

**Ploszajski Lynch
Consulting Ltd.**



Harborough District Council

***Playing Pitch and Outdoor
Sports Facilities Strategy
'Stage E' Report***

October 2024

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Ploszajski Lynch Consulting Ltd. was commissioned by Harborough District Council (HDC) to review the 2022 Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) for the district.

1.2 The rationale for the strategy

1.2.1 Background

In April 2019 HDC adopted its Local Plan 2011 to 2031 for Harborough District and a 2018 Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) informed that plan. The PPS was subject to a full review in 2022 and the current 'Stage E' review is to bring the playing pitch information fully up to date and to inform the preparation of the new Local Plan.

The Strategy makes recommendations for outdoor pitch including associated facility development and use based on evidence and consultation throughout the development of the document. It should be noted that the 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.

1.2.2 Purpose

The overall purpose of the project is to update both the evidence base and the strategic direction for the provision of outdoor sporting facilities in Harborough District. The revised Strategy should provide a recommendation and action plan to satisfy Sport England requirements and inform future investment in outdoor sport and recreation.

1.2.3 Objectives

The objectives of the strategy are:

- To inform the preparation of policies in the new Local Plan.
- To provide evidence to help any justification for securing S106 obligations, and/or making provision for Playing Pitch or Playing Pitch grounds as part of future development sites.
- To co-ordinate facility investment by clubs and other stakeholders in partnership with the governing bodies of sport.

- To help secure external funding for the investment and improvement of outdoor sports facilities and to prioritise investment in Harborough District Council and other sites.
- To identify any deficiencies or surpluses in provision and options for dealing with them now and in the future taking into account the Local Plan housing allocations.
- To inform future decisions about the provision and funding of Playing Pitch and Playing Pitch facilities.

1.3 The scope of the strategy

The pitches and outdoor sports facilities included in the Strategy are:

- Football.
- Cricket.
- Rugby Union.
- Hockey.
- Tennis.
- Bowls.
- Netball.
- Rounders.

1.4 Strategy format

This document comprises the 'Stage E' report of the playing pitch strategy. The structure of the document is as follows:

- Assessing playing pitch and outdoor sports facilities needs in Harborough district.
- The local context for pitch and outdoor sports facilities provision.
- Strategic influences on pitch and outdoor sports facilities provision.
- Football pitch needs.
- Cricket pitch needs.
- Rugby Union pitch needs.
- Hockey pitch needs.
- Tennis court needs.
- Bowls green needs.

- Netball court needs.
- Rounders pitch needs.
- Applying and reviewing the strategy.

2 ASSESSING PLAYING PITCH NEEDS

2.1 Introduction

This section describes the basis on which playing pitch and outdoor sports facilities needs in Harborough district were assessed. Two different methodologies were applied:

- Sport England's '*Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance*' (2013) for football, cricket, rugby and hockey pitches.
- Sport England's '*Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance*' (2014) for tennis courts, bowling greens, netball courts and rounders pitches.

2.2 *Playing Pitch Methodology*

2.2.1 Introduction

The methodology for the pitches follows the '*Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance*' (2013) developed by Sport England. The process involves five stages and ten steps as follows:

- **Stage A** Prepare and tailor the approach (Step 1).
- **Stage B** Gather information on the supply of and demand for provision (Steps 2 and 3).
- **Stage C** Assess the supply and demand information and views (Steps 4, 5 and 6).
- **Stage D** Develop the strategy (Steps 7 and 8).
- **Stage E** Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up-to-date (Steps 9 and 10).

2.2.2 *Preparing and tailoring the approach*

HDC convened a project steering group led by officers from Strategic Planning, Environmental Services and Community Partnerships and involving advice from Sport England and the relevant governing bodies of sport to devise:

- The vision and objectives of the review of playing pitches in the district.
- The scope of the exercise, including the types of facilities to include, the geographical scope and the overall timeframe for the assessment.
- The local and wider strategic context.
- The project management arrangements for the study, including the decision to engage assistance from external consultants.

A project brief was produced, approved and signed-off to complete Stage A of the process.

