increased in line with the aging population, then the club has a potential for 375 members. This would bring the total potential use to around 467-558 regular players. This would be somewhere around 78-93 members/users per rink for a 6-rink site, suggesting that a 6-rink facility would be justified.
  - Scenario B  
If it was possible to return to a membership level of around 250 and the membership then increased in line with the population increase but the non-member participation rates remained as at present, then the club has a potential for 375 members plus around 60-120 non-members. This would bring the total potential use to around 435-495 regular players. This would be somewhere around 73-93 members/users per rink on a 6-rink site, suggesting that a 6-rink facility would be justified.
  - Scenario C  
If it is possible to increase the current membership by the rate of population growth and the current non-members also increased at this rate, then the membership would increase to 222 and the non-members' visits to between 92-183, giving a total number of regular users of 314-405. This would just about justify a 6-rink facility as the number of uses per rink would be 52-67. A 4-rink facility would have between 79 and 101 members/users, so may not be large enough resulting in some members/users needing to go elsewhere.
  - Scenario D  
If the club remains at the same size as do the number of non-members, then the total number of regular users would be 209-270. This number could be accommodated in a 4-rink facility at a rate of between 52 and 68 users per rink.
- 8.97 Of these scenarios, the most likely future scenario may be Scenario D, given the trend in bowls nationally and locally. However, the long-term facility issues with the bowls hall at Market Harborough have seriously affected the attractiveness of the site, so likely reducing the number of members of the club and the potential for attracting non-member bowling. If the facility improves sufficiently to make it attractive, then the club should be able to increase its membership more quickly and more non-member casual bowlers will be encouraged to use the facility.



- 8.98 The implications of the scenarios are explored in more detail under 'Meeting the needs of the future' heading below.

### Short mat bowls

- 8.99 Short mat bowls is likely to remain an important activity in village and community halls, though current actual rates of participation are not known. Where halls lack sufficient storage space and there is potential demand for bowls, then extensions to halls to provide mat storage should be a priority. There is also a need to encourage greater organisation of the activity via local coordinators which can help establish more formal leagues and competitions as well as encourage the formation of new clubs.
- 8.100 The Market Harborough Indoor Bowls Club is keen to introduce short mat bowling within the main bowls hall. However, this would require additional equipment and the club estimates that it would need to seek a grant of approximately £1,000 to provide for this activity.

## Meeting the needs of the future

### Provision criteria

- 8.101 The criteria for the options in relation to future specialist bowls provision are:
- If a replacement facility is provided, the EIBA recommendation is that the minimum size should be 4 rinks, which would have a capacity for 320-400 members/users.
  - The facility option should best fit the current and potential future needs of the community.
  - A social area and appropriate changing facilities are essential.
  - Good disability access is essential.
  - A 20-30 minutes' drive time catchment is considered appropriate for this type of specialist facility.
- 8.102 Non-member pay-and-play access currently exists to the Harborough indoor bowls centre but is not available at most other specialist indoor bowls sites which are club-owned and managed. If the bowls hall is to be replaced, a decision will need to be taken as to whether this type of opportunity should still be offered.
- 8.103 In addition to the above, the EIBA has suggested that the following should be taken into consideration if alternative provision, or no future provision, is considered:
- Travel and additional cost for participants



- The ability to enter leagues in time for new Indoor Winter Season (from Sept) or Indoor Summer Season (from April)
- The ability to integrate into existing teams at a new club, advised by EIBA as likely to take 1-2 years to achieve
- The option of taking sufficient MHIBC members with them to the new club to form teams to enter the leagues
- The potential need to play at different times than at present.

8.104 The Market Harborough Indoor Bowls Club does not consider it reasonable for members or casual bowlers to travel to any club in Northamptonshire, or to take up short mat bowls instead. The MHIBC committee considers that the existing club members would be unlikely to drive to Northampton for a 2-hour game. It also considers that bowlers tend to progress from short mat to bowling at a specialist centre.

8.105 Harborough District Council will need to assess these views in reaching a conclusion about the future of indoor bowls in Harborough District. In addition to the views expressed by the EIBA and the Market Harborough Indoor Bowls Club the issue of viability of a replacement or retained facility must also be considered by the Council in the light of available resources and Council priorities.

8.106 In determining viability, it should be noted that a specialist bowling surface cannot be used for other activities without serious risk to its quality, unless it is seasonally boarded over to enable other activities during the summer months.

### Alternative places to play

8.107 The membership information for the clubs in the nearby areas provide a broad indication of how much spare capacity there may be to relocate the membership and other bowls users to alternative facilities within about 20 minutes' drive time of Harborough Leisure Centre. The drive time catchment of the Harborough indoor bowls facility stretches well into Northamptonshire, see Figure 35. The 20-minute drive time catchment includes Desborough and stretches towards both Kettering and Northampton, and also covers the northern part of Daventry district. Going northwards out of Market Harborough, the catchment covers an area stretching up to Oadby. The current facility therefore draws players from a large area, although, as the club confirms, the majority of players are from Market Harborough itself.

8.108 As the catchment of the current indoor bowls facility is much larger than Market Harborough itself, it is likely that some current members would consider joining an alternative club if the indoor bowls at Market Harborough was to close. For example, those people living in the north or east of the district might join Carlton. It is therefore unlikely that all of the current users would need to be relocated to the closest clubs, those within Northamptonshire.

8.109 Figure 45 (an extension of Figure 41) shows that current spare capacity at each of the clubs in the surrounding areas of Harborough. It is clear that there are currently at least 283 spare member spaces across Desborough, Kettering Lodge and Kingsthorpe clubs, and that all of the specialist bowling centres have at least some spare capacity. Should a decision be taken to close the Harborough facility, this means that all of the members could be potentially be relocated within 20 minutes' drive of the Harborough Leisure Centre site. However, some residents may take up to 30 minutes to reach an alternative indoor bowls facility. It also seems unlikely that all of the current MHIBC members would be able to play at their preferred times due to limited spare capacity during the daytime and early evening at most of the alternative sites.

*Figure 45: Spare capacity across indoor bowls centres*

| Site  | Number of rinks | Capacity of site @ members per rink |                        | Club membership (incl non-members for Harborough) | No. members/users per rink | Used capacity %  | Used capacity %   | Spare capacity of site @ members per rink |                        |
|---|-----------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|---|----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|---|------------------------|
|   |                 | @ 80 members per rink               | @ 100 members per rink |   |                            | (at 80 per rink) | (at 100 per rink) | @ 80 members per rink                     | @ 100 members per rink |
| Market Harborough                               | 6               | 480                                 | 600                    | 209-270   | 35-45*                     | 44-56%           | 35-45%            |   |                        |
| Barwell, Hinckley                               | 6               | 480                                 | 600                    | 462   | 77                         | 96%              | 77%               | 18  | 138                    |
| Carlton, Enderby Golf and Leisure Centre, Blaby | 6               | 480                                 | 600                    | 309   | 52                         | 64%              | 52%               | 171                                       | 291                    |
| Desborough, Northants                           | 6               | 480                                 | 600                    | 383   | 64                         | 80%              | 64%               | 97  | 217                    |
| Kettering Lodge                                 | 4               | 320                                 | 400                    | 229   | 57                         | 72%              | 57%               | 91  | 171                    |
| Kingsthorpe, Daventry district                  | 6               | 480                                 | 600                    | 385   | 84                         | 80%              | 64%               | 95  | 215                    |
| Leicester                                       | 9               | 720                                 | 900                    | 612   | 68                         | 85%              | 68%               | 108                                       | 288                    |
| Melton and District                             | 8               | 640                                 | 800                    | 585   | 73                         | 91%              | 73%               | 55  | 215                    |
| Northampton and District                        | 8               | 640                                 | 800                    | 760   | 95                         | 119%             | 95%               | -120                                      | 40                     |
| Rugby Thornfield                                | 8               | 640                                 | 800                    | 356   | 45                         | 56%              | 45%               | 284                                       | 444                    |
| Spare capacity at local sites                   |                 |                                     |                        |   |                            |                  |                   | 283                                       | 603                    |

## Future demand and facility options

- 8.110 Figure 46 compares the growth scenarios A to D above with the facility options, being a 6-rink specialist centre, a 4-rink specialist centre or no future provision.
- 8.111 At this time it is not possible to be certain how much the club membership numbers would recover if the existing bowls hall at Harborough leisure centre was to be of a consistently high standard, through improved heating control and catering which can enable the club to both retain existing members and attract new participants.
- 8.112 Should a new facility be provided it should be attractive to users and enable the club to grow its membership.
- 8.113 The continuation of casual play would probably only be possible in a facility which is managed as part of a wider leisure centre complex.
- 8.114 Scenarios A and B which envisage the club growing from a baseline of 250 members seem unlikely to be achievable. Scenario C is based on the club growing from its current membership in line with the growth in the number of people aged 60+ years in the district. This would appear to be potentially realistic but would depend on a facility which is attractive to users and maintaining current bowls participation rates.
- 8.115 Scenario D is based on the club and its current participation by non-members staying the same. This may be the worst-case scenario, but if opportunities for indoor bowling were to cease, then there may be a loss of participation in bowling at specialist centres.
- 8.116 The provision of short mat bowling is considered separately from the specialist bowls centre provision and is not therefore considered within Figure 46.

Figure 46: Scenario options for indoor bowls

| Scenario | Number of potential members + non-members playing regularly by 2031 | Number of rinks required to meet demand | Is there sufficient spare capacity to meet displaced members at alternative locations? | Is there sufficient programming time at other centres? | Options                  |                              |                              | Travel time and cost for players | Leagues                      | Changing time of play         | Cost implications   | Comment   |
|----------|---|---|--|--|--------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|
|          |   |   |  |  | Retain existing facility | Replace with 6 rink facility | Replace with 4 rink facility |                                  |                              |                               |   |   |
| A        | 467-558   | 5-7                                     | X  | X  | Y                        | Y                            | N                            | No impact, depending on location | No impact                    | No change                     | Capital required to improve existing facility or for any replacement. Viability dependent upon club reaching high membership levels | May result in some displacement to other centres  |
| B        | 435-495   | 5-6                                     | X  | X  | Y                        | Y                            | N                            |                                  |                              |                               |   | Sufficient capacity to cater for all potential use. Would require up to club to grow approx x3 current size for likely viability.   |
| C        | 314-405   | 3-4                                     | X  | X  | N                        | N                            | Y                            |                                  | May need more flexible times | Some need to be more flexible | Capital required for replacement. Viability likely to be better than 6 rink but uncertain as depends on club reaching growth target | May result in some displacement to other centres. Would require club to grow more than x2 for potential viability. Nonmember bowling likely to be only possible on leisure centre site. |
| D        | 209-270   | 2-4                                     | Y  | X  | N                        | N                            | Y                            | Depends on location              | Little or no impact          | Little or no impact           | Capital required for replacement. Viability uncertain if club fails to grow   | Facility may not be able to run at full capacity. Nonmember bowling likely to be only possible on leisure centre site. Assumes club grows approx x1.5 current size                      |

|  |  |  |  |  |   |   |   |                      |  |  |   |   |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|---|---|----------------------|--|--|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  | N | N | N | Higher for residents | More difficult. Likely to need to change county league | Likely to need to play at different times, both casual and competition | Capital investment into other sports facilities with focus on older and disabled people | Programming at other centres would need to adjust. Likely loss of pay and play bowling for non-members. Likely reduction in indoor specialist centre bowling participation. English Indoor Bowling Assn would object to loss of facility. |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|---|---|----------------------|--|--|---|---|

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8.117 The assessment in Figure 46 suggests that:

- under Scenarios A and B, the provision of a 6-rink facility would be justified.
- under Scenarios C and D, the provision of a 4-rink facility may be justified.

8.118 The English Indoor Bowling Association advises that a 4-rink facility is justified even if the current membership does not increase because there appears to be too little capacity at alternative accessible facilities during daytimes and early evenings for members to relocate. As most players are elderly, they may cease bowling rather than travel later on weekday evenings or switch to playing at weekends should capacity at their preferred time not be available at an easily accessible location. However, the EIBA advice needs confirmation because it is based on incomplete usage information for each of the potentially alternative clubs.

8.119 Non-member pay-and-play bowling could only continue if the specialist indoor bowls facility remained part of a leisure centre with a managed reception desk. There are currently about 33 visits per week by non-club members.

### Facility alternatives

8.120 The English Indoor Bowling Association recommends that the minimum size of specialist indoor bowls centre should be 4-rink.

8.121 The Sport England Facility Costs 2019 Q2 (Sport England, 2019) provides a facility cost for a 6-rink indoor bowls centre excluding a club/function room of £2.25m. This reflects the project cost of a facility in Coventry which is currently under construction. The Sport England estimated cost for an 8-rink facility also excluding a club/function room is around £2.94m. The capital cost for a 4-rink facility might therefore be expected to be around £1.5m.

8.122 Sport England does not have facility lifecycle costs for indoor bowls facilities, but if the Sport England lifecycle costs for sports halls were to be applied at 1% for maintenance and 0.5% for a sinking fund, then the annual lifecycle costs could be expected to be around £33,750 for a 6-rink facility, and £22,500 for a 4-rink.

8.123 Added to these costs would be utilities and operational costs, plus potentially ground rent.

8.124 The rental value for indoor leisure (D2 use class) was estimated to be between £8 and £20 per sq ft (£86 - £215 per sq m) nationally depending upon location in 2017 (Savills, 2017). A 16,000 sq ft (1,486 sq m) general industrial unit which would be easily large enough for a 4-rink facility costs approximately £106,000 per annum to rent in Market Harborough.



- 8.125 If the proposed feasibility work justifies replacement of the bowls hall either as part of a replacement leisure centre or as a separate facility, then the costs of this provision would likely need to be met by Harborough District Council or else a developer, should the existing site be sold for other use.

*Retaining the existing bowls hall as part of the Leisure Centre*

- 8.126 If the existing Harborough Leisure Centre is retained, then the indoor bowls centre provides a valued sports facility resource for around 150 indoor bowls club members, visiting league players, and about 33 non-member users each week during the winter months.
- 8.127 There is no estimate of the running costs of the existing bowls hall available from Everyone Active, but the income from the club is approximately £50,000 per annum. The costs of providing long term solutions for improved temperature control and catering for the bowls hall are unknown. Further information is therefore required on the costs, both potential capital and running costs to provide a sound basis for any future decision.
- 8.128 In the longer term, unless the facility receives much higher levels of use, the costs of maintaining the bowls hall versus the benefits for community sport may be likely to be less favourable than other community sport investment.
- 8.129 The Market Harborough Indoor Bowls Club have suggested that they may wish to introduce short mat bowls on site. This would require new equipment and the bowls club have indicated that they may seek a grant of £1,000. It is not known if the club or Everyone Active would be willing to contribute towards the cost of the equipment, and the actual cost of equipment is unknown.
- 8.130 So long as this short mat bowls equipment could be reused elsewhere should the bowls hall not be retained long term, then this investment may be justified.

*Retaining the bowls hall if the rest of leisure centre is relocated*

- 8.131 It is not known if the bowls hall could be successfully retained if the rest of the leisure centre was to be demolished for replacement elsewhere. However, a stand-alone bowls hall without substantial investment to improve the insulation and ensure that it is attractive, would be unlikely to attract large numbers of new participants.
- 8.132 If it was to be a stand-alone 6-rink facility, the club would need to be able to at least double its membership. Most of the 6-rink facilities in adjacent or nearby authorities have at least around 310 members, with the busier centres having over 400 members.

- 8.133 The Market Harborough Indoor Bowls Club would also need to be strengthened substantially if it was to be able to run its own facility. This may require direct sports development support from Harborough District Council, but only if capacity and resources at the Council allows.
- 8.134 Due to the above factors, retaining the existing bowls hall should the rest of the Harborough Leisure Centre be relocated, does not at this stage, appear to be a potential long-term option.

#### *New leisure centre, 4 rink facility*

- 8.135 A 4-rink specialist bowls centre which is part of a new leisure centre would ideally need to be supported by some participation growth in the district as Scenario C above, but this would enable the existing club use to continue. The club would need to be encouraged to take a more active role in managing the club and its facility, and in bowls promotion, though the ultimate facility control would need to be with the leisure centre.
- 8.136 This option would meet the aspirations of the current club members and also enable the continuation of the current pay and play opportunity for non-members, which has limited take-up.
- 8.137 The English Indoor Bowling Association (EIBA) would be likely to support a 4-rink facility for Harborough.
- 8.138 The implications of little or no growth in bowls participation would need to be tested (Scenario D) to assess viability. The costs/benefits of providing a 4-rink indoor bowls centre as part of the replacement Harborough Leisure Centre needs careful consideration by Harborough District Council as to whether it is sustainable.

#### *Community facility, 4 rink facility*

- 8.139 As with a 4-rink facility at a replacement leisure centre, the success of a 4-rink facility elsewhere would be dependent upon increasing the number of indoor bowls players, as Scenario C above.
- 8.140 Indoor bowls provision is best provided as part of another community facility, and there are a number of examples outside of the district which have both indoor and outdoor bowls provision, including both Kingsthorpe and Kettering Lodge.

- 8.141 The Market Harborough Indoor Bowls Club is keen to retain a facility within the town, but a site further north may provide better accessibility to more residents district wide. There are no specific sites known to be available, but options might include Welland Park (by covering one outdoor green), the Market Harborough Squash and Cricket Club, or Kibworth Bowls Club amongst others.
- 8.142 The English Indoor Bowling Association (EIBA) would be likely to support a 4-rink facility in an appropriate location.
- 8.143 The option of providing a 4-rink bowls facility should be considered on an existing community facility site. Feasibility work can be undertaken to determine the viability or otherwise of such provision on an existing site. Again, the implications of little or no growth in bowls participation would need to be tested.
- 8.144 Under this option, and if the MHIBC was required to take on a much more active role in managing the facility as well as fund raising, sports development and promotion, this may require significant direct sports development support from Harborough District Council; however this would be dependent on District Council capacity and resources being available.