2.2.3 Assessing current needs

To assess whether the current provision is adequate to meet existing demand an understanding of the situation at all sites available to the community needs to be developed. This is achieved by providing a brief overview for each site, which comprises:

- A comparison between the carrying capacity of a site and how much demand currently takes place there. The carrying capacity of a site is defined as the amount of play it can regularly accommodate over an appropriate period of time without adversely affecting its quality and use. Demand is defined in terms of the number of 'match equivalent sessions' at each site.
- An indication of the extent to which pitches and related facilities are being used during their respective peak periods.
- The key issues with and views on the provision at a site and its use.
- The site overviews identify the extent to which pitches are:
 - Being overplayed where use exceeds the carrying capacity.
 - Being played to the level the site can sustain where use matches the carrying capacity.
 - Potentially able to accommodate some additional play where use falls below the carrying capacity.

The situation at individual sites can then be aggregated to identify the position at a wider geographical area, to identify the potential for excess demand at some sites to be accommodated by excess supply at others in the locality. Other factors can also be assessed such as:

- Any demand being accommodated on sites with unsecured community access.
- The impact of latent or displaced demand.
- The situation at priority sites.

This analysis then enables an assessment to be made of the adequacy of existing pitch and related facility provision.

2.2.4 Assessing future needs

The methodology applied to assess the additional future needs for pitches and related facilities arising from population growth also involves the approach advocated in Sport England's PPS guidance, namely:

- Establishing projected population change.
- Analysing sports development proposals and participation trends.
- Considering existing deficiencies or spare capacity.
- Taking account of any forthcoming changes to facility supply.

2.2.5 Assessed demand parameters

Analysis of the above factors influencing the future supply and demand for playing pitches in the district has led to the following conclusions, which are reflected in the subsequent assessment of future needs:

- **Population change:** The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 104,839 by 2031, an increase of 9,302 (or 9.7%). Comparison of the projections for 2020 and 2031 shows that the percentage of people aged under 50 falls from 55.6% to 53.2%, with proportionate population increases amongst the over 50s.
- **Participation trends:** According to Sport England's 'Active People' and 'Active Lives' surveys, participation at a national level in all the pitch sports has remained static or fallen in the period since 2005, in some cases by quite significant margins. This means that future increases in participation in the pitch sports cannot be assumed based upon historic trends and have therefore not been factored into projected needs.
- **Sports development initiatives:** A number of sports development initiatives are delivered in Harborough district by the governing bodies of the pitch sports and their member clubs (full details are in the individual sports sections). The impact on sustained increases in participation directly attributable to these activities is unproven has therefore not been factored in to projected future needs.
- **Changes in supply:** Any known proposed gains or losses in pitches and related facilities provision will influence the ability to accommodate the additional demand arising from the increased population and this has been included in the capacity assessments (full details are in the individual sports sections).

2.2.6 Delivering future needs

To identify the most appropriate way to meet the additional pitch and related facilities needs arising from population growth, four sequential questions were addressed:

- **Existing deficiency or spare capacity:** To what extent do existing pitches and related facilities have any current shortfalls or any over-supply?
- **Additional needs:** What additional needs will arise from population growth?

- **Accommodating needs:** Which needs can be met in whole or part by spare capacity in existing pitches and related facilities and which will need to be met in whole or part by new provision?
- **Extra pitches:** What extra pitches and related facilities of each type are required to provide for the residual unmet demand?

2.2.7 Outputs

The methodology provides quantified answers to the above questions as follows:

- **Current provision:** The adequacy of current provision and any existing spare capacity was assessed using Sport England's approved methodology, adapted where appropriate to assess informal demand and facilities.
- **Additional needs:** Additional needs were calculated by identifying the existing Team Generation Rates in the district, to identify the number of people that are currently required to form a team of various types in each of the pitch sports. These figures have then been applied to the ONS mid-2018 population projections, to calculate the gross additional team and related pitch needs arising from the additional population.
- **Net requirements:** The net requirement for additional provision was calculated by comparing the extra required capacity to the current spare capacity where appropriate, to identify the difference.
- **Location of provision:** The location of additional pitch and related facilities needs was established by comparing the respective levels of projected population growth in each part of the district.

2.2.8 The criteria assessed

- **Quantity:** The number of pitches and related facilities was established and cross checked against other sources provided by local stakeholders and consultees.
- **Quality:** The quality of playing pitches was assessed by visiting every pitch in the district during the respective playing seasons and assessing quality criteria using the recognised non-technical visual assessment criteria. The ratings for each aspect of each pitch were checked and challenged via the clubs' survey and stakeholder consultation and amended where necessary.
- **Accessibility:** The accessibility of pitches, in particular the extent of secured community use and pricing was assessed, to identify any barriers to use that might impact on the capacity of local provision.
- **Strategic priority:** The assessment of need and priorities for provision was identified by the governing bodies of the respective pitch sports.

- **Used capacity:** The used capacity of existing pitches at each site was assessed using a bespoke supply-demand spreadsheet.

2.2.9 Delivering the strategy and keeping it up-to-date

The 'Stage E' review involved an assessment of:

- How the delivery of the recommendations and action plan has progressed and any changes required to the priority afforded to each action.
- How the PPS 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 means 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.

2.3 Outdoor Sports Facilities Methodology

The methodology applied to assess the needs and opportunities for sports facilities follows Sport England's recommended approach, advocated in 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance' (2014).

2.3.1 Preparing and tailoring the approach

HDC convened a project steering group led by officers from Strategic Planning, Environmental Services and Community Partnerships and involving advice from Sport England and the relevant governing bodies of sport to devise:

- The vision and objectives of the review of outdoor sports facilities in the district.
- The scope of the exercise, including the types of facilities to include, the geographical scope and the overall timeframe for the assessment.
- The local and wider strategic context.
- The project management arrangements for the study, including the decision to engage assistance from external consultants.

A project brief was produced, approved and signed-off to complete Stage A of the process.

2.3.2 Assessing sports facilities supply

The assessment of sports facilities supply at Stage B of the study involved four main elements:

- **Quantity:** Establishing what facilities there are in the district, with details of their dimensions, technical information like playing surfaces and floodlighting. This included consideration of facilities not currently in use, those not available to the community and significant provision in neighbouring areas that serves some needs of Harborough district residents.
- **Quality:** Auditing the quality of facilities. This involved assessing each facility in terms of its condition (its age, appeal, fabric and ancillary provision like changing and car parking; factors that will influence its attractiveness to users) and fitness for purpose (its technical specifications and ability to accommodate an appropriate standard of play).
- **Accessibility:** Determining spatial distribution of provision in the district by GIS mapping of each facility type, including catchment analysis appropriate to the scale and role of each facility.
- **Availability:** Identifying how much each facility is used, whether there is any existing spare capacity and if there is any scope to increase capacity. This involved consideration of programming and usage data, opening times and pricing levels, which was secured through consultation with facility providers and operators.

The information was collated and analysed in a facilities supply report, which was evaluated and approved by the project steering group.

2.3.3 Assessing sports facilities demand

The assessment of sports facilities demand at Stage B of the study involved five main elements:

- **Local population profile:** Establishing the local demography, including the size, age profile, affluence/deprivation, health indices and growth projections.
- **Sports participation:** Identifying local sports participation characteristics, through analysing the results of Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey, local facilities usage figures and a survey of local clubs to establish membership patterns and trends.
- **Unmet, displaced and future demand:** In addition to current expressed demand, analysis of unmet (demand which exists but cannot currently be satisfied), displaced (demand from within the district that is satisfied elsewhere) and future demand (based on projected population and participation increases) was identified.
- **Local participation priorities:** Establishing any local priorities for the use of sports facilities, such as those relating to corporate health and well-being policies.

- **Sport-specific priorities:** Determining through consultation with the governing bodies of sport and a local sports clubs survey, whether there are any sport-specific priorities for Harborough district.

The information was collated and analysed in a facilities demand report, which was evaluated and approved by the project steering group.

2.3.4 Assessing the balance between sports facilities supply and demand

To complete Stage B of the process, the supply and demand information was brought together for each type of facility to establish:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough facilities with sufficient capacity to meet needs?
- **Quality:** Are the facilities fit for purpose for the users?
- **Accessibility:** Are the facilities in the right physical location for the users?
- **Availability:** Are the facilities available for those who want to use them?

2.3.5 Applying the assessment and Developing the strategy

The results of the assessment was applied to produce an assessment which included:

- **Options for provision:** The options for meeting current and future facilities needs were identified under Sport England's recommended headings of 'Protect', 'Provide' and 'Enhance'.
- **Policy recommendations:** Arranged under the headings of 'Protect', 'Provide' and 'Enhance', planning policy recommendations were developed to ensure that the implementation of the strategy will be supported by the provisions of the Local Plan.

2.3.6 Reviewing the strategy

The action plans for the sports assessed under the 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance' have been reviewed to ensure that the PPS still comprises a robust and up-to-date assessment of needs in the district.