#### *Closure and no re-provision*

- 8.145 If the indoor bowls facility at Harborough Leisure Centre was to close without replacement, then this would have a number of implications for residents.
- 8.146 The EIBA advises that although the current membership of the MHIBC could be absorbed into alternative indoor bowls centres within 20-30 minute' drive of Market Harborough, their evidence to date (although currently not complete) is that there is insufficient capacity for the members of MHIBC during the daytime or early evenings, the peak time for these facilities.
- 8.147 At a drive time catchment of 20 minutes (map in Figure 47) much of the rural eastern and rural central area of the district could not access any specialist indoor bowls centre, including the Husbands Bosworth area. However, there would be access for people living in Market Harborough and Lutterworth.
- 8.148 At a drive time catchment of 30 minutes (map in Figure 48) everyone with access to a car would be able to reach a specialist indoor bowls facility outside of the district.
- 8.149 The opportunity for casual (pay-and-play) bowling would be available via Enderby Leisure and Golf Centre (Figure 38 and Figure 39) but only for some residents:

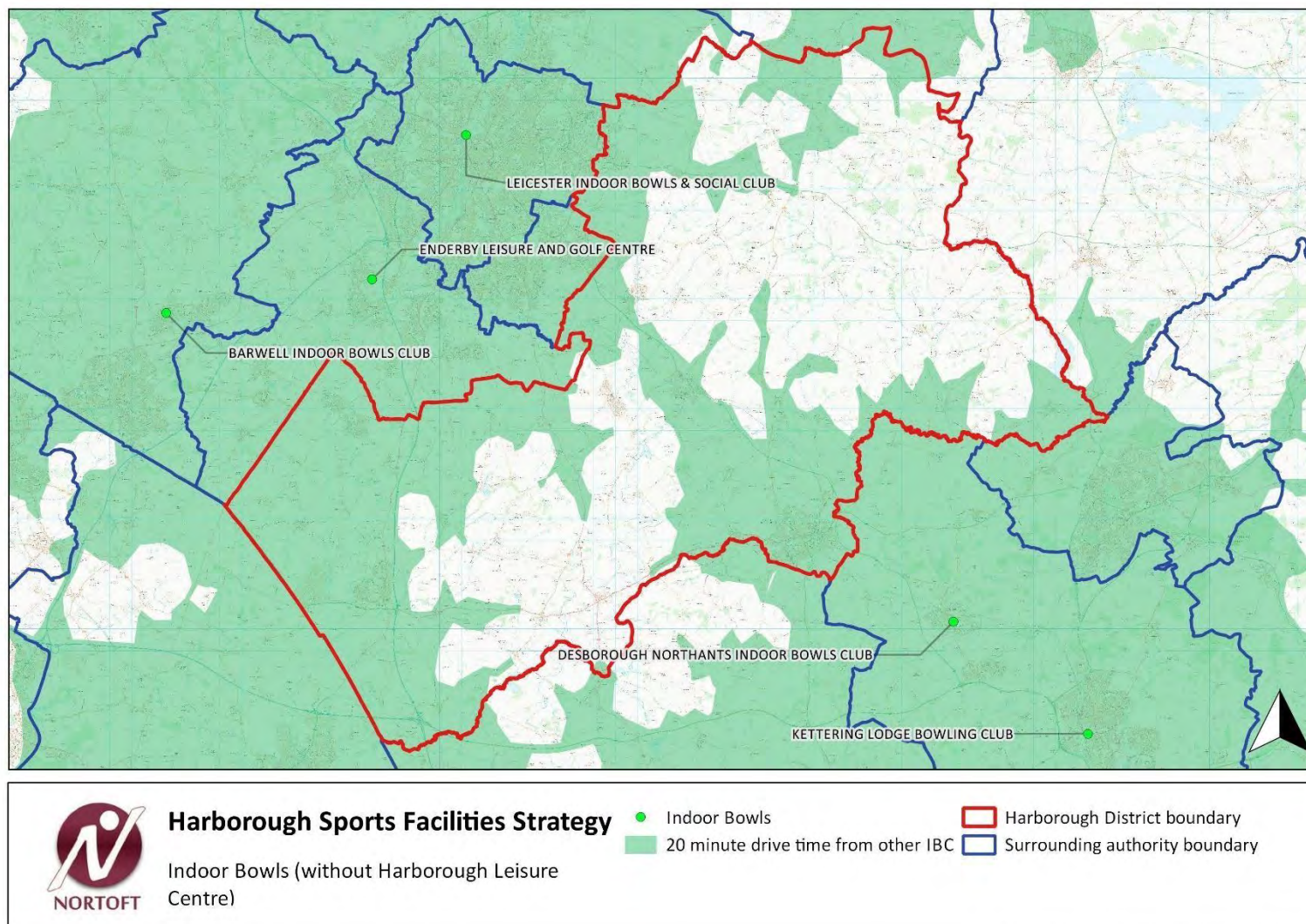
- Within 20 minutes' drive for residents in the Lutterworth area and north west of the district
- Within 30 minutes' drive for residents in the district west of the north side of Market Harborough to Melton Mowbray road (B6047)
- No access (more than 30 minutes' drive) for residents living in Market Harborough or to the east of the Market Harborough to Melton Mowbray road (B6047).

8.150 There would be no capital cost to Harborough District Council associated with this option in terms of a new specialist facility, but there would need to be investment elsewhere and/or into other appropriate sports projects subject to available resources.

8.151 The EIBA would object to the loss of indoor bowls specialist provision in Market Harborough and there may also be planning challenges.



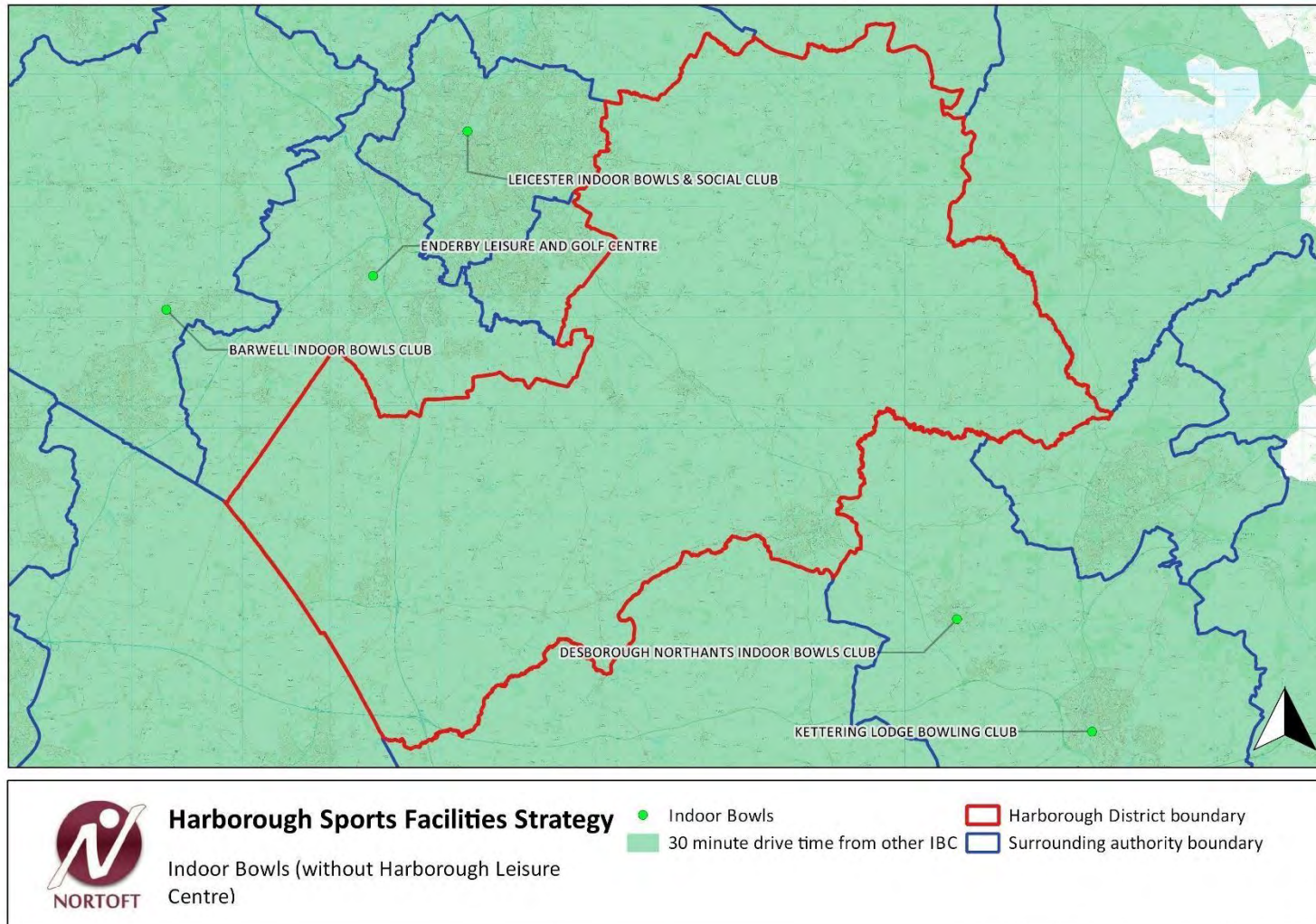
Figure 47: Scenario - Harborough indoor bowls closed at 20 minutes' drive time







*Figure 48: Scenario - - Harborough indoor bowls closed at 30 minutes' drive time*



## Short mat bowls

- 8.152 Whether or not a specialist indoor bowls centre is retained in the district, the existing short mat bowls opportunities should be strengthened. This may include new /additional storage at village and community halls and similar sites. There is also a need to strengthen the network of clubs and leagues to provide greater opportunities for more structured competitions and to encourage the formation of new clubs.

## Meeting the planning requirements

### National planning policy

- 8.153 The planning tests protecting sports and recreation facilities are set out in National Planning Policy Framework (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019) paragraph 97:

*Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, 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.*

- 8.154 One of the tests (a), (b) or (c) above will be required to be met when considering the future of the specialist bowls provision.

- 8.155 Meeting the test of 97(a) would depend on:

- the further information from the nearby specialist indoor bowls sites which confirms that there is sufficient capacity to cater for the current users of the Market Harborough indoor bowls centre and the non-member casual bowlers; or
- provision of a 4-rink replacement and independently managed facility which meets the current and anticipated future needs of the existing membership and casual non-member bowlers

- 8.156 The test of 97(b) would only be met if any replacement facility was a 6-rink site because of the “quantity” test and the location would need to be in or close to Market Harborough. As a 6-rink facility seems unlikely to be justified because of the level of use, this test is not relevant.

- 8.157 The test 97(c) could be met if the existing bowls hall was converted to other uses which better meet the needs of older people and those with disabilities. However, it would not be met if the existing leisure centre site including the bowls hall was to be used for other development

## Local Plan

8.158 The Local Plan policy GI2 Open Space, sport and recreation largely reflects the NPPF policies:

### *GI2*

- 1. The District's open space, sport and recreation facilities (as shown on the Policies Map) and any future additional facilities provided as part of new development will be safeguarded and enhanced through improvements to their quality and use.*
- 2. Development resulting in the loss of or reduction in defined open space, sport and recreation facilities will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that:*
  - a. a robust assessment clearly demonstrates that the space or recreational facility is surplus to local requirements and will not be needed in the-long term in accordance with local standards; or*
  - b. replacement areas will be at least equivalent in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility, and there will be no overall negative impact on the provision of open space in accordance with local standards; or*
  - c. the proposal is for alternative recreational provision which meets evidence of local need in such a way as to outweigh the loss*

8.159 Should Harborough District Council prefer not to replace the specialist bowls hall provision and there is shown to be insufficient capacity in the nearby alternative specialist bowls centres (in Northamptonshire) then a case based on planning balance would need to be demonstrated.

## Recommendations for indoor bowls

8.160 It is recommended, subject to resources being available, that the Council and relevant stakeholders consider the following to address indoor bowls provision in the district:

8.161 Based on information provided in this report, if an Indoor Bowls facility is not provided as part of a new or replacement Leisure Centre, the Council will discuss with the National Governing Body and Sport England to determine whether an alternative, independently managed facility can be provided elsewhere in the district, or whether indoor bowling venues outside the district can provide for the needs of indoor bowling.

8.162 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, it is recommended that the Council continues to support community access to indoor bowls provision through alternative venues such as village halls.

8.163 It is recommended that the Council and partner organisations seek to utilise a range of funding sources to enable the independent delivery of identified projects, taking into account: what monies are already available, the opportunities for funding via S106, and current funding opportunities from a range of external agencies.

*Protect and enhance*

8.164 It is recommended that the long-term future of indoor bowls in the district should be reviewed by the National Governing Body and Indoor Bowls Club as a matter of urgency, whether or not the leisure centre as a whole is replaced.

8.165 It is recommended that the National Governing Body and Indoor Bowls Club undertake feasibility studies to assess the viability of options for a 4-rink specialist indoor bowls centre, at an alternative community sports site. This should include working with Everyone Active to better understand the current membership of the Market Harborough Indoor Bowls Club, the reasonable projections about future membership of a club at a new/alternative independently provided venue and to confirm the current income and costs of the Indoor Bowls facility. There should also be detailed discussions within the club to identify its strengths and weaknesses, and what support would be required if the club was to take on greater responsibility for a future facility.

8.166 It is recommended that the existing indoor short mat bowls provision at village halls and community centres is protected and maintained.

8.167 It is recommended that additional storage should be provided where justified for additional storage at village halls, community centres and similar facilities.



8.168 It is recommended that short mat bowling sports development is supported across the district to establish a more formal organisational structure including leagues, plus the establishment of more local clubs.



## **SECTION 9:       ATHLETICS AND RUNNING**

- 9.1     Participation in athletics and running includes field and track activities taking place at athletics tracks, cross-country running, road running, marathon/ultra-marathon running, and jogging. Participation amongst adults (16 years and over) at least twice in 28 days in “running, athletics or multi-sports” was estimated to be around 6.9 m nationally during the period November 2017 to November 2018 (Sport England, 2019). Athletics and running generally attracts slightly more men (55%) than women (45%).
- 9.2     Research by Sport England has shown that about 10% of athletics and running activity takes place at a track, with 90% elsewhere (Sport England, 2012). This report therefore considers both synthetic athletics track provision and other running needs.

### **Current provision**

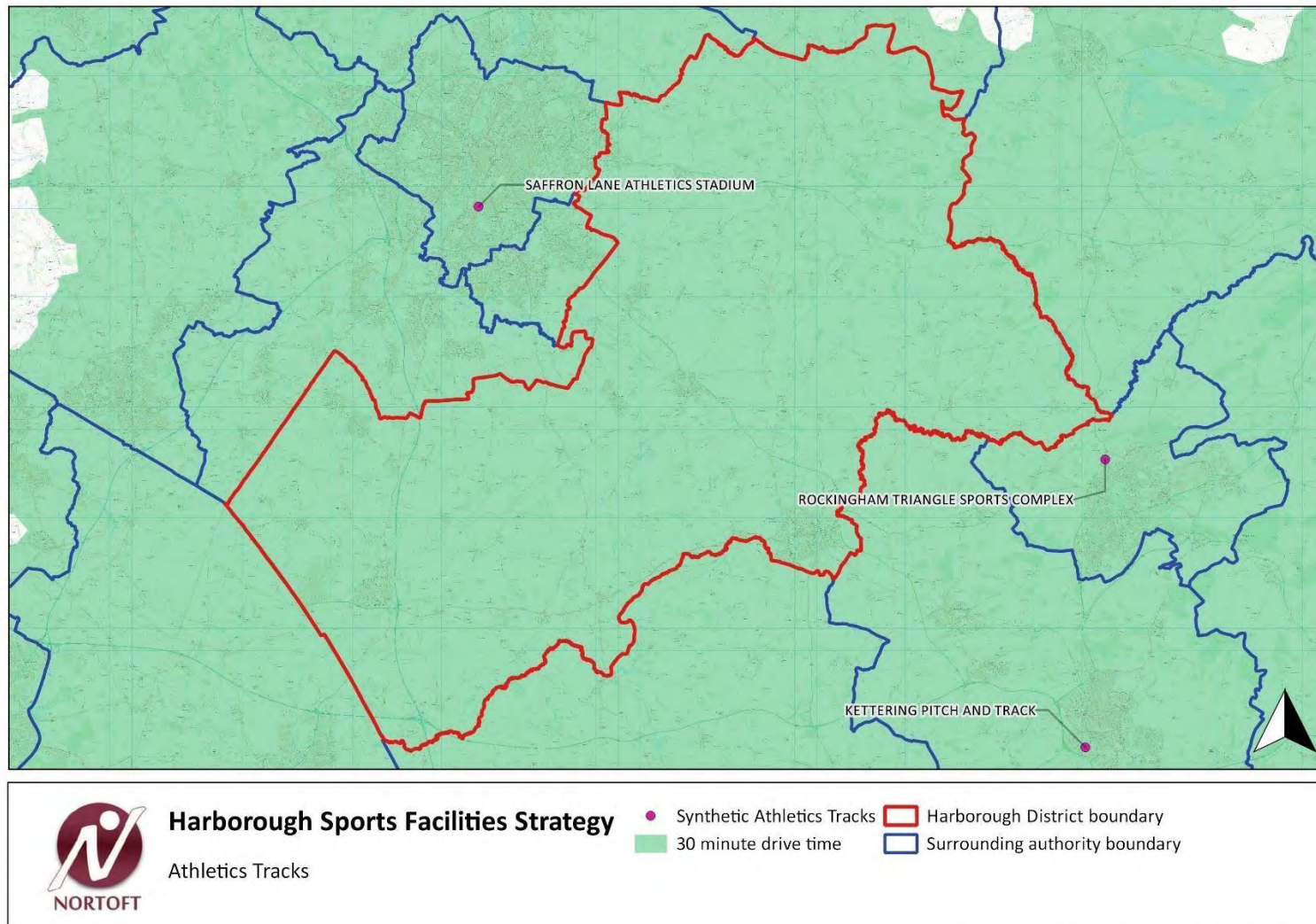
- 9.3     There are no publicly available synthetic athletics tracks in Harborough district, but there are tracks in the adjacent and nearby authorities: Daventry, Rugby, Nuneaton, Leicester, Charnwood, Corby and Kettering.
- 9.4     A realistic drive time to synthetic athletics tracks is around 30 minutes. The map in Figure 49 shows that all of Harborough’s residents who have access to a car are able to reach an athletics track within 30 minutes.
- 9.5     Regular parkrun events take place in Welland Park in Market Harborough and routes such as the Brampton Valley Way are well used for informal running together with cycling and walking.