2.4 Stakeholder consultation

Information was gathered from a wide range of consultees including:

- **Sport England:** Guidance on the assessment methodology.
- **Harborough District Council:** Consultation with officers from Strategic Planning, Environmental Services and Community Partnerships on their respective areas of responsibility.

- **Neighbouring local authorities:** Information on their playing pitch and outdoor sports facilities assessments and the impact of any cross-border issues was obtained from Rugby, Blaby, Oadby and Wigston, Leicester, Charnwood, Melton, Rutland, Corby, Kettering and Daventry councils.
- **Governing bodies of sport:** Information on local and wider strategic priorities and local supply and demand information.

2.5 Summary

Assessing playing pitch needs in Harborough district using the approach advocated by Sport England in its *'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance'* and outdoor sports facilities using its *'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance'* has ensured that the exercise is both robust and evidence-based and as a result complies with the provisions of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework.

3 THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Key findings:

- **An ageing population:** Demographic change by 2031 will see a significant increase in the proportion of people aged over 50 and since sport and physical activity rates typically decline with age, the market for local playing pitches will evolve accordingly.
- **Population growth:** The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast an increase of 10,155 people (or 11.9%) over the period 2021 to 2031. This will increase demand for facilities for sport and physical activity.
- **Overall sports participation rates:** Local participation rates in sport and physical activity have increased significantly over the past five years (based upon Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey) and are well above the respective county, regional and national figures.

3.1 Introduction

This section identifies the context within which pitches and outdoor sports facilities provision is made in Harborough district.

3.2 Background

3.2.1 Location

Harborough district covers an area of 238 square miles of rural south and east Leicestershire. It borders ten local authorities in four counties (Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire), namely Rugby, Blaby, Oadby and Wigston, Leicester, Charnwood, Melton, Rutland, North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire.

3.2.2 Settlement pattern

The district's population is split between the two market towns of Market Harborough and Lutterworth, the large villages of Broughton Astley, Great Glen, Kibworth and Fleckney, and Bushby, Thurnby and Scraptoft which are 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.

3.2.3 Transport links

The district's central location gives it 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.

3.3 Demography

3.3.1 Current population

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) mid-2020 population estimates for Harborough indicate 95,537 residents. This represents an increase of 10,155 people (11.9% growth) since the 2011 Census figure of 85,382.

3.3.2 Age structure

Analysis of the ONS mid-2020 sub-national population projections shows that Harborough district has a relatively elderly age profile compared with both Leicestershire and England.

Age	Harborough No.	Harborough %	Leicestershire %	England %
0-14	16,233	17.0%	16.8%	18.1%
15-24	9,114	9.5%	11.8%	11.6%
25-49	27,809	29.1%	30.4%	32.6%
50-64	21,383	22.4%	20.5%	19.2%
65+	20,998	22.0%	20.5%	18.5%
Total	95,537	100.0%	100%	100%