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Figure 49: Athletics tracks map





## Consultation findings

### Club comments

- 9.6 As part of the strategy process extensive attempts were made to contact all clubs in the district to give them an opportunity to respond to an online club survey which asked specific questions about the facilities that they use, their club's aspirations and any issues that they face.
- 9.7 The only response received was from the Harborough Athletics Club which has 192 members and is based at the Training Shed in Market Harborough. The club exists to provide 'the opportunity to take part in many athletic events including track and field, road running, cross-country, triathlons and other athletic events'.

### National Governing Body comments

- 9.8 There are two governing bodies overseeing athletics in England; England Athletics and UK Athletics.

### UK Athletics

- 9.9 UK Athletics provides the UK framework for the activity and is also responsible for athletics track certification.
- 9.10 The UK Athletics Facilities Strategy 2014-2019 (British Athletics, 2014) has two main sections; Track and Field and Running Facilities. In relation to Track and Field, UK Athletics has recognised a need to make the current network of outdoor tracks more sustainable, and also a need for the development of 'Compact Athletics Facilities' which are designed to encourage and support entry level track and field athletics. These simple facilities are expected to be flexible in design and provide basic run/jump/throw opportunities. There are no set layouts or requirements, so there are no set costs. However, co-location with other facilities or sports is encouraged.
- 9.11 UK Athletics is seeking access to appropriate indoor training opportunities year-round, ideally within a 20 minutes' drive time of all residents. These facilities are usually expected to be multi-purpose, and in most cases are likely to be a sports hall, often on a school site.



- 9.12 In relation to other running facilities, the UK Athletics strategy focuses on supporting new running facility solutions in areas where the removal of physical barriers will help unlock latent demand. UK Athletics is proposing three levels of running routes; beginner fitness routes (Greenline) primarily in city areas which are designed to be safe and well-marked for absolute beginners; marked national running routes that provide easy access to local running/jogging opportunities; and closed-circuit training and competition routes which are traffic free. The Greenline and marked routes approach were promoted by England Athletics through the Run England programme up to the end of 2016. RunTogether is the new England Athletics beginner running programme replacing Run England at the start of 2017, and whilst England Athletics branded routes are no longer a focus of RunTogether; the aspiration to ensure safe places to people to run remains.

### England Athletics

- 9.13 England Athletics leads the development work with clubs and is the key body at the district level. The England Athletics Facilities Strategy 2018-2025 (England Athletics, 2018) has a number of sections and also identifies priority locations for England Athletics investment, which are mainly large cities.
- 9.14 England Athletics considers that following the national trends, the sport has potential to grow in the area and that the greatest growth would be in running rather than track and field.

### Road and Off-Road Running

- 9.15 England Athletics recognises the opportunities to influence facility planning to provide safe, traffic-free running routes as part of future development considerations.

### Track and Field

- 9.16 The strategy recognises a hierarchy of facilities including:
- **Club Training Venue** - Track and field facilities (indoor and outdoor) that have a strong anchor club with 100+ track and field members. To support site sustainability, Club Venues should have excellent social and ancillary provision and facilities that actively encourage multi-sport usage.
  - **Compact Athletics Facility** - A new generation of affordable and sustainable indoor and outdoor athletics satellite facilities that provide a stepping-stone into Club Venues. They are designed to fit available spaces and budgets and provide functional, inspiring, facilities at which people of all ages and abilities can improve their fitness and confidence and develop the fundamental athletics movement skills.
- 9.17 England Athletics confirmed that Harborough district is not a priority area for facilities provision, although it acknowledges that Harborough Athletics Club has growth potential.

## Adjacent authorities' provision and strategies

9.18 The Rugby Built Facilities Strategy (2016) recommendation is to retain and maintain the existing track at Rugby. In Daventry district the strategy of 2017 acknowledges that a new 8-lane track was being built at Moulton College, and in 2019 grant aid was offered by the District Council to complete the athletics track in Daventry town. The existing facilities with 30-minute drive time catchments that cover Harborough district are as follows:

- Saffron Lane, Leicester
- Rockingham Triangle Sports Complex, Corby
- Kettering Athletics Track
- Rugby and Northampton Athletic Club, Moulton College, Daventry District
- Rugby and Northampton Athletic Club, Rugby
- The Pingles Stadium, Nuneaton
- Lyng Hall School, Coventry
- Ratcliffe College, Charnwood District, (4 lane track, independent school)

## Comparator authorities' provision

9.19 Using Active Places Power (Sport England, 2019) data it has been possible to review the athletics track provision for each of the Harborough benchmark CIPFA comparators. Of the comparators, only Daventry has an athletics track, which is at Moulton College which is close to the Northampton boundary and arose due to relocation of the track from Northampton.

## Summary of the current situation

9.20 There are no synthetic athletics tracks in Harborough district but there is access within 30 minutes' drive time to a track within a nearby authority for all residents. However, the majority of running type activities take place away from formal athletics tracks and include parkruns as at Welland Valley Park in Market Harborough.

9.21 As all of Harborough has access to a synthetic athletics track, there is no demand for a separate compact athletics facility.

9.22 Traffic-free walking and running routes have been identified by the national governing bodies as a priority.

## Assessment of Future Needs

- 9.23 The national governing bodies' priorities are to retain the existing network of athletics tracks rather than provide more.
- 9.24 The development of marked running routes in traffic free environments would offer a real opportunity for many people. There are a number of traffic free routes already in existence, and there may be opportunities to develop these further.

## **Meeting the needs of the future**

- 9.25 There is justification to seek coordinated traffic-free marked walking and running routes to link the new SDAs with their surrounding areas and also as opportunities arise, to link green spaces with new or improved routes within the towns and larger villages.

## **Justifying developers' contributions**

- 9.26 The importance of traffic-free running routes is recognised and major developments should therefore be expected to incorporate on-site marked running routes with an all-weather surface and which link to the wider network of parks, open spaces, public rights of way and traffic free routes. Contributions to off-site provision may be sought where on-site provision is not appropriate.

## **Recommendations for athletics**

9.27 It is recommended that, subject to resources being available, the Council and relevant stakeholders consider the following to address athletics and running provision in the district:

9.28 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, it is recommended that the Council continues to support community access to traffic free running, walking and cycling routes.

9.29 It is recommended that the Council seeks to utilise a range of funding sources to deliver the identified projects, taking into account: what monies are already available, the capital programme of the Council, the opportunities for funding via S106, and current funding opportunities from a range of external agencies.

*Protect*

9.30 It is recommended that existing traffic-free routes for running, walking and cycling are protected.

*Enhance*

9.31 It is recommended that improvements are sought to routes through parks and open spaces to encourage walking, running and cycling.

*Provide*

9.32 It is recommended that measured walking and running routes are provided in association with England Athletics and other partners, utilising open spaces, parks and traffic-free routes.

## SECTION 10: SQUASH

- 10.1 Nationally, Sport England estimates that around 342,300 people play squash or racketball at least once a month, but there has been a gradual decline since 2007 (Sport England, 2017). Sport England research in 2009 (Sport England, 2012) gave an overview of the participants playing at least once a week and this showed that about 87% of the players are male, with the peak numbers being amongst those aged between 35 and 64 years. A high proportion of players are from the most affluent socio-economic groups. It is assumed that the trends occurring nationally are being reflected in Harborough.

### Current provision

- 10.2 There are two types of squash court, glass-backed and “normal” or enclosed. There is one squash site in the district, the Market Harborough Cricket and Squash Club with 5 courts, of which 2 are glass-backed courts and the others are normal courts. The club operates on a sports club membership basis.
- 10.3 The site is owned by Bowden Harborough Trust and is on lease to the club (due for renewal in 2023). The club currently has about 430 members, the majority of which belong to the squash element of the club. The cricket element has been in decline but there are still adult teams and junior sports development schemes. There are no female cricket players.
- 10.4 The club has seen relatively recent investment in new squash courts but the design of the site’s buildings appears uncoordinated and fails to make the most of the opportunities of the site. The current social area for squash is not appropriate for cricket, and vice versa.
- 10.5 The location of Market Harborough Cricket and Squash Club is mapped in Figure 50 together with other squash courts with public access outside of the authority. The map demonstrates that there are some limited parts of each sub-area that are more than 20 minutes’ drive of a squash facility, either within or outside of the authority area.

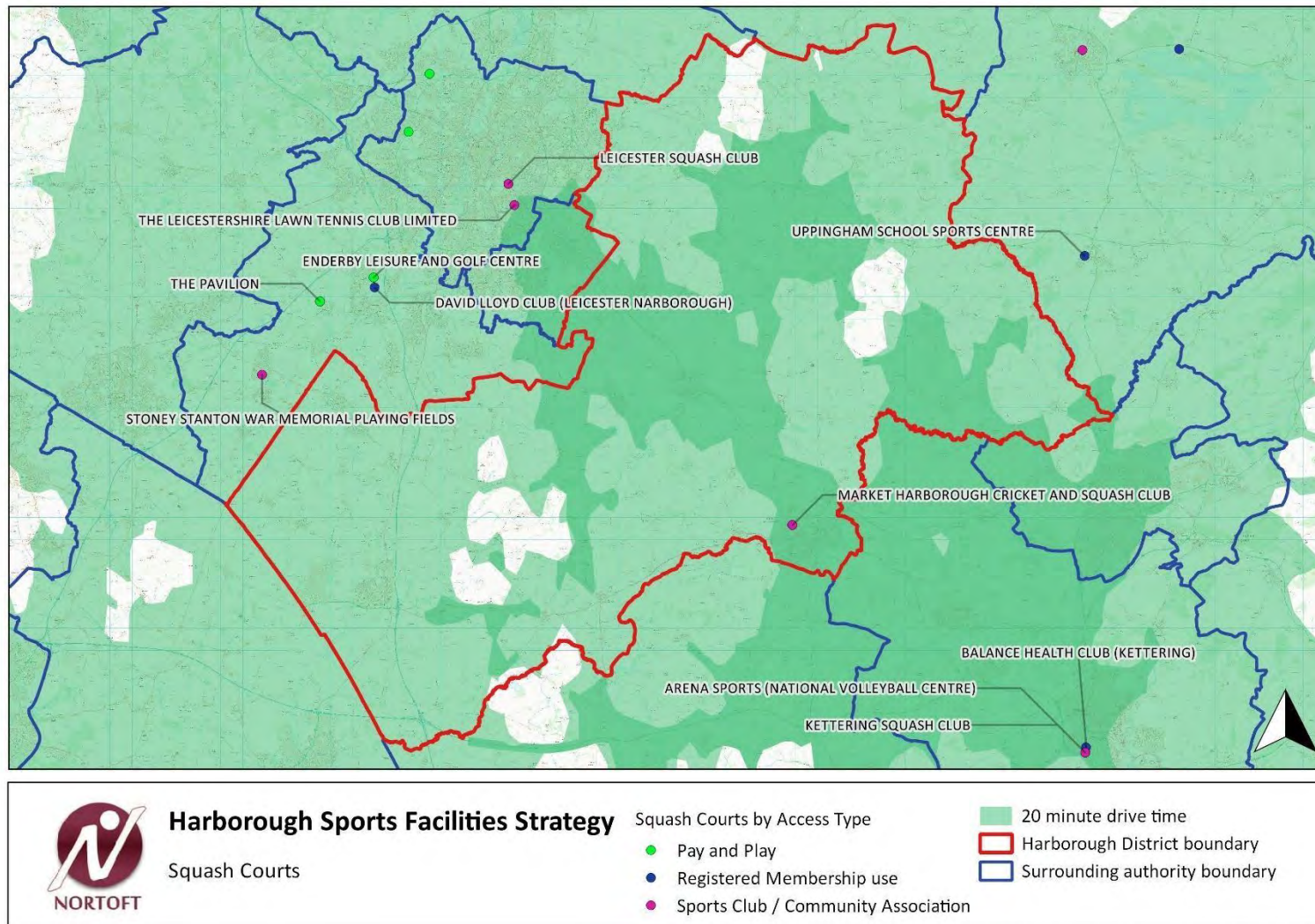






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Figure 50: Squash court locations





## Assessment of current supply and demand

### Quantity

- 10.6 The club reports that there is spare capacity on the squash courts even at peak time as they are used at around 60% capacity. The club also reports that it has picked up new members relocating from squash sites which have closed elsewhere.
- 10.7 Of greatest concern is the relatively short lease that the club has left on the site.

### Quality

- 10.8 The glass courts were opened in 2015 and they are generally good quality although there had been a design issue which had allowed in moisture from the roof. The normal courts are standard quality. The changing facilities are standard quality. There is no disabled access to the social area above the courts.
- 10.9 The separate changing for the cricket lies directly between the squash building and the cricket pitch (obscuring the view from ground level) and is also separate from the current cricket clubhouse.
- 10.10 There appears to be a need to review the buildings on site as a whole to determine how best to use the space available and to ensure the long-term viability of this multi-sport hub site.

### Accessibility

- 10.11 The drive time catchment for squash is approximately 20 minutes. The map in Figure 50 shows that residents across most of the district can access squash facilities, within or outside of the authority.

## Consultation findings

### Club comments

- 10.12 As part of the strategy process, extensive attempts were made to contact all clubs in the district to give them an opportunity to respond to an online club survey which asked specific questions about the facilities that they use, their club's aspirations and any issues that they face.

- 10.13 There is one squash club in the district, the Market Harborough Cricket and Squash Club, which responded to the club survey. Key officers of the club also met with the strategy consultants on site. The club has a total of about 430 members, most of whom are squash members. Around 87% of the members are drawn from Harborough district. The club has grown over the last 5 years and is planning to grow further in the next five years. The club has a development plan and there are no current issues impeding its expansion.
- 10.14 The club has a 20+ year lease on its site, although it is due to expire in 2023. The club commented that:
- 4.41 'The playing facilities are well maintained – the club includes maintenance plan in its development plan. This includes appropriate floor and wall work when required'.
- 4.41 'The changing rooms need some updating, car park a bit small at sometimes but can overflow in summer onto cricket ground, bar area just been renovated'.

### National Governing Body comments

- 10.15 England Squash states that there has been investment into the local County Association and Regional Forum, who have in turn worked closely with local clubs, schools and leisure centres in Leicestershire. In comparison to other counties, the need for investment and required impact on deliverers makes Harborough a key area for future delivery and squash participation. The specific demographics within the local area also lend themselves to squash participation and target markets for the sport. The county association is proactive and there is an abundance of competition in Nottingham and the East Midlands.
- 10.16 England Squash comments that there is a poor spread and choice of facilities across the area. The governing body's view is that the geography of the area (rural and large towns nearby) means that there needs to be a large spread of courts to meet the needs of the local population in cluster towns. As such it is imperative sites are maintained and more sites are added in the future. There are currently 3 sites within a 10-mile radius of Market Harborough, with two of those being in Kettering.
- 10.17 The amount of courts in Harborough does not meet the England Squash national requirement of 1 court per 10,000 people (the current district figure is 1:17,490 approx.). England Squash believes that more investment is immediately required into new fully accessible facilities.



- 10.18 England Squash advises that any 3-court venue is capable of delivering festivals, team squash, junior coaching and 'Copper' events (local junior competitions that form the first level of the England Squash Talent pathway). Its flagship programme, Squash 101, aims to get more participants engaged in the sport and as the Market Harborough site has 5 courts, this can be delivered in the area. England Squash is offering community programmes and support locally through partner organisations, such as the Regional Forum. The governing body believes that losing any courts would have a detrimental impact on the sport.

### **Adjacent authorities' provision and strategies**

- 10.19 The only adjacent local authorities that include an assessment of squash needs in their sports facilities strategies are Daventry, Rugby and Rutland. Daventry and Rutland have sufficient squash capacity into the long term, but Rugby identified a future shortfall of two courts.

### **Summary of current situation**

- 10.20 There is one squash site in the district, the Market Harborough Cricket and Squash Club which has around 340 senior members and 60 juniors, most of which play squash. The club has 5 courts, of which the 2 glass-backed courts were opened in 2015. The others are standard quality. The changing is standard quality and the social area is acceptable but does not have disabled access.
- 10.21 The site's buildings have developed in an uncoordinated way and do not operate effectively. There is a desire to improve the cricket clubhouse on the site. The site is owned by the Bowden Harborough Trust and the lease is up to 2023.
- 10.22 Although the NGB has suggested that there is a lack of provision in the area, almost all Harborough residents can access squash courts within a 20 minutes' drive, so the lack of additional squash provision within the district is not of concern.

### **Assessment of Future Needs**

- 10.23 The club reports that the courts are used for around 60% of their capacity at peak time and the it considers that the current level of provision will meet the needs of the district with the current level of proposed housing.
- 10.24 The total growth in population across the district is between 2019 and 2031 is expected to be around 30%, so if the rate of participation in squash remained similar, then the used capacity of the courts could be expected to rise from 60% now to just below 80%. This is an acceptable level of used capacity and further courts would not be required.



## Meeting the needs of the future

- 10.25 The primary need in relation to squash is a review of the buildings on site to ensure that they are as efficient as possible and ideally work more effectively as a single sports hub facility. This review should also consider if other activities could use the site, particularly the clubhouse facilities.
- 10.26 There will also be a need to seek confirmation of the lease renewal for a time period long enough to enable external funding to be offered to the club.

## Justifying developers' contributions

- 10.27 All new housing will generate demand for squash courts, and the Market Harborough Cricket and Squash Club is the single squash site in the district. New developments should therefore be expected to contribute towards projects which will help meet this demand via improvements to the existing facilities.

### *Quantity*

- 10.28 The 5 courts are sufficient provision up to 2031, so the rate of provision is 0.04 courts per 1,000 population.

### *Accessibility*

- 10.29 The accessibility standard is 20 minutes' drive time.

### *Design and quality*

- 10.30 The quality and design of facilities should reflect current best practice, including design guidance from Sport England and the national governing bodies. Facilities should also have at least a "very good" BREEAM rating. This policy should apply to refurbishment proposals as well as new build.

## Recommendations for squash

10.31 It is recommended that, subject to resources being available, the Council and relevant stakeholders consider the following to address squash provision in the district:

10.32 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, performance and excellence, it is recommended that the Council continues to support community access to squash courts.

10.33 It is recommended that future identified projects should be included in the IDP.

10.34 It is recommended that the Council seeks to utilise a range of funding sources to deliver the identified projects, taking into account: what monies are already available, the capital programme of the Council, the opportunities for funding via S106, and current funding opportunities from a range of external agencies.

*Protect*

10.35 It is recommended that the existing squash facilities at the Market Harborough Cricket and Squash Club are protected. They should be refurbished as needed to maintain them at a high quality. If there is a justified need, investment should be considered into moveable walls to enable more flexible use of the courts at off peak time.

10.36 The lease for the site should be secured and extended to enable external funding for the facilities to be offered.

*Enhance and provide*

10.37 It is recommended that a review is undertaken of the buildings as a whole at the Market Harborough Cricket and Squash Club with the view of considering how the site might be made better coordinated and potentially provide for additional sports and community activities to enable the site to be fully sustainable long term.

## SECTION 11: GYMNASTICS AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

- 11.1 This section of the strategy addresses gymnastics and related activities. Some of the gymnastics activity is within affiliated clubs of the national governing body, British Gymnastics, but other activity is not affiliated, or the activity is not one of the British Gymnastics' recognised disciplines.
- 11.2 This section considers the needs of the gymnastics as a sport. It does not include consideration of the commercial trampoline centres in the adjacent authorities, such as the Boost Trampoline Park in Leicester. This is because these sites do not provide sports development programmes and are effectively not available or not suitable for gymnastic club activities.

### Current provision

- 11.3 There are four affiliated gymnastics clubs in Harborough district, and the table in Figure 51 gives their size and home location. It is notable that other than in Market Harborough, the gymnastics club network is relatively weak, which is likely to reflect the fact that there are strong clubs in the adjacent and nearby authorities, including in Rugby, Hinckley, Leicester and Northampton.

*Figure 51: Gymnastics clubs in Harborough*

| Club                                 | Number of members affiliated to British Gymnastics (Jan 2019) | Home site  |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Market Harborough Gymnastics Club    | 149   | Meadowdale Primary School, Market Harborough                     |
| Market Harborough Trampoline Academy | 42  | Welland Park Academy and Robert Smyth Academy, Market Harborough |
| Market Harborough Leisure Centre     | 20  | Harborough Leisure Centre  |
| Lutterworth Sports Centre            | Not available   | Lutterworth Sports Centre  |

- 11.4 The peak age for participation in gymnastics according to British Gymnastics is at around 9 years. This young participation is not identified by Sport England's Active People Survey (Sport England, 2017) which has focussed mainly on adult participation for those aged 16 years and over, although the survey expanded to include those aged 14 and over from October 2012.

- 11.5 Nationally, the affiliated membership of British Gymnastics reached almost 390,500 in 2017, and its membership has been growing rapidly at around a 12% increase each year between 2013 and 2017. Most of this growth remains at the young age groups but there has also been a notable increase in the number of teenagers and young adults up to the age of 25 years. The future priority for British Gymnastics will be the foundation level of the sport, those aged 5-11 years.
- 11.6 The larger gymnastics clubs tend to have a drive time catchment of 20 minutes. The Market Harborough town clubs therefore have approximately the same catchments, though the activities offered by the trampolining club are different from the others. There is little overlap between the catchments of the clubs in Market Harborough and that of Lutterworth.

## Consultation findings

### Club comments

- 11.7 As part of the strategy process extensive attempts were made to contact all clubs in the district to give them an opportunity to respond to an online club survey which asked specific questions about the facilities that they use, their club's aspirations and any issues that they face. Only one of the four gymnastics clubs responded to the survey.

#### *Market Harborough Trampoline Academy*

- 11.8 The Market Harborough Trampoline Academy uses the sports halls at Welland Park Academy and Robert Smyth Academy and commented that:
- 441 'The facilities at Welland Park Academy have a ceiling that is under a slanted roof and we require minimum 8 meters height. Preferable 10 meters for regional events. The floor is being replaced summer 2019. But we use gymnastics matting anyhow so not relevant to us. We have an overhead rig installed and wall bars'. The refurbishment has now been completed.
- 441 'The facilities at Robert Smyth Academy have a lower ceiling than Welland Park which prohibits the use of high-performance trampolines. The heating during the winter however is top notch. Storage is reasonable'.
- 11.9 The club has around 50 members, almost all of which are either minis or juniors, who travel up to about 10 minutes to the club. Almost all live in the district. The club has grown over the last 5 years but although it has waiting lists of up to 10 for both minis and juniors, the club is not expecting to grow more in the future. The main issues restricting development are a lack of coaches and facility restrictions (too little storage space, and too low ceilings). High facility hire charges also restrict growth.

## National Governing Body comments

11.10 British Gymnastics is the national governing body for gymnastics and trampolining. It was consulted about the needs and issues for the sport in Harborough. Its Facility Strategy 2013-17 provided an overview of the different roles of the dedicated and non-dedicated gymnastics facilities (see Figure 52). This is important as it gives the justification for British Gymnastics' focus on the development of new dedicated sites, as well as what is needed to enable gymnastics at other venues.

*Figure 52: Role of dedicated and non-dedicated gym facilities*

| Dedicated gymnastics centres  | Non-dedicated gymnastics facilities   |
|---|---|
| Purpose built or converted buildings which are dedicated for gymnastics use. They have equipment permanently laid out (i.e. doesn't have to be stored away at the end of each session) and a proportion of it will be permanently fixed in place. | Typically sports halls, school gymnasiums or community centres etc.   |
| A dedicated gymnastics facility will probably have pitted areas for landing under/around equipment.   | Equipment has to be put out and stored away for each session.   |
| Dedicated facilities are generally run by clubs as a business.  | Non-dedicated facilities generally cater for introductory and recreational level gymnastics.  |
| They may be able to accommodate every level of the gymnast pathway depending on equipment and coaches but will probably focus on one or two disciplines.  | Non-dedicated facilities may be able to cater for multiple activities/disciplines where storage and/or equipment allow.   |
| Dedicated facilities can usually accommodate more than one discipline (e.g. women's artistic and rhythmic).   | Generally non-dedicated facilities cater for introductory and recreation level participation. Non-dedicated facilities are able to cater for some of the activities (rather than disciplines) to a high standard of participation. The standard of the gymnastic activity taking place is of a low level. |
| The level of gymnastics taking place in a dedicated gymnastics centre tends to be of a higher standard as the gymnast will have access to international standard equipment.   |   |

11.11 In relation to Harborough, British Gymnastics confirmed that:

- There are four clubs in the district, all of which use non-specialist facilities.

- There is limited access to facilities within Harborough with all clubs having waiting lists restricting access to gymnastics activities due to the lack of time within non-dedicated facilities.
  - As the area is fairly rural it is likely to be difficult to identify appropriate sites to convert into dedicated sites.
  - There is a large demand for more gymnastics opportunities and clubs all have large waiting lists.
- 11.12 There are no new identified priority projects for the British Gymnastics within the district. Welland Park Academy's sports hall refurbishment was partially based on the strong links with the gymnastics club and its needs.
- 11.13 As no club returns were received from Market Harborough Gymnastics Club or the two clubs operating out of the leisure centres, the extent of waiting lists cannot be confirmed.

### **Adjacent authorities' provision and strategies**

- 11.14 The only adjacent local authorities that include an assessment of gymnastics needs in their sports facilities strategies are as follows:
- The 'Charnwood Indoor Built Sports Facilities Strategy 2017 - 2036' (Charnwood Borough Council, 2018) concluded that additional dedicated gymnastics facilities are required to meet current and future needs.
  - The 'Melton Sports Facilities Strategy 2016 - 2021' (Melton Borough Council, 2017) concludes that there is no strategic need for dedicated facilities, but additional sports hall space is needed for gymnastics.
  - 'Planning the Future of Open Space, Sport and Recreation in West Northamptonshire' (Daventry District Council, 2017) identifies the need to 'retain and support the existing gymnastics facilities across West Northamptonshire, which should be protected and maintained at high quality'. It further establishes the need for increased facilities capacity at an existing or new site.
  - The 'Rugby Sports Facilities Strategy' (2016) confirms that 'there is one dedicated gymnastics centre at Lower Hillmorton Road in Rugby which is hoped by the club to be replaced by a new, larger centre, at a site to be confirmed. Non-specialist sites are also used for gymnastics across the borough'. The recommendations include the need to provide a new specialist gymnastics facility.



- The 'Corby Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Strategy' (2017) contains a recommendation to 'work with the Corby Gymnastics Academy to ensure the facility is maintained to a high standard to support the development of the sport'. It does not identify any additional specialist facilities needs.

## Summary of current situation

- 11.15 The gymnastics clubs are concentrated in the Market Harborough area, with two independent clubs and one operating through the leisure centre. There is a small club at Lutterworth centre, but the affiliation numbers have not been provided to British Gymnastics. This pattern of clubs probably reflects the existence of a number of strong gymnastics clubs in the adjacent and nearby authorities, which attract members from Harborough.
- 11.16 Most gymnastics activity is by minis and juniors, and although British Gymnastics has stated that there are long waiting lists at clubs, this is not really borne out by the return from the Trampoline Academy, and there was no response from the largest club, Market Harborough Gymnastics Club.
- 11.17 All the clubs operate out of multi-sport facilities, including Harborough Leisure Centre and Lutterworth Sports Centre.

## Assessment of Future Needs

- 11.18 The assessment of future needs recognises that much of any new demand will be met at sites over the border of the Harborough district.
- 11.19 The use of the leisure centres is expected to continue along with the current use of the school sites.
- 11.20 The need for improved access to multi-functional halls or activity spaces is also expected to continue to be needed, both during the school day and at evenings and weekends. Where appropriate and justified, additional storage space at community centre type venues may therefore support use by gymnastics and related activities.

## Justifying developers' contributions

- 11.21 It is not recommended that developers' contributions are sought for formal gymnastics facilities but local projects which support the development of storage for expanding the use of village and community halls may be subject to developers' contributions.

## Recommendations for gymnastics

11.22 It is recommended, subject to resources being available, that the Council and relevant stakeholders consider the following to address gymnastics provision in the district:

11.23 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, performance and excellence, it is recommended that the Council continues to support community access to gymnastics provision.

11.24 Local projects to support increased storage provision at village and community halls with the purpose enabling the sites to then provide for, or better provide for gymnastics may be included in the IDP or may be treated as a local facility for S106 funding.

11.25 It is recommended that the Council seeks to utilise a range of funding sources to deliver the identified projects, taking into account: what monies are already available, the capital programme of the Council, the opportunities for funding via S106, and current funding opportunities from a range of external agencies.

### *Protect*

11.26 It is recommended that the existing gymnastics use of the leisure centres and schools is retained and maintained at high quality.

### *Enhance and Provide*

11.27 It is recommended that, subject to feasibility assessments the 3-court sports hall at Robert Smyth Academy is improved to better provide for gymnastics.

11.28 It is recommended that improved storage at village and community halls is supported where justified to enable the provision of gymnastics.

## SECTION 12: CYCLING AND WALKING FOR LEISURE

- 12.1 The number of adults aged 16 and over cycling at least twice a month for leisure and sport nationally is around 6,170,000 people, and around 3,116,000 cycled for travel. Over 60% of the cycling for leisure and sport and about 70% of cycling for travel was by men. The rates of participation have fallen slightly since 2015.
- 12.2 The number of adults walking for leisure at least twice a month in the period up to November 2018 was around 19,069,000 and the walking for travel figure was 14,914,500. Both have seen an increase since 2015. Slightly more women than men walk for both leisure and travel (Sport England, 2019). The Ramblers Association has published the following figures on walking for leisure:
- Around 63% of English adults walk for leisure at least once a year, and around 20 million people say they walk for leisure at least once a month (National Transport Survey (NTS), 2017).
  - 38% of English adults have used a “strategic recreational route” such as a National Trail or long-distance path in the past year (NTS 2017).
  - Walking is the joint most popular activity (along with eating out) for people taking days out in England, and the most important reason for 18% of the 3.6 billion trips per year. It is the main activity on 36% of countryside and 33% of seaside visits (Natural England, 2016).
  - Of 386.1million trips on the National Cycle Network per year, 191.4million, or around half, are on foot (Sustrans, 2018).
  - A third of adults in Britain say walking for more than 10 minutes is their only form of exercise in a typical month (Office of National Statistics, 2016).
- 12.3 The ‘Harborough Physical Activity Strategy 2018-3035’ (2018) includes actions to:
- ‘Provide a number of opportunities across the district free of charge that are of real value to our residents. Examples include outdoor fitness equipment, playgrounds, parkrun, well-maintained cycle tracks and walking routes’.
  - ‘Integrate walking and cycling routes into our local public transport network and encourage their use in commuting and school travel by clearly mapping safe routes throughout the district’.
- 12.4 There are a number of cycling clubs either in the district or close-by and therefore service parts of the district. The following information was provided in response to the draft Sports Facilities strategy by Welland Valley Cycling Club:

- Clubs in the district include:
  - Welland Valley Cycling Club (WVCC), over 300 adult and Whizz Kids members
  - Mega Bike Race Team ○ Cats MBC (20 members) ○ Welland Valley Tri Club (140 members)
- Less formal clubs and groups in the district include Bojko Velo Club (50 members) and Kibworth Velo Club.
- The Rockingham Forest Wheelers (83 members) are based in Middleton, Northamptonshire but draw some of their members from Harborough district.
- The Leicestershire Cycle Cross League run several events in the district, and Ratae RC (more than 100 members) are also prominent.

## Current provision

### Cycling

- 12.5 In relation to the long-distance national cycle routes crossing Harborough, numbers 6, 50, 63 and 64 pass through the district. Of these only the southern section of route 6 is mainly traffic free. A map showing these national routes plus other promoted cycle routes is given in Figure 53. This shows that although there are promoted routes in many parts of the district, these are often unconnected and also the availability of traffic-free routes (bridleways and off-road routes) is very limited.
- 12.6 There are no specialist cycling facilities in the district, for example large BMX sites, cycle speedway or closed road tracks.

### Walking

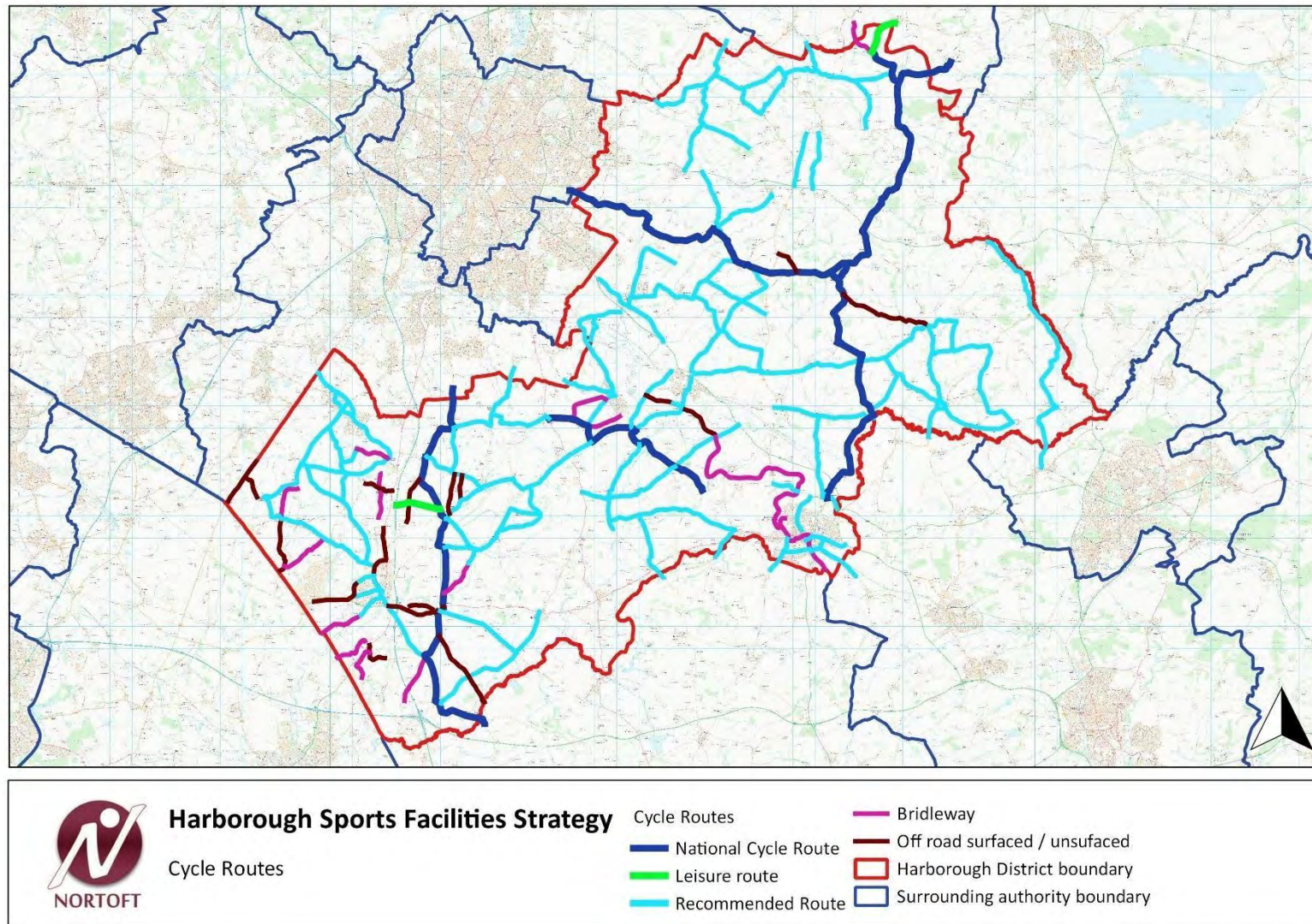
- 12.7 The Walking for Health Scheme in Harborough - named Healthy Harborough Walks - has been running for 10 years in the district. There are four weekly-led walks throughout the District of Harborough, two from Market Harborough, one from Lutterworth and one from Broughton Astley. All are under two miles and are buggy friendly. The walks are led by trained volunteer walk leaders and all ages and abilities are welcome.
- 12.8 Market Harborough Rambling Club organises group walks of between five and eight miles every Sunday throughout the year and on Wednesday evenings during the summer.
- 12.9 Other existing promoted provision for leisure walking in Harborough includes:

- Six designated 'Heritage Trails' (in Market Harborough, Lutterworth, Kibworth/Harcourt, River Soar and Thurnby and Bushby).
- 31 designated self-guided 'Parish Walks'.
- The Brampton Valley Way, which links Market Harborough to Northampton.
- Four designated 'Long Distance Paths' pass through Harborough district. They are the 'Leicester Line Canal Walk' (Grand Union Canal) 79 miles), the 'Leicestershire Border Walk' (198 miles), the 'Market Harborough Round' (71 miles) and the 'Hobblers Way' (the Severn to the Wash, 193 miles).