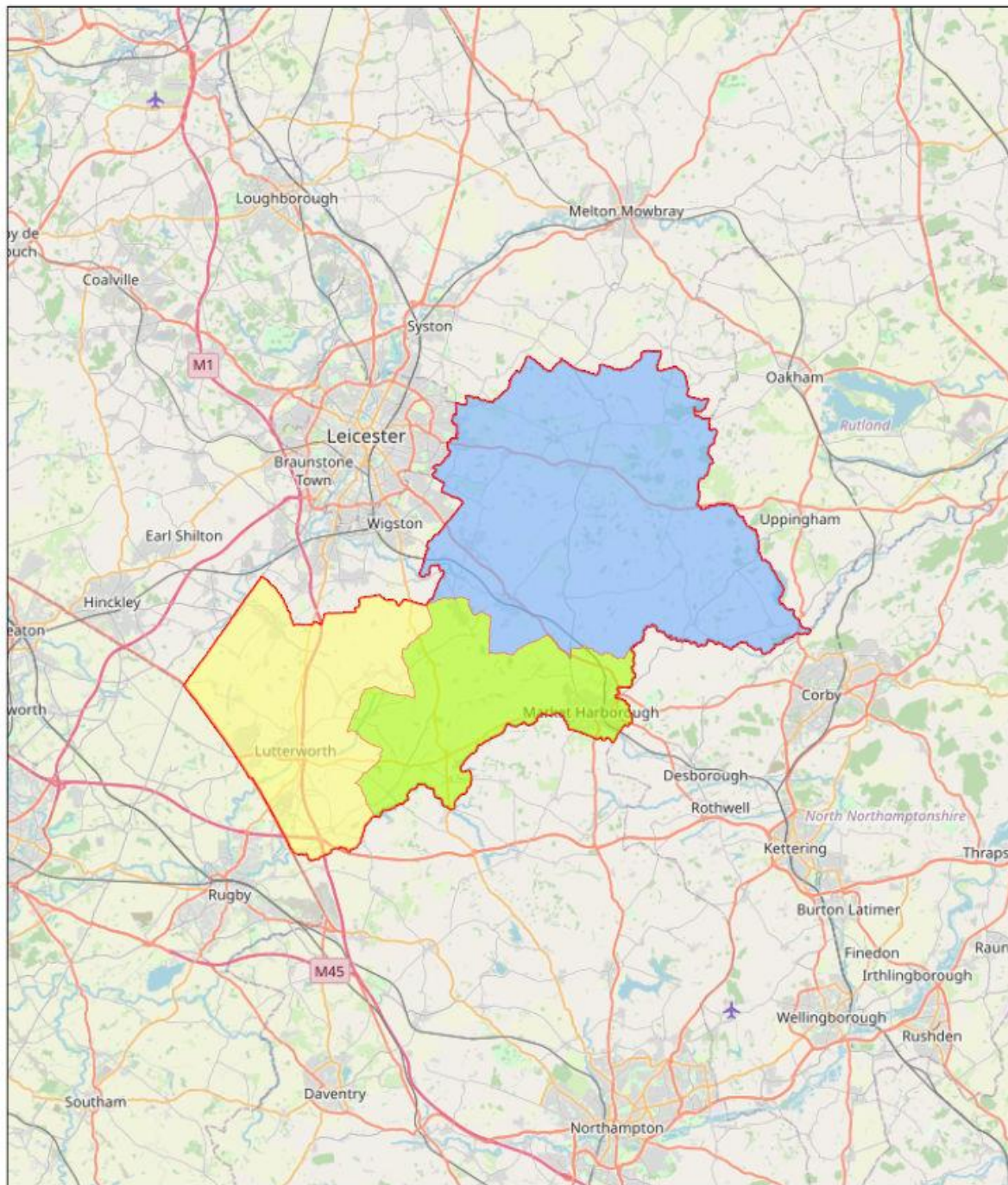
3.3.3 Sub-areas

The district can be divided into sub-areas, to help analyse provision at a more local level and in particular to assess the differential impact on supply and demand for sports facilities arising from housing growth. Three areas are identified in the 'Harborough Playing Pitch Strategy' (2018), on the basis that they comprise discrete areas within which the population will typically look to access provision on a relatively local basis. The ward populations are ONS 2020 small-area estimates:

Sub-area	Wards	Ward Population 2020	Sub-area Population 2020
West sub-area	Boughton Astley, Primethorpe and Sutton Boughton Astley South and Leire Dunton Lutterworth East Lutterworth West Misterton Ullesthorpe	4,672 5,359 2,651 5,483 5,040 2,751 3,007	28,963
Middle sub-area	Bosworth Fleckney Great Bowden and Arden Little Bowden Lubbenham Logan Welland	3,275 5,705 5,595 6,162 2,883 6,350 8,407	38,377

East sub-area	Billesdon and Tilton	2,630	28,197
	Glen	5,685	
	Kibworths	8,492	
	Nevill	2,984	
	Thurnby and Houghton	8,406	

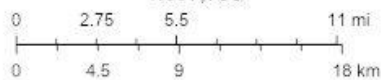
HARBOROUGH - Sub Areas



2/14/2022

- WEST SUB AREA
- MIDDLE SUB AREA
- EAST SUB AREA
- Harborough District Boundary

1:557,790



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3.3.4 Population growth

The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 104,839 by 2031, an increase of 6,064 (or 6.1%). Comparison of the projections for 2024 and 2031 shows that the percentage of people aged under 50 falls from 54.2% to 53.2%, with proportionate population increases amongst the over 50s.

Age	Population 2024	% 2024	Population 2031	% 2031
0-14	16,277	16.5%	16,373	15.6%
15-24	8,834	8.9%	9,625	9.2%
25-49	28,306	28.7%	29,830	28.4%
50-64	22,117	22.4%	21,451	20.5%
65+	23,242	23.5%	27,560	26.3%
Total	98,775	100.0%	104,839	100.0%

3.3.5 Housing development

The location of population growth will be determined to a large extent by housing development allocations as set out in the Harborough Local Plan (2019) and current commitments. The projected number of dwellings by 2041 are set out in the table below (note: data provided May 2024. The new Local Plan to 241 will provide updated figures as it progresses to adoption). Details relating to current planning permissions (commitments) are set out in the Council's latest 5 Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement available on the Council's website.

Settlement type	Development	Number of dwellings
Urban area	Strategic Site (Oadby)	1,200
	Scraptoft/Thurnby/Bushby	1,718
Market towns	Lutterworth	2,209
	Market Harborough	4,317
Large villages	Broughton Astley	738
	Fleckney	742
	Great Glen	610
	Kibworth	730
Medium villages	Various	800
Small villages	Various	1,063
TOTAL	-	14,127

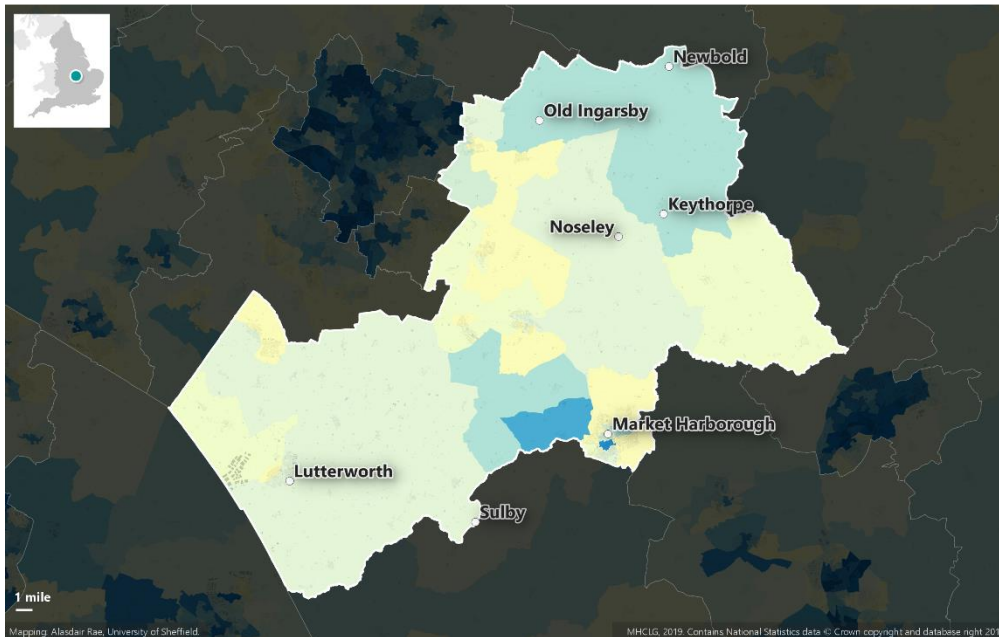
3.3.6 Deprivation

Deprivation: The English Indices of Deprivation (2019) show that the district is one of the least deprived in England. It is ranked 308 out of 317 local authority areas in England. 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.

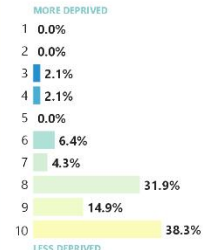
English Indices of Deprivation 2019

HARBOROUGH



Local deprivation profile

% of LSOAs in each national deprivation decile



What this map shows

This is a map of Indices of Deprivation 2019 data for **Harborough**. The colours on the map indicate the deprivation decile of each Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) for England as a whole, and the coloured bars above indicate the proportion of LSOAs in each national deprivation decile. The most deprived areas (decile 1) are shown in blue. It is important to keep in mind that the Indices of Deprivation relate to small areas and do not tell us how deprived, or wealthy, individual people are. LSOAs have an average population of just under 1,700 (as of 2017).



3.3.7 Health

Local health indices recorded in Public Health England's *'Health Profile for Harborough'* (2019) show that in general the health of people in the district is better than in England as a whole, although:

- 7.2% (1,070) of children live in low income families.
- Life expectancy at birth in Harborough is 2.0 years longer for men and 1.7 years longer for women than the respective national averages. However, life expectancy is 3.8 years lower for men and 1.7 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of the district than in the least deprived areas.
- The prevalence of obese children aged 10-11 years is 14.9%, compared with 20.2% nationally.
- 57.7% of the adult population of the district is classified as overweight or obese (Public Health England). This is well below the national average of 62.0%.