Figure 53: Sustrans and promoted cycle routes



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## Consultation findings

### Club comments

- 12.10 As part of the strategy process extensive attempts were made to contact all clubs in the district to give them an opportunity to respond to an online club survey which asked specific questions about the facilities that they use, their club's aspirations and any issues that they face.
- 12.11 There are three cycling clubs in the district, Welland Valley, Mega Bike Race Team and Cats MTB. Of these, the Welland Valley club is the largest and most progressive and was the only one to respond to the survey.

### *Welland Valley Cycling Club*

12.12 Welland Valley Cycling Club responded to the clubs' survey as follows:

- The club has more than 300 members, 70% of whom are drawn from Harborough district. Membership has increased over the past five years and further increases are projected in the next five years.
  - The limiting factors to expansion are a lack of coaches and shortage of facilities. 'We do not have a home site. We use a range of courses and HQs across the cycling disciplines over the year'.
- 12.13 The club also provided detailed comment on the draft strategy recommendations including a response to British Cycling's emerging priorities for investment, which do not directly support the club's aspirations for a significant cycling facility.
- 12.14 The club wishes to develop a closed road and off-road facility in the district but recognises that any facility would need to be used by a range of sports and recreational groups beyond cycling. Any facility would need to be able to attract users from Northamptonshire and South Leicestershire as well as the district.
- 12.15 In recent years the club has used Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground and Rockingham Raceway as traffic free closed road sites, but both facilities are no longer available to the club. In 2019 the club used Leicester Airport, but this is not fully satisfactory. The club considers such provision as being essential for both for racing and training for road races, but also as a stepping-stone opportunity between learning to cycle and riding on roads.
- 12.16 The Leicestershire Cycle Cross League holds races at Misterton and Marston Lodge, Market Harborough. These can be large events with many competitors and spectators. The local Muddy Marvels training skills sessions are popular but struggle with suitable lit venues for the winter months.

## National Governing Body comments

### British Cycling

12.17 The strategic facility priorities identified by British Cycling (British Cycling Federation, 2017) are:

- A comprehensive network of accessible traffic-free multi-disciplined cycling facilities enabling the effective and safe delivery of cycling activities both at a participation and excellence level.
- Support for clubs and groups who wish to develop new, or improve existing, facilities and infrastructure.

12.18 British Cycling's emerging facilities strategy has identified a number of key insights regarding barriers to participation, in particular:

- 52% of those who don't cycle as much as they can say that the cycling (on-road) infrastructure 'does not make me feel safe';
- 62% of women say that they don't feel confident riding their bike on the road;
- 40% of inactive people report that they would be encouraged to cycle if traffic-free facilities were available in their local area;
- Only 15% of the population currently feel they have access to traffic-free, or safe low-traffic cycle routes (women 12%, disability/limiting longstanding illness 14%);
- Regular cyclists also demonstrate a strong willingness to use cycling facilities:
  - 69% of respondents are not currently using facilities, but are interested in using facilities in the future, which will both help to sustain their long-term participation and support increased participation;
  - 56% of cyclists want to cycle more regularly than they currently do.

The insight suggests there is a strong case for the prioritisation of facility investment, both to sustain an already active population as well as encourage new participation.

12.19 The emerging national governing body priorities are:

- Everyone has an opportunity to learn to cycle in a traffic free environment such as parks and open spaces within 15 minutes' walk or cycle of their home or school;
- All affiliated cycling clubs have access to appropriate cycling facilities within 45 minutes' drive time of their club base;
- Within every population centre, strong local partnerships facilitate a network of provision covering road, MTB, cyclo-cross and BMX disciplines, maximising opportunities to ride recreationally;



- Long-term agreements are in place with key landowners to encourage cycling, with bike hire / ancillary provision / marked routes supporting regular participation;
- Every talented cyclist, whether male, female or disabled, will have the opportunity to take part in more advanced training and competition. No one has to drive more than 45 minutes to a cycle circuit or 1.5 hours to an indoor velodrome.

12.20 British Cycling is very supportive of developing traffic-free places to ride, recognising the positive impact this can have on the growth of people cycling and those taking part in cycle sport. Developing multi-discipline facilities, ideally co-located with other sport and leisure provision, maximises the opportunity for encouraging participation and achieving a sustainable operation.

12.21 In relation to Harborough district, British Cycling advises that access to a road circuit is provided for the majority of the district via the existing Leicester cycle circuit, recognising the need to invest in improvements there, particularly around ancillary accommodation. From a regional development perspective, if a new closed road circuit was to be developed, the national governing body's preference would be further east, given the lack of provision in that part of the region. Therefore, a facility in Harborough is unlikely to be a funding priority for British Cycling, albeit it supports development of cycling provision generally. The national governing body also highlights the need to carefully consider the business plan for a road circuit, given that the circuits already in existence generally continue to require local authority subsidy – in this regard, co-location with other leisure provision and cycling disciplines is of significant importance.

12.22 If land was available for a tarmac cycle circuit, British Cycling would encourage the design to be focused on training and development, which could therefore be a shorter length course and would not need to be 6m in width in all areas. Careful focus on achieving a sustainable operating model would be a priority, as well as ensuring there was no detrimental impact on existing facilities through displacement of activity.

12.23 Cyclo-cross is a growth area for the sport and is something that British Cycling is keen to support, likewise trails provision such as those provided at Leeds Urban Bike Park which was the re-development of a closed golf course. Facilities such as the urban bike park provide for off-road, recreational and learn to ride opportunities, as well as encouraging family participation and young people to cycle.

12.24 British Cycling does not consider the district to be a high priority for large scale investment, which instead will be focussed on high population areas such as Leicester and Nottingham. The national governing body's priority for Harborough would be to support development of accessible places to cycle in traffic free environments, including parks, open spaces and school playing fields. However, if there was an opportunity for new facility provision, the national governing body would encourage Harborough District Council to look at schemes which provide a sustainable mix of facilities and a wide range of users.

## Ramblers Association

- 12.25 There are no specific national governing bodies for walking, although the Ramblers Association is one of the most important, particularly in terms of the protection of public rights of way in the district.
- 12.26 The Ramblers Association acknowledged receipt of the draft strategy but did not provide any feedback.

## Summary of current situation

### Cycling

- 12.27 Cycling is a popular activity in Harborough with high levels of participation by both men and women. There are also a small number of active clubs. There are limited traffic-free routes and cycling opportunities, which restricts the ability of juniors to cycle on a regular basis.
- 12.28 The Local Plan has strong recommendations to support cycling both within the new developments and to develop safe routes.
- 12.29 Welland Valley Cycle Club is keen to develop traffic-free opportunities, but do not have any particular project that they are working on. British Cycling would probably not see a facility in Harborough as a high priority for its financial support.

### Walking

- 12.30 There is an extensive network of public footpaths in the district, some of which have been designated as 'Heritage Trails', 'Parish Walks' or 'Long Distance Trails'.
- 12.31 'Healthy Harborough Walks' and the Market Harborough Rambling Club provide opportunities to participate in leisure walking on an organised basis.

## Assessment of future needs

- 12.32 As the population of Harborough increases, the demand for cycling and walking is likely to grow, particularly in relation to traffic free routes.
- 12.33 A small number of potential sites for traffic-free cycling have been identified, including possibly in relation to the Lutterworth SDA area and at The Gliding Club site at Husbands Bosworth. These options require further feasibility work to confirm their suitability and deliverability.



## Meeting the needs of the future

- 12.34 The proposed safe cycling and walking routes and extensions to the cycling and walking network should be delivered, according to the Local Plan policies.
- 12.35 There is also a need to provide more opportunities for traffic-free cycling in all areas of the authority.
- 12.36 In a relation to a specific cycling facility, the proposal from the cycling club requires further development with the support of the British Cycling as the national governing body to firm up the details.

## Justifying developers' contributions

- 12.37 It is recommended that developers' contributions are sought towards improvements in the network of cycle and walking routes; on site to connect the development to the wider network, and off-site to identified projects within a 20-minute drive time

**7.46**

## Recommendations for cycling and walking

12.38 It is recommended, subject to resources being available, that the Council and relevant stakeholders consider the following to address walking and cycling provision in the district:

12.39 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, it is recommended that the Council continues to support community access to a range of cycling and walking opportunities.

12.40 It is recommended that if a major cycling facility or route, or walking route, project comes forwards this should be identified in the IDP.

12.41 It is recommended that the Council should seek to utilise a range of funding sources to deliver such projects, taking into account: what monies are already available, the capital programme of the Council, the opportunities for funding via S106 and current funding opportunities from a range of external agencies.

*Protect*

12.42 It is recommended that the existing network of routes suitable for cycling and walking across Harborough are protected and maintained.

*Enhance*

12.43 It is recommended that the development of an improved cycling and walking network across Harborough should be a major focus of future investment, both to support sustainable travel and to respond to the high-level interest in both activities.

12.44 Support facilities such as surfaced tracks in local parks, open spaces and village recreation grounds which will help encourage people to learn to cycle in a traffic-free environment.

*Provide*

12.45 Closed a road training facility and trail routes subject to feasibility studies and locations being available.

## SECTION 13: OTHER SPORT AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES

- 13.1 There are a number of sports facilities in Harborough which have specialist facilities, either built facilities, or primarily using countryside and water spaces.
- 13.2 Those sports using specialist facilities in this section have relatively low participation rates, so are not specifically identified in the consultation or in the Sport England research (Active People Survey, Active Lives Survey).

### Table tennis

- 13.3 Nationally, Sport England estimates that 422,200 adults aged 16 years and over took part in table tennis at least twice a month between November 2017 and November 2018. There has been no change in participation rates since November 2015. Much of the table tennis activity takes place in village halls, community centres or in ancillary halls.

### Consultation findings

#### Club comments

- 13.4 As part of the strategy process extensive attempts were made to contact all clubs in the district to give them an opportunity to respond to an online club survey which asked specific questions about the facilities that they use, their club's aspirations and any issues that they face.
- 13.5 There are two main clubs, Harborough Table Tennis Club and Fleckney Spinners. Neither club is affiliated to the national governing body, but both responded to the survey.

#### *Harborough Table Tennis Club*

- 13.6 This club has a total of around 23 members, which are a mix of juniors, seniors and veterans. The members travel up to 20 minutes to reach the home site which is Langton Community Hall. Almost all of the members live within the district.
- 13.7 The number of members has fallen over the past 5 years and the club does not expect to grow in the future. It faces a number of issues including a lack of coaches and volunteers, lack of access to facilities and the recruitment of members.

- 13.8 The hall at Langton Community Centre is used 1-2 times per week from autumn through to spring. The facility is described as excellent although the club had to pay for a lighting upgrade, and the club does not require changing provision. However, the club would prefer to be located in Market Harborough as the relocation to Langton resulted in a loss of membership. The club has sought alternative venues in Market Harborough but has been unable to find anything suitable.

#### *Fleckney Spinners Table Tennis Club*

- 13.9 This club has around 15 members, all of whom are veterans. They live within 10 minutes of Fleckney and most are from Harborough district. The club has grown over the last 5 years and expects to continue to do so, though they have issues with a lack of funding and aging equipment.
- 13.10 The club uses Fleckney Sports Centre 3-6 times a week year-round during both weekday daytime and evenings. Although the location is considered good in general terms, the club notes that the hall is painted too light a colour for the sport, the changing is poor quality, and there is a major problem with a lack of storage.

#### *National Governing Body comments*

- 13.11 The Table Tennis England Facilities Strategy 2015 - 2025 (2015) identifies that table tennis takes place in a variety of settings. To support sustainable clubs, the priorities are:
- Establish a minimum of one accessible, high quality dedicated multi-table facility in every active county.
  - Support current clubs to ensure long-term security of use of their facilities and to develop facilities or access multisport and multi-use environments.
- 4.38 To support the social recreational game, the priorities are:
- Support the implementation of free-to-use outdoor tables, prioritising centres of population.
  - Establish a network of social table tennis venues offering vibrant informal environments for all.
- 13.12 Table Tennis England states that there are no specific local facilities priorities in Harborough.

#### *Justifying developers' contributions*

- 13.13 It is not proposed to seek developers' contributions for table tennis facilities as there is sufficient capacity for the growth of the sport, and no specific investment needs have been identified.

### Recommendations for table tennis

- 13.14 It is recommended, subject to resources being available, that the Council and relevant stakeholders consider the following to address table tennis provision in the district:

- 13.15 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, performance and excellence, it is recommended that the Council continues to support community access to table tennis provision.

#### *Protect*

- 13.16 It is recommended that the existing facilities which are used for table tennis are generally protected, unless the use can be relocated to a more suitable, accessible facility.

#### *Enhance and provide*

- 13.17 It is recommended that the opportunities offered at table tennis club venues are improved by investment projects which may be identified and justified in the future.

### Countryside and Water Sports

- 13.18 The sport and recreation activities which are based in the countryside using the natural resources include amongst others; horse riding, water, motorsports such as motorcycle trials, archery and air sports.

- 13.19 Most of the countryside and water-based activities will take place at sites which are outside of the control of the local authority, so the Council's role in relation to these activities is necessarily different compared to that for the built facilities, namely:

- As an advocate working with partners to gain and retain access to a wide range of "natural resources".
- Providing positive planning policy to encourage provision for, and access by, a range of sport and recreation activities.

- Supporting clubs and partners to achieve grant aid to gain, maintain and improve their facilities, particularly where this encourages or enables new participation.

## Archery

13.20 Nationally, Sport England estimates that around 38,600 adults aged 16 years and over took part in archery at least twice a month between November 2017 and November 2018. There has been a significant increase in participation rates since November 2015. Archery GB has a current membership of approximately 40,000 members.

13.21 There are four archery clubs in Harborough district. Welland Valley Archers uses Symington's Sports Ground in Market Harborough, but the three other clubs use dedicated sites: Bowmen of Glen at Great Glen, Lutterworth Archery Club near Walcote, and Phoenix Archers near Smeeton Westerby. The Market Harborough site is a playing field shared with football which also has informal public access. The locations of the four clubs provides a good geographical spread of archery across the district, although only the Welland Valley Archers are within a town so most participants will rely on a car to reach an archery venue.

## Consultation findings

### Club comments

13.22 As part of the strategy process extensive attempts were made to contact all clubs in the district to give them an opportunity to respond to an online club survey which asked specific questions about the facilities that they use, their club's aspirations and any issues that they face. Two of archery clubs responded.

13.23 Lutterworth Archery Club responded to the clubs' survey as follows:

- The club has 50 members, 75% of whom are drawn from Harborough district. Membership has increased over the past five years and further increases are projected in the next five years.
- The limiting factors to expansion are a lack of coaches and volunteers. The club leases a field at Buckwell Lodge, North Kilworth for its main activities, but also hires the sports hall at Lutterworth Sports Centre for winter training. Both facilities meet all the club's needs.

13.24 Bowmen of Glen Archery Society responded to the clubs' survey as follows:



- The club has 102 members, 85% of whom are drawn from Harborough district. Membership has increased over the past five years and further increases are projected in the next five years.
- The limiting factors to expansion include a lack of facilities. The club owns its own site at Newton Lane, Great Glen, but there is no on-site changing, and its poor quality pavilion is in need of replacement.

## National Governing Body comments

13.25 Archery GB is the national governing body for the sport. Research by it suggests that the highest priority for clubs is facility development. Most archery clubs rent or hire the facilities they use, whether this is indoors or outdoors. Schools and leisure centres are also important in the provision of indoor spaces (usually sport halls), but private landowners and similar are more important for the outdoor facilities.

13.26 The identification of sites used for archery and their protection is also seen as crucial for the continued growth of the sport. Archery GB is also aware that the current facilities often require modernisation and that this is one of the biggest barriers to successful coaching and the progression of archers. Actions to support facility issues will be evident in the Places theme of the forthcoming Archery GB strategic plan.

## Recommendations for archery

13.27 It is recommended, subject to resources being available, that the Council and relevant stakeholders consider the following to address archery provision in the district:

13.28 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, performance and excellence, it is recommended that the Council continues to support community access to archery provision.

### *Protect*

13.29 It is recommended that the existing outdoor archery facilities are protected.

### *Enhance and provide*

13.30 It is recommended that the Bowmen of Glen Archery Society be supported in their efforts to improve clubhouse provision at their site.

13.31 It is recommended that support is given to the archery clubs to access sports halls for winter training as part of wider sports development initiatives led by Harborough District Council.

## Equestrian

- 13.32 Nationally, Sport England estimates that 276,000 adults (aged 16 years and over) took part in equestrian sports, mainly horse riding, at least twice a month between November 2017 and November 2018. There has been a fall in participation rates since November 2015. The sport is primarily female, with over 88% of regular adult riders being women.
- 13.33 The relatively affluent rural area of Harborough has enabled high levels of participation both amongst young people and adults.
- 13.34 Regular riding takes place in a wide range of venues, and traffic free routes are particularly important. For training and competitions, the use of all-weather surfaces is now critical, with all dressage competitions and most show jumping competitions taking place at all-weather facilities, both indoors and outdoors. The discipline of eventing mainly uses grass facilities, particularly for the cross-country phase of competitions.
- 13.35 The clubs do not have home sites but use a number of venues across the district which are privately owned.

## Consultation findings

### Club comments

- 13.36 As part of the strategy process extensive attempts were made to contact all clubs in the district to give them an opportunity to respond to an online club survey which asked specific questions about the facilities that they use, their club's aspirations and any issues that they face.
- 13.37 There are three main youth riding clubs which provided responses to the clubs' survey. There are also adult riding clubs operating in the area including the larger Misterton. The three Pony Club branches responded to the survey.

### *Fernie Hunt Pony Club*

- 13.38 The Fernie club has about 70 members, of which about 80% live in Harborough district, with the remainder from Blaby. The membership has decreased over the last 5 years but expects to grow again in the next 5 years. There are a number of issues facing the club. The club previously used Home Farm, Hothorpe (just within Daventry district) as a regular venue, but this site has been sold recently to British Showjumping and new hiring arrangements are not yet in place.

### *Atherstone Hunt Pony Club*

- 13.39 The Atherstone main home base is in the west of the district stretching over towards Atherstone. However, a lack of facilities in Warwickshire means that the club also uses many facilities in Harborough district. The club has around 150 members and it has grown over the last 5 years. There are around 120 members aged under 16 years, with the others being aged 17-25 years. The club faces a number of issues such as a lack of volunteers, access to facilities and their cost, and a lack of funding, but still expects to grow further in the next 5 years.

### *Woodland Pytchley Pony Club*

- 13.40 The club has around 105 members, of whom about 80 are juniors or minis. The club draws most of its members from the Kettering area, but about 15% are from Harborough. The club has stayed the same size over the last 5 years but anticipates growing in the next 5 years. The main issues restricting growth are in relation to a lack of facilities and the costs of hire. The main outdoor venue used by the club is at Brigstock.
- 13.41 The club's primary facility need is for a local indoor training venue. Members travel to Moulton College for some training and the club used to hire Hothorpe Home Farm.

### *National Governing body comments*

- 13.42 Each of the competitive equestrian disciplines has its own national governing body, as do the Pony Clubs, Riding Clubs, British Horse Society, and the Riding for the Disabled groups. Their umbrella body is the British Equestrian Federation.
- 13.43 There are no national facility strategies for the equestrian sports.
- 13.44 No comments were received from the British Equestrian Federation or the constituent bodies.

### *Recommendations for equestrian sports*

13.45 It is recommended, subject to resources being available, that the Council and relevant stakeholders consider the following to address equestrian provision in the district:

13.46 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, performance and excellence, it is recommended that the Council continues to support community access to equestrian facilities and places to ride.

*Protect*

13.47 It is recommended that the existing equestrian specialist facilities used for training and competition are protected.

13.48 It is recommended that the existing network of bridleways, traffic-free routes and lightly trafficked roads across Harborough are protected and maintained.

*Enhance and provide*

13.49 It is recommended that the development of improved bridleway and traffic free-routes are a key element of future investment, with a recognition that these routes can also provide for walkers and cyclists.

13.50 It is recommended that the Council has positive planning policies which support the provision of all-weather surfaces for both training and competition, including where justified, indoor riding centres.

## Canoeing

13.51 Nationally around 167,200 adults take part in canoeing at least twice a month and there has been a fall in participation since 2015/16 (Sport England, 2019). About 60% of the adult canoeists are male.

13.52 There are no affiliated canoe clubs in the district, the nearest ones are at Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre and Hinckley Canoe Club. The nearest paddling centres are at Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre and Rutland Watersports. There are no British Canoe Union "Paddling Trails" in Harborough.

13.53 The Break Out Canoe Club (Leicestershire Scouts) provides a canoeing opportunity for Harborough and draws most of its 65 members from the district. The club uses Hinckley Water Activities Training Centre as its home site for 1-2 weekday evenings, year-round. The club notes that the site is not ideally located, but there are no sites available within the district for canoeing.

- 13.54 No comments were received from the British Canoe Union which is the national governing body for the sport.

## Recommendations for canoeing

- 13.55 It is recommended, that should opportunities arise which would enable a new canoeing opportunity in Harborough district, for example a canoe trail or new club base, that these should be encouraged and supported. There are no specific projects at this time.

## Gliding

- 13.56 There are 83 affiliated gliding clubs in the British Gliding Association (BGA), using 78 sites. There are about 7,000 glider pilots in the UK and it is estimated by the BGA that there are around 230,000 flights each year. Individuals can fly solo from the age of 14

*illustrates this growth.*

- 13.57 The Gliding Centre at Husbands Bosworth is one of a small number of gliding clubs in the Midlands area. The next closest is Welland Gliding Club near Brigstock, Northamptonshire but then the next nearest are at Grantham, Banbury and Bedford. The Gliding Centre club has around 250 members of which 30 are women, 42 are juniors (aged under 26 years) and 94 are over the age of 65 years. In 2018 over 300 people experienced gliding at The Gliding Centre, resulting in 47 new club memberships.

- 13.58 The club has previously hosted the Junior World Gliding Championships and in 2021 it will host the Women's World Gliding Championships. The club regularly hosts regional and national gliding championships. International pilots have been invited to the 2020 Challenge Cup competition to use it as a pre-Worlds warm-up fixture.

- 13.59 The Gliding Centre site, Husbands Bosworth Airfield, is recorded on Sport England's Significant Areas for Sport register as one of five nationally important sites for gliding. The status as a Significant Area for Sport is non-statutory but Sport England expects local planning authorities to take such sites into account in planning policy to ensure their protection.

- 13.60 The BGA estimates that The Gliding Centre may make an economic contribution around £940,000.

## Recommendations for gliding

13.61 It is recommended, subject to resources being available, that the Council and relevant stakeholders consider the following to address gliding provision in the district:

13.62 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, performance and excellence, it is recommended that the Council continues to support community access to gliding provision.

*Protect*

13.63 It is recommended that the Husbands Bosworth Airfield is protected as a nationally important site for the sport of gliding.

*Enhance and provide*

13.64 It is recommended that facility improvement support, if justified, is given to The Gliding Centre to prepare for the Women's World Gliding Championships in 2021.

13.65 It is recommended that The Gliding Centre continues to explore opportunities to become more of a multi-sports hub with compatible sports, in order to further strengthen the financial sustainability of the site.

## Golf

13.66 Golf provision is not specifically included within the brief for the Sports Facilities Strategy. It is anticipated that the existing golf courses will be retained and maintained, with the exception of the Scraftoft Golf Course. This course will become part of the Scraftoft North Strategic Development Area. A replacement golf course is required as part of Local Plan Policy SC1:

*4. Land to the east of Houghton on the Hill, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated for a replacement golf course subject to the following criteria:*

- a. the layout does not sever or severely disrupt the public right of way network;*
- b. a satisfactory access is provided and there is capacity in the local road network to accommodate traffic generated by the development;*
- c. the location and design of the buildings and the landscaping of the course minimise visual impact upon the surrounding open countryside;*
- d. all built facilities proposed are related to the use of the land for the proposed golf activities in nature and scale;*
- e. details of the course construction are submitted with the planning application;*
- and*
- f. light spillage from any proposed lighting installations is minimised.*



- 13.67 This re-provision is expected to meet the National Planning Policies Framework requirements for the protection of sports facilities. Golf England, the national governing body for the sport, has been consulted about the new site.

## **SECTION 14: VILLAGE HALLS AND COMMUNITY CENTRES**

- 14.1 Village, church and community halls and similar venues provide essential space for many locally-organised activities such as pilates, martial arts, short mat bowls and circuit training. This level of facility is particularly important for those people without a car or who do not wish to travel to a main sports centre to participate. They are also an important community resource for wider uses such as community celebrations, dance and drama, and consultation events. Larger halls of 3+ badminton court size are covered within the sports halls section of the Built Sports Facilities Strategy.
- 14.2 The value of such facilities in their local communities cannot be underestimated as they create an important hub for local people to gather, make friendships, and provide cohesion on estates and in villages where there may be limited other venues to meet. These facilities are particularly important where there is limited access to services generally, or where there are higher levels of deprivation.
- 14.3 In principle, existing village and community halls should therefore be protected and enhanced, or where they are not suitable for retention, replaced within the locality by improved facilities (Local Plan Policy HC2).
- 14.4 The geographical spread of village halls and community centres together with their quality, accessibility and attractiveness is more important than quantitative rates of provision in the more established areas of the district, both in the rural areas and the towns.

### **Current provision and assessment**

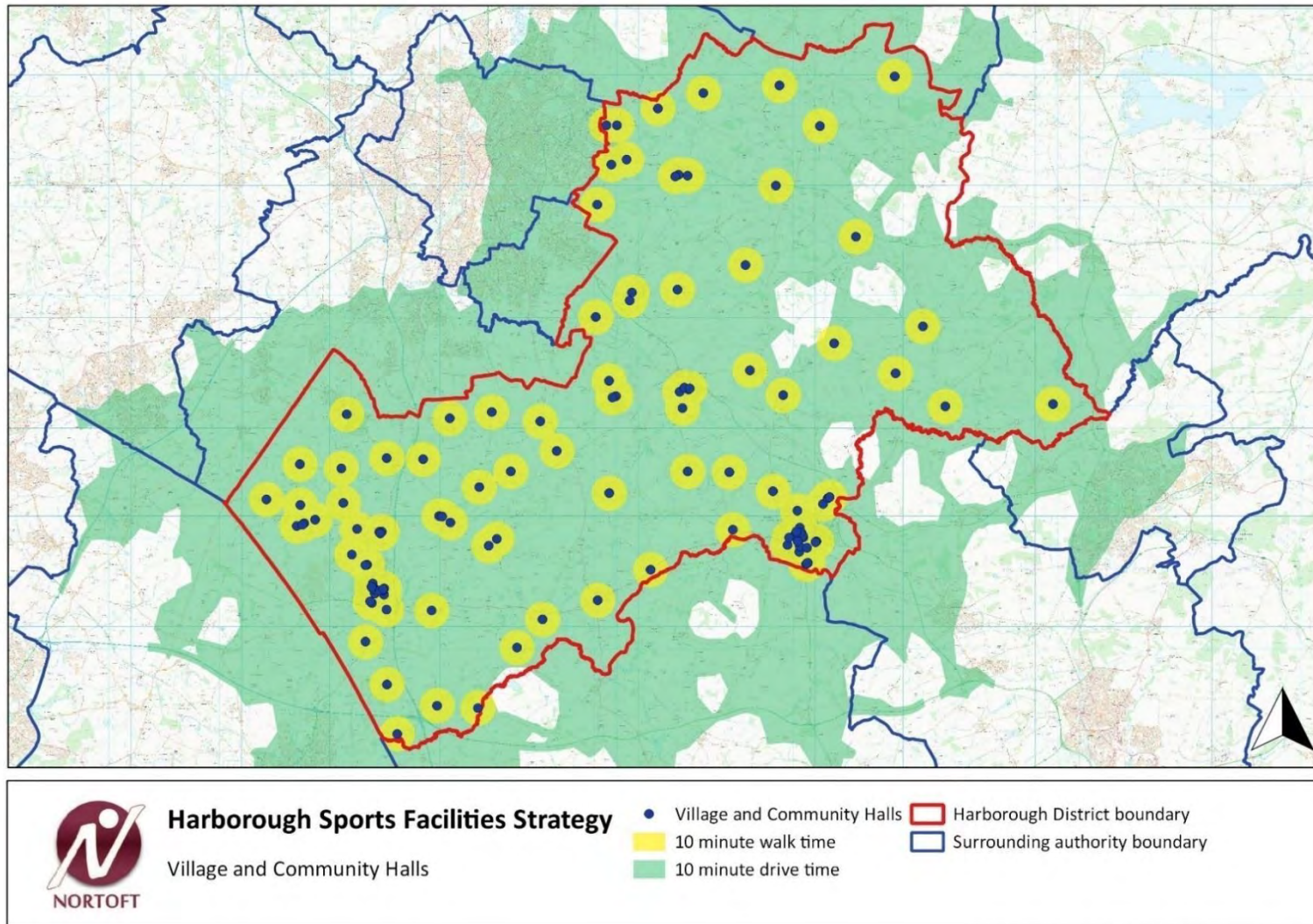
- 14.5 There are a large number of village and community halls and similar facilities in Harborough. These are mapped in Figure 54 with an 800m walking catchment and a 10-minute drive time catchment. It is clear from this map that almost all residents have access to at least one hall within 10 minutes' drive time, and that many people have access within 10 minutes walking time (the 800m catchment).

- 14.6 The nature of the village halls and community centres varies significantly, from relatively large multi-room complexes such as the Community Hub at Scraftoft (once fully constructed), to the smaller aging halls usually in the smaller villages. The size of a facility will usually reflect its location, with the smaller halls in the smaller villages, and the larger centres in the towns and larger villages. There are also often other facilities used by the community (not specifically listed or mapped) and these include a number of parish and church halls.
- 14.7 Also included in this section are the Fleckney Sports Centre and The Coplow Centre at Billesdon. Both of these have one court sports halls as part of a larger centre. The Fleckney Sports Centre is also important for football as it has a number of grass pitches plus a small size '3G' artificial grass pitch. The Coplow Centre has a multi-use games area in addition to the facilities in the building.
- 14.8 Some facilities are purpose-built and relatively modern, for example the Langton Community Hall, but some are converted Victorian buildings (for example the original Kibworth Grammar school) or were built in the period around the 1920-30s. The majority of the village halls and community centres are of at least a reasonable condition, but some require significant investment.
- 14.9 The ownership and management arrangements of the facilities are variable, with several being dedicated village hall charities, whilst others are church halls used by the community on a regular basis. However only those facilities which are used as a venue for active recreation have been included in this study i.e. the size of the rooms allows activities such as yoga or pilates, and the nature of the site encourages such bookings.





Figure 54: Village/Community halls location







## Local identified priorities for investment

### 14.10 The 'made' Neighbourhood Plans have the following identified priorities in relation to their community centres and village halls:

- The Billesdon Neighbourhood Plan includes provision for 'meeting any growth in demand for recreational facilities from the population of the Parish by increasing the capacity of the Coplow Centre'. It notes that 'the Centre is constantly in use throughout the week and facilities require upgrading and expansion to accommodate a growing population'.
- The Burton Overy Neighbourhood Plan mentions the village hall, 'which has its own kitchen, accommodates village and private functions and is well used by the clubs and societies of the village. In 2017, it was awarded a Lottery Grant of £10,000 to renovate the entrance to the Hall, to make it safer and more user friendly, with better access and more suitable parking for disabled users'.
- The Foxton Neighbourhood Plan notes that the village hall is used for activities including fitness sessions.
- The Great Bowden Neighbourhood Plan states that the 'Village Hall is the most used community venue which is used by 79% of respondents. The Church Hall is used by 47% of residents and the Community Pavilion is used by 28% of the community. Both the Village Hall and Church Hall provide a large range of classes, a meeting venue for village societies, open village events and a well-attended pre-school. They have little spare capacity. The Community Pavilion is home to Great Bowden Cricket Club and is less busy. Its availability is curtailed to the broader community during the evenings of the summer months. However, during the day it is under-utilised. The room available for community use in the Pavilion is smaller than those available in the Village Hall and Church Hall and this may restrict its broader appeal'. Plan policy supports the provision of additional facilities capacity but contains no specific proposals for achieving this.
- The Great Easton Neighbourhood Plan notes that 'the village hall is an important asset for the village. Many groups, societies and clubs, as well as private users, use the facilities on a regular basis. 77 respondents to the community questionnaire (47%) use the village hall. The village hall has an active management committee. Ongoing refurbishment is required to maintain the level of quality required for public use'.
- The Great Glen Neighbourhood Plan states that there is a good range of community facilities in Great Glen. These include a Youth Club, Scout Hut and Village Hall. These are well used and especially important to the vitality and well-being of the community.

- The Houghton-on-the-Hill Neighbourhood Plan notes that ‘the Village Hall was built in 1922 and has benefitted from significant investment and improvement in the last five years. It comprises a main hall which can seat 140, a committee room, a modern kitchen and storage inside and in outbuildings. It still bears a legacy from piecemeal development over nearly 100 years and has particular deficits in energy efficiency and space for the present, let alone increasing, village population. It is used for a very diverse range of activities, including indoor bowls, exercise group, circuit training, karate and yoga’.
- The Hungarton Neighbourhood Plan states that ‘the Village Hall, opened in 1928, is an independent village charity run by a village hall committee on which all the major organisations in the village have representation. It is a well-used local resource which offers a main hall, meeting room, kitchen and storage area’.
- The Kibworths Neighbourhood Plan supports the need for a ‘multi-functional community centre’ in addition to the existing four-badminton court sports hall at Kibworth School and the village hall. It indicates that developer contributions will be sought to fund new and improved facilities provision.
- The Medbourne Neighbourhood Plan notes that the village hall is an important community asset and that it accommodates pilates classes. It states that ‘the village hall is in need of substantial renovation, in particular internal decoration, re-wiring and removal of the suspended ceiling. The committee has ambitious plans to refurbish and extend the building to include a new kitchen, toilets and meeting rooms.
- The Scraftoft Neighbourhood Plan states that ‘Scraftoft Village Hall is very small and has limited facilities. We are currently looking to provide a new multi-use community hall close the Strawberry Fields development off Beeby Road. We already have outline planning permission and we are looking to secure funding. The new facility will provide more community space, opportunities for multi-faith worship, indoor recreation and activities for young people. The new Community Hall will be planned so that it can provide a branch GP surgery. A new community hall is also essential for the future of the village and is supported by over two-thirds of local households’. [Facility now largely complete and opened as the Community Hub].
- The Shearsby Neighbourhood Plan notes that ‘the village hall forms a focal point for village life by providing a modern venue for private and public meetings and functions. The Hall is now equipped to the highest standards and suits a wide range of uses’.

- The South Kilworth Neighbourhood Plan states that ‘the Village Hall is well used by a range of community groups and hired by individuals. In the community consultation, the Village Hall was one of the most valued community facilities, 73% of those responding believing that it was either important or very important. The village hall was originally the village Reading Room, but in 2000 with the help of a lottery funded grant it was moved to larger purpose-built premises on Parish Council land. The hall is in need of some refurbishment and upgrading. There is a covenant on the land which precludes the extension of the hall. This covenant has already been changed once so it is unlikely to be amended again within the lifetime of the plan’.
- The Swinford Neighbourhood Plan notes that the ‘village hall is a well-used local resource which offers a main hall, a meeting area, large store cupboard, kitchen/catering facilities and toilet facilities for all abilities.