3.4 Sport and physical activity

3.4.1 Participation rates

Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey measures physical activity rates amongst people aged 16 and over at district, county, regional and national levels. The definitions used in the survey are as follows:

- **Sport and physical activity:** This includes at least 10-minutes of moderate or higher intensity sports activities, walking and cycling for leisure or travel, fitness and dance.
- **Active:** The 'Active' population is defined as those doing at least 150 minutes of the above activities per week.
- **Fairly active:** The 'Fairly active' population is defined as those doing between 30 and 149 minutes of the above activities per week.
- **Inactive:** The 'Inactive' population is defined as those doing 30 minutes or less of the above activities per week.

The key data for Harborough district since 2015 is set out below and shows an upward trend in activity levels:

Nov '15 - Nov '16	May '16 - May '17	Nov '16- Nov '17	May '17- May '18	Nov '17- Nov '18	May '18- May '19	Nov '18-Nov '19	May '19- May '20	Nov '19-Nov '20	May '20- May '21	Nov '20-Nov '21	Nov '22-Nov '23	% Change
60.1%	60.2%	62.1%	63.4%	64.7%	64.7%	64.5%	65.8%	69.9%	67.4%	64.3%	63.5%	+3.4%

In comparative terms activity levels in 2022/23 are just above the national average:

Area	Active	Fairly active	Inactive
Harborough	63.5%	13.5%	23.0%
Leicestershire	65.1%	12.5%	22.4%
East Midlands	62.2%	11.1%	26.7%
England	63.4%	10.9%	25.7%

3.4.2 Club membership

The 'Active Lives' survey also records rates of sports club membership amongst people aged 16 and over and who participated at least twice in the previous 28 days. The figures below show that rates are higher in Harborough district than for all the wider geographical comparators:

Harborough	Leicestershire	East Midlands	England
44.3%	42.1%	41.0%	42.8%

3.5 The local pitch and outdoor sports facilities supply network

Sports facilities provision in Harborough district comprises a mixed economy involving the public, voluntary and commercial sectors. The key providers are as follows:

- **Harborough District Council:** The Council provides playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities at several sites in the district.
- **Schools:** State and private secondary schools are major pitch providers in the district, although not all provision is fully community accessible.
- **Sports clubs:** Voluntary sector sports clubs provide and run a range of sports pitches and outdoor sports facilities.
- **Parish councils:** Several pitches and outdoor sports facilities are provided at village recreation grounds in the district.

3.6 *The implications for pitch and outdoor sports facilities provision*

The implications of the local context for playing pitch and outdoor sports facilities provision in Harborough district are as follows:

- **An ageing population:** Demographic change by 2031 will see a significant increase in the proportion of people aged over 50 and since sport and physical activity rates typically decline with age, the market for local playing pitches will evolve accordingly.
- **Population growth:** The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast an increase of 6,064 people (or 6.1%) over the period 2024 to 2031. An additional 14,127 dwellings are planned in the district by 2041. This will increase demand for facilities for sport and physical activity.
- **Overall sports participation rates:** Local participation rates in sport and physical activity have fallen slightly over the past five years (based upon Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey) but are generally above the respective county, regional and national figures.

4 STRATEGIC INFLUENCES

Key findings:

- **Corporate Plan:** The Plan includes a specific commitment to ‘Seek to improve the district’s leisure facilities and local infrastructure’.
- **Planning policy:** A robust, evidence-based assessment of playing pitch needs in the district will inform planning policy and the PPS will provide this to help ensure good future provision.
- **Government planning policy:** Policy emphasises the need to ‘enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs; for example through the provision of sports facilities’.
- **Sport England strategy:** Sport England’s strategy broadens the traditional definition of sports facilities from formal specialist provision, to include other ‘Active Environments’ that provide opportunities for informal and non-specialist activities for ‘Movement’. The Harborough PPS focuses on formal outdoor sports facilities needs as an important sub-set within the wider definition of ‘Active Environments’.

4.1 Introduction

This section examines the influence of relevant policies and priorities on pitches and outdoor sports facilities provision in Harborough district, including the impact of national strategies.