## Consultation findings

- 14.11 A survey of town and parish councils was undertaken to confirm site information and project proposals relating to their village or community halls. 77 returns were received, representing 72% (of parishes) and 77% of these types of local facility.
- 14.12 The table in Figure 55 summarises the feedback in relation to projects with estimated costs of £10,000 and above. The survey responses also identified a large number of projects which are expected to cost less than £10,000. These smaller projects are likely to be completed relatively quickly.
- 14.13 School hall facilities were not included in the consultation as further work is required to establish practical arrangements, community accessibility and pricing.

*Figure 55: Village and community hall projects*

| Parish           | Name of Village Hall or Community Facility | Project/proposal                                    |
|------------------|--|---|
| Ashby Magna      | Ashby Magna Village Hall                   | Floor refurbishment<br>Roof works<br>Exterior works |
| Billesdon        | Coplow Centre                              | Building Extension                                  |
| Broughton Astley | Village Hall                               | Kitchen and toilet refurbishment New heating system |
| Bruntingthorpe   | Bruntingthorpe Village Hall                | Roof replacement                                    |

|                  |  |   |
|------------------|--|---|
| Burton Overy     | Burton Overy Village Hall                | Hall roof repair  |
| Church Langton   | Church Langton Village Hall              | Upgrade heating and lighting to be energy efficient<br>Kitchen upgrade<br>Additional storage                              |
| Claybrooke Magna | Claybrooke Magna Village Hall            | New kitchen   |
| Dunton Bassett   | Dunton Bassett Village Hall              | Modernise toilets to include a disabled access toilet.  |
| Fleckney         | Fleckney Village Hall                    | New toilet block  |
| Gilmorton        | Gilmorton Playing Fields Pavilion        | Replace boilers<br>Extend hall<br>Car park improvements.  |
| Glooston         | Glooston Village Hall                    | Car park improvements   |
| Great Glen       | Great Glen Methodist Church              | New kitchen and<br>Toilets upgrade<br>Roof replacement  |
| Great Glen       | Village Hall                             | Demolish and rebuild  |
| Great Glen       | Youth Centre                             | Demolish and rebuild  |
| Great Glen       | Bowman of Glen Club House                | Demolish current clubhouse and build a modern facility with an integrated indoor archery range.                           |
| Gumley           | Gumley Village Hall                      | Roof replacement  |
| Hallaton         | The Pavilion                             | Replace roof<br>Insulate and replace ceiling<br>Disabled facilities and access needed throughout<br>New kitchen required. |
| Hallaton         | The Hallaton and Isabella Stenning Trust | Storage extension   |

| Parish | Name of Village Hall or Community Facility | Project/proposal |
|--------|--|------------------|
|--------|--|------------------|

|                      |   |   |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Houghton             | Houghton Village Hall                   | Additional entrance to hall with porch & disabled access<br>Extension to rear of building to provide more storage space<br>Re-development of northern range of building to enlarge committee room, provide separate toilets, and utility kitchen, provide youth/café area.<br>Add additional bar and seating area to main hall. |
| Houghton on the Hill | Houghton on the Hill School Hall        | Increase size of hall   |
| Houghton on the Hill | Houghton on the Hill Field Association  | Replace clubhouse   |
| Husbands Bosworth    | Husbands Bosworth Village Hall          | Convert garage to a parish office   |
| Kibworth Beauchamp   | Kibworth Beauchamp Grammar School       | Kitchen update and Toilets upgrade  |
| Kibworth Beauchamp   | Kibworth Community Library              | Replacement of existing library to a community library including a community meeting space.   |
| Lutterworth          | Town Council Building                   | Refurbishment of main room to create a stand alone meeting room to hire to community groups including refurbishment of interior and frontage  |
| Lutterworth          | Lutterworth Town FC                     | New changing rooms  |
| Lutterworth          | Lutterworth Town Hall                   | New lift needed<br>Upgrading toilets<br>Exterior repairs to make the building appealing to new users  |
| Market Harborough    | Harborough Town FC                      | Creation of meeting rooms and access to clubhouse roof  |
| Market Harborough    | Market Harborough Congregational Church | Hall roof replacement Lift replacement  |
| Market Harborough    | Market Harborough Squash Club           | New build club house and community centre   |

|                   |   |  |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Market Harborough | The Cube  | Extension to The Cube Youth centre<br>Additional storage space<br>Installation of log cabin to provide an outdoor classroom<br>Operating front door for disability access                |
| Medbourne         | Medbourne Village Hall                            | Complete renovation  |
| <b>Parish</b>     | <b>Name of Village Hall or Community Facility</b> | <b>Project/proposal</b>  |
| Newton Harcourt   | The Reading Room                                  | Roof replacement   |
| North Kilworth    | Sports Club                                       | Change to lounge area to diversify use and improve security<br>Access to the facility to allow hall availability without being staffed<br>increasing usage<br>Disabled toilet facilities |
| Scraptoft         | Scraptoft Community Hub                           | New build extension  |
| Scraptoft         | Scraptoft Village Hall                            | New fire door and front door<br>Disabled access route<br>Replace roofing<br>Store room roof replacement  |
| Shawell           | Shawell Memorial Hall                             | Car park and entrance resurfacing<br>Exterior work<br>New flooring in main hall and entrance porch   |
| Slawston          | Slawston Village Hall                             | Upgrade or rebuild village hall – feasibility study will determine outcome   |
| Smeeton Westerby  | Smeaton Westerby Village Hall                     | Upgrade hall lighting suitable for functions<br>Installation of sound reduction acoustic boards<br>Renovation of hall floor<br>Garden re-slabbing  |
| South Kilworth    | South Kilworth Village Hall                       | Upgrade of main hall<br>Disabled access throughout<br>Kitchen and bar refurbishment<br>Improved flooring for sports<br>Upgrade of two multi use changing facilities                      |
| Thurnby           | Wadkins Centre                                    | Building replacement   |



|                      |                                   |   |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Tugby and Keythorpe  | Tugby and Keythorpe Village Hall  | Lowering of hall ceiling to improve heating and acoustics Disabled parking bays |
| Tur Langton          | Tur Langton Village Hall          | Total renovation  |
| Willoughby Waterleys | Willoughby Waterleys Village Hall | Replace roof  |
| Walton               | Walton Village Hall               | Renew car park surface  |

## Clubs and national governing bodies of sport

14.14 Sports clubs and national governing bodies of sport views are not usually particularly relevant to village and community halls, where the large majority of active recreation use is for activities such as pilates and zumba. However, the feedback from the AFB Dance Academy is relevant to this section.

### *Ballet and dance*

14.15 The AFB Dance Academy is based at Great Bowden Church Hall. It has 90 members, of which about 70% are minis, with around 15% of both juniors and veterans. Almost 90% of the club come from within the district, with most of the remainder from Kettering. The size of the Academy has increased over the last 5 years and expects to continue to grow. There are waiting lists for the minis and also for the pre-school age, the equivalent to a full dance class for this age group.

14.16 The Academy uses the hall at Great Bowden 3-6 times a week on weekday evenings and weekends daytime, and the hall is the preferred location. The existing hall floor is “not in the best condition”, with splinters being of concern. The storage is described as being “below average” and there is no car park.

14.17 The main restriction on the growth of the Academy is a lack of access to facilities, as the hall is used Monday-Thursday all day and Friday mornings with a pre-school. There are therefore limited opportunities to provide additional classes.

### National governing bodies

14.18 No comments were received from national governing bodies about village and community hall facilities.

## Adjacent authorities’ provision and strategies

14.19 Adjacent authority strategies are not particularly relevant to the provision of community centres and village halls because of their small catchments.

## Modelling and assessment of future needs

- 14.20 The current network of village halls and community centres means that almost everyone has access to at least one hall within 10 minutes' drive and many people living in villages and the towns are also within 800m walk. The feedback from the parishes shows that almost every hall is used for some activity, but it is unlikely that every hall will be fully booked, even in the evenings and weekends.
- 14.21 Across the rural areas of the district, the priority will therefore be to maintain and retain a network of halls and to ensure that they meet the requirements of their communities, for example some buildings may require extensions or extra storage to enable them to host activities such as short mat bowls or gymnastics.
- 14.22 There is however a need to provide for new community halls in association with some of the major housing developments in the district.

## Community halls and new housing

- 14.23 Planning permission has already been granted for the Strategic Development Area at North West Market Harborough. The proposal includes the provision of a community hall, either on a dual-use basis at the new primary school, or adjacent to the proposed playing field area so that the hall can also be built with changing facilities.

*The community hall will also be expected to be opened as early as practicable. The facility will be for multi-purpose and designed to encourage a wide range of potential activities from parent and toddler groups to a place of worship (ecumenical and not reserved for just one religious group). (Harborough District Council , 2019)*

- 14.24 The community facility building at North West Market Harborough should be a minimum of 540sqm of floor space (gross external) as outlined in the relevant s106 agreements.
- 14.25 The other main housing sites in Market Harborough are not specifically required to have their own community hall: Overstone Park, East of Blackberry Grange and Burnmill Farm. (Harborough District Council, 2019)
- 14.26 The new adopted Local Plan (Harborough District Council, 2019) however does include a requirement for community facilities to be provided in association with the SDAs:

## SC1 Scraptoft North Strategic Development Area

*3. The masterplan will guide the creation of a sustainable and high-quality living environment within a network of green infrastructure which maintains and enhances the existing areas of highest ecological value, creates new habitats of local*

*Biodiversity Action Plan priorities, provides recreational opportunities and maintains the distinct identity of Scraftoft village and will provide for:*

*.....*

*g. a neighbourhood centre as a social and retail hub for the new community to be provided in accordance with a phasing plan to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority to include some or all of the following:*

*iv. a community hall; and*

*v. other community facilities or upgrade of existing facilities;*

### *L1 East of Lutterworth Strategic Development Area*

*3. The masterplan will guide the creation of a high quality sustainable urban extension to Lutterworth and an attractive environment for living, working and recreation. It will address and overcome the issue of community severance resulting from the presence of the M1, to create a sustainable urban extension which is permeable and wellconnected to Lutterworth via legible walking and cycling routes with good natural surveillance. It will provide for:*

*i. a neighbourhood centre as a social and retail hub for the new community to be provided in accordance with a phasing plan to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority, to include some or all of the following:*

*iv. a community hall; and*

*v. other community facilities or upgrade of existing facilities;*

### *Local plan policies and identified need*

14.27 The East of Lutterworth SDA and the North West of Market Harborough SDA are both outside the 800m walking catchment of an existing community centre or village hall. New provision will therefore be needed in these housing developments.

14.28 By contrast, almost all of the Scraftoft SDA is within an 800m walking catchment of either or both the new Scraftoft Community Hub and Scraftoft Village Hall. These two facilities are complementary in nature so each has a different “offer” for the community. Both currently have spare capacity. The Community Hub is not yet fully constructed and will have provided a meeting room and kitchen. As this is a new facility, it is good quality. The Village Hall is an old building requiring major refurbishment including improved disabled access and kitchen. It is therefore recommended that off-site contributions towards the existing facilities should be sought, rather than providing a new community centre within the SDA, which would be in direct competition with the Community Hub and Village Hall.

### *Fleckney Sports Centre*

- 14.29 Fleckney Sports Centre is addressed under Village and Community Halls because it is a small facility with one badminton court hall, changing facilities, kitchen and meeting room/office. It shares the Leicester Road site with a small size 3G artificial pitch with football turf (3G AGP), a number of grass football pitches, and play provision including a skate park.
- 14.30 Fleckney is provided with relatively poor transport links for both public transport and car journeys to other sites in the district. The community places great importance on the ability of facilities within Fleckney to provide for the growing village.
- 14.31 It is the aspiration of the community to replace the existing Sports Hall building with a modern, fit for purpose and welcoming facility that meets the needs of all the site users.
- 14.32 The Parish Council is working with users to determine the most advantageous offer of facilities for the community. This is not only for sports and recreation use, but also social, arts and general community use.
- 14.33 The Sports Centre was the subject to a Stage 1 feasibility study commissioned by the Parish Council with support from Harborough District Council. The report is dated June 2018.
- 14.34 The Parish Council evaluated the 2018 feasibility study and subsequently commissioned Lungfish Architects to produce design options for the Sports Centre site, based on the facility recommendations contained in the 2018 report. The design provides for:
- 2 badminton court sports hall
  - 25 station gym
  - Multi-function room
  - Refreshment breakout area
  - 2 changing rooms for indoor use
  - 2 changing rooms for outdoor use
  - Medical room
  - Kitchen
  - Refreshment breakout area
  - Office for parish council
  - Storage for hall and for football goals
  - Improved car parking

- 14.35 The wider context in which the recommendations for the Fleckney Sports Centre were developed in 2018 has changed, and this potentially offers both new opportunities and new challenges. There are recommendations in the Built Sports Facilities Strategy for a range of sports facility types based on an assessment of the supply/demand and catchments of facilities, including sports halls and fitness facilities. A Local Football Facility Plan report of September 2019 has recommendations for refurbishing the changing rooms and improving the pitches at the Sports Centre although some refurbishment was undertaken in 2016 with grant help from Sport England. There is also an emerging proposal for a new arts/theatre venue in Fleckney.
- 14.36 To enable the Parish Council to realise the opportunities and meet the challenges of the future it is recommended that the redevelopment of the Sports Centre site is progressed by the Parish Council with the production of a robust business plan. The business plan should demonstrate the need for the facilities proposed and the long-term financial sustainability of the site.
- 14.37 A business plan will also help to unlock external funding, potentially including S106 monies and grants from other sources such as lottery, national governing bodies of sport and the Football Foundation.

### Size and design of new community buildings

- 14.38 The Harborough District Council adopted Local Plan including the Community Infrastructure Assessment 2017 and the Built Facilities Strategy, will help to guide the priorities for investment and the delivery of high-quality community facility infrastructure to the strategic development areas.
- 14.39 Improvements to (or occasionally replacement of) existing village and community hall facilities will be encouraged and supported where this will improve their attractiveness and 'offer', their usability, their accessibility to all of their local community, and/or the proposal will help to make the facility more sustainable. The facilities should generally be within 800m of the majority of the community that they will serve and be possible to access via safe walking routes.
- 14.40 Space requirements for a settlement area are dependent on the size of the development. The current gross floor area standard is 0.3 sq m per person, as set out in the Refresh of Harborough District Community Infrastructure Assessment (May 2017). This standard is similar to that adopted in Daventry and South Northamptonshire and is considered deliverable in Harborough.

### Accessibility



- 14.41 The overall objective is to have a good quality local village or community hall which is easily accessible both on foot and by car. There is no current accessibility standard for Harborough, but the Harborough District Community Infrastructure Assessment (May 2017) suggests that a 1,000m walking catchment is appropriate. This recommendation has now been reviewed.
- 14.42 It is useful to draw on relevant research undertaken by Milton Keynes Council in 2013 which covered both the rural area and city area of the borough. It is likely that similar patterns of use will apply to Harborough, both in relation to the towns and rural areas. The Milton Keynes survey showed that most people walked to such a facility (43%) but that a similar percentage drove (40%). This compared to about 15% using a bicycle, and about 2% using either public transport or a taxi. The survey also showed that about 72% travelled up to 10 minutes by either car or on foot. The recently adopted standard for village and community halls in Milton Keynes is therefore 800m for the urban area and large towns, equivalent to 10 minutes' walk. The drive time catchment is also 10 minutes.
- 14.43 In the rural county of Rutland, with its two Market Towns and seven Local Service Centres, the research showed a similar pattern of use for this type of facility as in Milton Keynes. Rutland is adjacent to Harborough district and has similar characteristics, so the pattern of use of village and community halls is likely to be similar.
- 14.44 Daventry, South Northamptonshire and Northampton have recently adopted an 800m walking catchment for village and community halls, which equates to a 10-minute walk.
- 14.45 Figure 54 shows the application of the walking and drive time catchments to the network of village and community halls across the district. From this map it is clear that almost all residents can reach a facility within 10 minutes' drive time and many people in the villages can reach a facility within 800m walk.
- 14.46 It is therefore proposed that the accessibility standards for village and community halls is changed from that proposed in the 2017 Infrastructure report and should be:
- 800 m catchment in Market Harborough, Lutterworth, Broughton Astley, and the Rural Centres (Billesdon, Fleckney, Great Glen, Houghton on the Hill, Husbands Bosworth, The Kibworths, Ullesthorpe)
  - 10 minutes' drive time catchment elsewhere

## Quality



- 14.47 The community centres, village halls and similar facilities should be able to offer a wide range of activities as well as meet modern standards for health and safety, the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, energy efficiency etc. It is important that the design of any new facilities should be highly flexible, to enable the local management of the sites to both provide a community facility, and also generate income where possible to ensure the viability of their provision.
- 14.48 Where an existing community centre/village hall lacks storage space, parking, or does not meet modern requirements including in relation to the kitchen and disability access, these should be improved as a priority. New facilities and improvements should reflect the current best practice guidance from the relevant agencies.
- 14.49 If a new community centre is proposed as part of a major housing development area, then this should be a stand-alone facility i.e. not part of a school. If possible, new centres should also be located adjacent to the playing fields (if provided) and the changing facilities for the pitches be provided and managed as part of the community centre. This helps both in terms of the economy of scale and the long-term efficient management of the building.
- 14.50 The centres should be fully accessible for those people using mobility scooters and with pushchairs.

## **Recommendations for village halls and community centres**

- 14.51 It is recommended, subject to resources being available, that the Council and relevant stakeholders consider the following in relation to village and community halls and similar facilities.

14.52 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, it is recommended that the Council continues to support community access to village halls, community centres and similar facilities.

*Protect*

14.53 It is recommended that existing village halls and community centres are protected and improved.

*Enhance*

14.54 It is recommended that proposals for all new facilities and enhancement of existing community facilities are confirmed as justified and sustainable by feasibility plans including business plans which demonstrate sustainability.

- Replacement facilities are required at : Great Glen, Kibworth, Houghton on the Hill Market Harborough and Thurnby.
- Improvements are required at : Ashby Magna, Billesdon, Broughton Astley, Bruntingthorpe, Burton Overy, Church Langton, Claybrooke Magna, Dunton Bassett, Fleckney, Gilmorton, Glooston, Great Glen, Gumley, Hallaton, Houghton on the Hill, Husbands Bosworth, Kibworth Beauchamp, Lutterworth, Market Harborough, Medbourne, Newton Harcourt, North Kilworth, Scraptoft, Shawell, Slawsby, Smeeton Westerby, South Kilworth, Tugby and Keythorpe, Thurnby, Tur Langton, Willoughby Waterleys and Walton.

14.55 It is recommended that a robust business plan is produced by Fleckney Parish Council for the proposed redevelopment of Fleckney Sports Centre which demonstrates how the facility will fit within the wider community facility network for the village, confirms the demand for each element of the proposed new facility, and the long term sustainability of the site.

*Provide*

14.56 It is recommended that the other delivery priorities should be:

- New community centres delivered in accordance with the Local Plan policies at North West Market Harborough and Lutterworth SDAs.
- Improvements/enhancements of the Scraptoft Village Hall and Scraptoft Community Hub to meet the needs of Scraptoft SDA.

14.57 The existing planning standards are updated:

- Quantity:

○ 300 sq m per 1,000 population (0.3 sq m per person)

- Accessibility ○ 800m walk in the towns and larger villages ○ 10-minute drive elsewhere
- Quality ○ The quality and design of facilities should reflect current best practice from relevant agencies. New community centres should enable at least two separate groups to independently use the centres at the same time, without contact between the groups, e.g. for pre-school and for an adult social or activity group.

## SECTION 15: DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

- 15.1 The strategy is intended to inform not only planning documents and development management decisions, but also recreation infrastructure planning and information to support funding bids by both the Council and other providers. All sources of funding and other means of delivery will be required to deliver the facilities needed.
- 15.2 As the responsibility for provision of sport and recreation facilities is shared between the District, Town and Parish Councils, schools, sports clubs and associations and in some instances commercial providers, delivering the strategy will require partnership working. The District Council's direct role in the provision of sport and leisure facilities is twofold; firstly, via its ownership of Harborough Leisure Centre and Lutterworth Sports Centre, and secondly via the provision and application of planning policy to secure new or improved facilities from new developments.
- 15.3 The facility proposals identified in this strategy are not all intended to be provided or funded directly by the Council and it should not be assumed that the Council will automatically make additional funds available to assist other bodies to provide new or improved facilities. It also does not mean that the Council will take responsibility for more facilities.
- 15.4 Harborough District Council will support clubs and external providers with guidance on the strategic requirements, external funding and the planning process where there is an identified need for new or improved sport and leisure facilities. Any support offered by the Council will be subject to capacity and resources being available.

### Maximising health and well-being outcomes

- 15.5 Harborough District Council and its partners have a clear stated objective of improving the health and wellbeing of the communities across the district, as set out in the Harborough Physical Activity Strategy 2019-2029.
- 15.6 This sports facilities assessment and strategy has considered the current patterns of participation in sport and active recreation across all the communities in the district, and across all providers, and forecasts forwards the anticipated needs up to 2031 based on the expected future population, its age structure, and socio-economic characteristics. The strategy has taken these into account, and the facility proposals reflect what is expected to be required to meet the needs of the different communities across the district up to 2031. The network of sports facilities will be an essential element in the delivery of the health and wellbeing objectives for the district.

### Maximising cost effectiveness

- 15.7 The table, Site Specific Proposals (Figure 58) identifies a number of facility priorities which are expected to be the most cost-effective and deliverable route of achieving the facilities required. This is based on a recognition that the most cost-effective options may in fact not be deliverable because of factors outside of the control of Harborough District Council, and a recognition that the Council itself only controls a small proportion of the facilities across the district. Each main element of the Action Plan should, however, in practice start with the most cost-effective option as the preferred option, moving to the more expensive as needed.
- 15.8 A fundamental principle for the provision of public leisure facilities are that they must be financially sustainable. It is also essential that any public investment into school sites should be linked to a legal agreement securing community use for an appropriate length of time, usually 25 years, either via a planning obligation or other mechanism.

### Working across authority boundaries

- 15.9 The strategy has identified that there is significant cross-boundary movement of participants between different local authority areas, for example the export of swimmers to Oadby & Wigston but also the import of swimmers from Daventry district. This cross-boundary movement is apparent in all areas of the district and for most facility types. In planning the sports provision there is therefore a need to work strategically cross-boundary, to ensure that the sports facility provision both meets the needs of the expanding communities and is provided in the most cost-effective way.

### Securing provision of sport through development

- 15.10 A key output from the strategy is the securing of new and improved sports provision through development. This can include on-site provision through master-planning and planning obligations, and by securing developers' contributions to off-site provision. Any shortfalls in funding for specific facilities will need to be met by other funding sources, for example grant aid from the National Governing Bodies of sport, lottery funding, private funding, and housing infrastructure funds.
- 15.11 The authority seeks contributions via S106 but it will still be necessary to meet the three CIL tests set out in CIL Reg 122 (Government uk, 2010) and NPPF para 56 (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019):
- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
    - Directly related to the development
  - Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

15.12 In addressing the CIL tests, it is first necessary to have a robust and up-to-date evidence base for sporting provision need. This strategy provides the framework to determine the nature, location and level of sports facility needs that may be generated from new developments. Planning policies and supplementary planning guidance will need to be updated in due course to reflect the findings of the strategy.

15.13 The Provision Guide, Figure 56, is a summary of the proposals which have been derived from the strategy's assessment process. It is a quick reference guide to help calculate the amount of expected demand being generated by a development, the relevant catchment area and relevant quality standards. Note: fully available at peak time means open to community use in the evenings and at weekends.

*Figure 56: Recommended Provision Guide for new housing developments*

| Facility type  | Quantity per 1,000 population  | Accessibility     | Quality  |
|--|--|-------------------|--|
| Sports Halls   | 0.27 badminton courts <b>fully available</b> at peak time  | 20 minutes by car | Design and quality to meet Sport England and the relevant national governing body guidance |
| Swimming pools   | 9.6 sq m water space <b>fully available</b> at peak time   | 20 minutes by car | Design and quality to meet Sport England and the relevant national governing body guidance |
| Fitness facilities (stations)                                | 5.84 stations <b>fully available</b> at peak time  | 15 minutes by car | Design and quality to meet Sport England guidance  |
| Fitness facilities (studios)                                 | 0.08 studios <b>fully available</b> at peak time   | 15 minutes by car | Design and quality to meet Sport England guidance  |
| Indoor netball courts and associated floodlit outdoor courts | 0.02 indoor courts <b>fully available</b> at peak time<br>0.02 floodlit outdoor courts <b>fully available</b> at peak time | District wide     | Design and quality to meet Sport England and the relevant national governing body guidance |
| Indoor tennis  | 0.04 indoor tennis courts <b>fully available</b> at peak time  | 30 minutes by car | Design and quality to meet Sport England and the relevant national governing body guidance |
| Squash courts  | 0.04 courts <b>fully available</b> at peak time  | 20 minutes by car | Design and quality to meet Sport England and the relevant national governing body guidance |



|  |  |                                    |  |
|--|--|------------------------------------|--|
| Village and community halls              | Additional and improved facilities including storage to enable more sports activities to be offered, such as gymnastics and short mat indoor bowls.                          | 800m walk<br><br>10 minutes by car | Design and quality to meet local needs and to meet Harborough District Council requirements. |
| Walking, cycling and horse riding routes | Towards improvements in the network of walking, cycling and horse riding routes; on site to connect the development to the wider network, and offsite to identified projects | 20 minutes by car                  | Design and quality to meet local needs and to meet Harborough District Council requirements. |

## Planning for sport and recreation

15.14 The table in Figure 57 relates to the planning functions of Harborough District Council, and identifies the actions and priorities relating to planning policy and development control which will be required to implement the strategy.

*Figure 57: Actions for forward and development planning*

| Proposal / Facility                       | Action required   | Lead organisation | Key partners   | Date for action |
|---|---|-------------------|--|-----------------|
| Major new housing developments            | Ensure that major new housing sites have policies for sports provision, on or off site as appropriate.  | HDC               | Sport England<br><br>Leicester-Shire & Rutland Sport | On-going        |
| Planning policies on sport and recreation | Update planning policies on sport and recreation to reflect updated standards of provision, including in relation to village and community halls. | HDC               |  | Year 1          |
| Developer Contributions                   | Update the policy guidance on the delivery of sport and recreation facilities and playing pitches for new developments.                           | HDC               | Sport England<br><br>Leicester-Shire & Rutland Sport | Year 1          |

|   |   |                                |  |  |
|---|---|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Replacement leisure centre for Harborough | Complete feasibility studies to confirm the preferred option for the location of the proposed replacement leisure centre for Harborough.<br><br>Confirm facility mix, the build and funding options.  | HDC                            | Sport England  | Year 1                                   |
| Indoor bowls provision                    | Undertake a feasibility study to determine the requirements for indoor bowls, so as to inform the options for a possible replacement facility in the District<br><br>If provision required, identify preferred site, management, costs etc.   | NGB/HDC (subject to resources) | Market Harborough IBC<br>Everyone Active<br>English Indoor Bowling Assn<br>Sport England | Year 1                                   |
| Lutterworth Sports Centre                 | Identify long-term site options for Lutterworth Sports Centre (from 2031) within existing town area. Include within future planning policies.   | HDC                            |  | Year 3                                   |
| Planning applications                     | Respond to planning applications for development to ensure that the necessary sports provision is achieved.<br><br>If a sport and recreation site has become disused, consideration should be given to other sport, recreation or open space use, having regard to deficiencies identified in the assessments and strategies. | HDC                            | Sport England  | On-going                                 |
| Community use agreements on school sites  | Ensure that any public investment, and where relevant, planning permission for sports facilities on school sites is linked to formal community use agreements, the terms of which should reflect the size of the investment.  | HDC                            | Schools Sport England Funding bodies   | Linked to specific projects.<br>On-going |

|  |   |     |                                 |          |
|--|---|-----|---------------------------------|----------|
| Traffic free walking, and cycling routes | Ensure that planning policy requires the provision of linked traffic-free walking and cycling routes as part of new developments.                       | HDC | Developers                      | On-going |
|  | Development of traffic-free running and cycling routes linking existing green spaces as an integral part of sustainable transport networks.             | HDC | Leicester-Shire & Rutland Sport | On-going |
| Horse riding routes                      | Development of traffic-free or lightly trafficked links to enhance the existing bridleway routes.   | HDC |                                 | On-going |
|  | Positive planning policies to enable development of allweather surfaces for training and competition, including where justified, indoor riding centres. | HDC |                                 | On-going |
| Golf                                     | Ensure that Scraftoft Golf Course is replaced as proposed.  | HDC | Developer                       | On-going |

## Site specific investment proposals

- 15.15 The table in Figure 58 provides a summary of the investment needs identified in this strategy.
- 15.16 The various specific projects are at relatively early stages of feasibility assessment, and therefore the costs and deliverability are still to be confirmed. The estimated capital costs of the replacement sports centre have been provided by Harborough District Council. It should be noted that these exclude lifecycle costs of facilities, on which Sport England provides separate guidance dated 2012. The estimated sinking fund requirements for built facilities at that time were estimated to be between 0.3% and 0.5% per annum, with a maintenance figure of around 1% for sports halls and swimming pools (Sport England, 2012).
- 15.17 The assessment of the deliverability of the projects, including the achievement of planning permission, will need to be kept under regular review and alternative options identified if the preferred site/location is not possible to deliver.
- 15.18 The recommended priorities for the specific projects are identified as High, Medium and Low. These are defined as:

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| High priority   | <p>Facility or project essential for meeting the current and future projected needs of the community across Harborough, particularly for the sports/facilities with high levels of participation, for example swimming.</p> <p>High priority is also given to projects which will attract those less active or sited in areas with deprivation.</p>    |
| Medium priority | <p>Facility or project which will help to meet the current and future projected needs of the community across Harborough for the sports/facilities with moderate levels of participation, for example tennis.</p>  |
| Low priority    | <p>Facility or project which will help to meet the current and future projected needs of the community across Harborough but where the sport/facilities have lower levels of participation for example archery, or where the project's aims are already partially addressed by other projects in the area identified at higher levels of priority.</p> |

Figure 58: Recommended site specific proposals

| Project name                          | Main aim  | Priority<br>H = High<br>M = Medium<br>L = Low | Phasing<br>St 2019-2022<br>Mt 2022-2027<br>Lt 2027-2031                                    | Estimated capital cost<br>( £000's)                | Main delivery partners                           | Comment  |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|--|
| Leisure Centres                       |   |   |  |  |  |  |
| Harborough Leisure Centre replacement | Replace leisure centre with sports facility elements including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 badminton court sports hall</li> <li>• 25m x 8 lane pool with spectator accommodation</li> <li>• 10m x 8m leisure pool</li> <li>• 5m x 4m learner/teaching/ training pool</li> <li>• Large fitness gym (number of stations tbc)</li> <li>• Studios /multi-activity rooms (number and size tbc)</li> <li>• 2 indoor netball courts/3 indoor tennis courts</li> <li>• 2 floodlit outdoor netball/tennis courts adjacent to indoor</li> </ul> | H   | St<br>Feasibility assessment including bowls hall options.<br><br>Construction and opening | £15.1m plus up to £5m for commercial opportunities | HDC Sport England Operator/ construction partner | Facility mix to be confirmed.<br><br>If netball/tennis provision not made via replacement dome type facility, then will require 8 badminton court sports hall plus investment off site to improve sports halls at Robert Smyth Academy.<br><br>Detailed further assessment required in relation to provision of indoor bowling. If justified and not provided as part of a replacement leisure centre, identify alternative deliverable sites. |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  | Consider provision of 4 rink indoor bowls facility either a part of existing facility or as part of a separate facility. |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| Project name | Main aim | Priority<br>H = High<br>M = Medium<br>L = Low | Phasing<br>St 2019-2022<br>Mt 2022-2027<br>Lt 2027-2031 | Estimated capital cost<br>( £000's) | Main delivery partners | Comment |
|--------------|----------|---|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------|---------|
|--------------|----------|---|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------|---------|



|   |   |            |          |     |                                 |  |
|---|---|------------|----------|-----|---------------------------------|--|
| Lutterworth Sports Centre                 | Retain and maintain<br><br>Potentially expand health and fitness provision, subject to local justification.   | H<br><br>M | On-going | tbc | Operator                        | For longer term, need to confirm future of site. If Sports Centre requires relocation, alternative town centre site will be required to be identified. |
| Broughton Astley                          | Maintain and retain newly opened sports centre  | H          | Lt       | n/a | Broughton Astley Parish Council | Indoor facility opened December 2019. Completion of '3G' AGP expected April 2020.  |
| Schools                                   |   |            |          |     |                                 |  |
| Robert Smyth Academy                      | Refurbishment of existing sports halls (4-court and 3-court) together with changing provision   | M          | Mt       | tbc | Academy                         | Halls currently too small to provide for netball leagues.  |
| Other                                     |   |            |          |     |                                 |  |
| Market Harborough Cricket and Squash Club | More intensive use of site as sports hub and for wider community activity. Review of buildings and their uses on site. Requires detailed feasibility study. | M          | St       | tbc | Club                            | Site lease needs to be extended to secure longterm community use.<br><br>Also home to cricket club.  |
|   | Retain and maintain squash courts.  | H          | On-going | n/a | Club                            |  |
| Bowmen of Glen                            | Improve clubhouse facilities  | L          | St       | tbc | Club                            |  |

| Project name                        | Main aim   | Priority<br>H = High<br>M = Medium<br>L = Low | Phasing<br>St 2019-2022<br>Mt 2022-2027<br>Lt 2027-2031 | Estimated capital cost<br>( £000's) | Main delivery partners                  | Comment   |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Lutterworth Tennis Club             | Cover 2 existing courts.   | H   | St  | tbc                                 | Club LTA                                | Grant aid offered to club in 2019 for covering 2 courts by HDC.   |
| Indoor bowls centre 4-rink          | Undertake feasibility study into provision of 4-rink specialist indoor bowls facility within or close to Market Harborough.  | H   | St  | £5,000                              | HDC<br>EIBA<br>Cub<br>Potential sites   | Feasibility study into provision of 4-rink specialist facility, either at leisure centre or alternative site. |
| Village halls and community centres | Retain, replace or improve where justified.<br><br>Ensure provision of new community centre facilities to serve North West Market Harborough and Lutterworth SDA.  | H   | On-going  | tbc                                 | Hall trusts<br>Parish and Town Councils | Needs and costs will need to be justified locally   |
| Walking, running and cycling routes | Improvements to existing routes and development of new links to extend network, particularly of traffic free routes.<br><br>Improved linking of open spaces.<br><br>Provision of distance markers on routes. | H   | On-going  | tbc                                 | HDC<br>Developers                       | Routes within and linking developments to wider network.<br><br>Improvements to existing network of routes.   |



## Review and monitoring

- 15.19 The final stage in the strategy is its delivery and making sure that it is kept up to date. Sport England recommends that a process should be put in place to ensure regular monitoring of how the recommendations and action plan are being delivered. Understanding and learning lessons about how the strategy has been applied is also a key component of monitoring its delivery.
- 15.20 As a guide, if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years of a strategy being signed-off, then Sport England may consider the strategy and the information upon which it is based, to be out of date. Ideally the strategy should therefore be reviewed on an annual basis. This will help to maintain the momentum and commitment that has been built up when developing the strategy, and also ensure that the supply and demand information is no more than two years old without being reviewed.
- 15.21 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 strategy 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.

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## GLOSSARY

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| AGP    | Artificial Grass Pitch  |
| ANOG   | Sport England's Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance      |
| BREEAM | Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method |
| CASC   | Community Amateur Sports Clubs                                  |
| CIL    | Community Infrastructure Levy                                   |
| CIO    | Charitable Incorporated Organisation                            |
| CIPFA  | The Chartered Institute of Finance and Accountancy              |
| EIBA   | English Indoor Bowls Association                                |
| FPM    | Facilities Planning Model                                       |
| GP     | General Practice Doctors Surgery                                |

|      |  |
|------|--|
| HMA  | Housing Market Area  |
| IDP  | Infrastructure Development Plan  |
| KPI  | Key Performance Indicator  |
| LTA  | Lawn Tennis Association  |
| MSOA | Middle Super Output Area   |
| NGB  | National Governing Body of sport   |
| NPPF | National Planning Policy Framework   |
| ONS  | Office for National Statistics   |
| PP   | Peak Period  |
| PUA  | Leicester Principal Urban Area   |
| S106 | Planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 |
| SDA  | Strategic Development Area   |
| SFC  | Sports Facilities Calculator   |



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