4.2 Harborough District Council Corporate Plan

4.2.1 Corporate vision

The Council’s aspirations for the district are set out in the ‘Harborough District Council Corporate Plan 2022/31’ (2022). The corporate vision is ‘working with our communities, we will build a future for the people of Harborough district that gives them the best life chances and opportunities through:

- Community leadership to create a sense of pride in our place.
- Promoting health and wellbeing and encouraging healthy life choices.
- Creating a sustainable environment to protect future generations.
- Supporting businesses and residents to deliver a prosperous local economy’.

4.3 *Harborough Local Plan*

4.3.1 Introduction

Harborough District Council's current adopted plan is the '*Harborough Local Plan 2011 - 2031*' (2019). It contains the following material of relevance:

4.3.2 Vision

The Local Plan vision includes a statement that 'communities will have access to improved social, recreational, sports, health and educational facilities'.

4.3.3 Policy G12: Open Space, Sport and Recreation

The policy states that:

- '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.
- 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 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
 - 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
 - The proposal is for alternative recreational provision which meets evidence of local need in such a way as to outweigh the loss.
- Developments of more than 10 dwellings which would result in deficiencies in the quantity, accessibility and/or quality of existing open space, sport and recreation facilities should contribute towards:
 - The provision of specific new open space, sport and recreation facilities in accordance with local standards; and/or
 - The enhancement of identified existing facilities to meet the relevant local standards.
- New open space, sport and recreation facilities should be provided within residential development sites (unless otherwise agreed by the Council) and should:
 - Be accessible, usable, of high quality and good design, visible and safe and include facilities for a range of ages;

- Enable links to be created between new development and surrounding recreational networks and facilities (including Public Rights of Way);
- Provide an appropriate landscaping and landscape maintenance scheme; and
- Specify, prior to the commencement of development, the responsibilities for management and maintenance in-perpetuity of the open space, sport and recreation facility.

4.4 The Government's Planning Policies

4.4.1 Introduction

In December 2023, the Government published revisions to the '*National Planning Policy Framework*' setting out its economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. Taken together, these policies articulate the Government's vision of sustainable development, which should be interpreted and applied locally to meet local aspirations.

4.4.2 Sustainable development

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' and there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.4.3 Promoting healthy and safe communities

'Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

- 'Promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other - for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages.
- Are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion - for example through the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high-quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
- Enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs - for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

4.4.4 Sport and leisure facilities

To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

- '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.
- Take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.
- Guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs.
- Ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community.
- Ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services'.

4.4.5 Open space and recreation

'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 and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. 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'.

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

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

4.4.6 Planning Practice Guidance

The Government also issued '*Planning Practice Guidance*' in 2014 and the following is relevant:

- **Open space, sport and recreation provision:** 'Open space should be taken into account in planning for new development and considering proposals that may affect existing open space. It can provide health and recreation benefits to people

living and working nearby. Authorities and developers may refer to Sport England's guidance on how to assess the need for sports and recreation facilities. Local planning authorities are required to consult Sport England in certain cases where development affects the use of land as playing fields. Where there is no requirement to consult, local planning authorities are advised to consult Sport England in cases where development might lead to loss of, or loss of use for sport, of any major sports facility, the creation of a site for one or more playing pitches, artificial lighting of a major outdoor sports facility or a residential development of 300 dwellings or more'.

- **Healthy and safe communities:** 'The design and use of the built and natural environments, including green infrastructure are major determinants of health and wellbeing. Planning and health need to be considered together in two ways: in terms of creating environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles, and in terms of identifying and securing the facilities needed for primary, secondary and tertiary care, and the wider health and care system (taking into account the changing needs of the population)'.

4.5 **The Government's Sports Strategy**

The Government's sports strategy 'Get Active - A Strategy for the Future of Sport and Physical Activity' (2023) contains three main priorities, outlined below.

- **Driving participation and addressing inactivity:**
 - 'Ensuring everyone is focused on increasing physical activity, meaning fewer inactive children, and narrowing the gap on inactivity where groups are not being reached, with visible progress across the country by 2030'.
 - 'Setting the future direction for facilities and spaces where people can be active by delivering multi-million pound investment into grassroots facilities and setting a clear strategic ambition for the future. This will mean facilities that reflect the needs of local communities, supported by hundreds of millions of pounds of government and local authority investment'.
- **Strengthening the integrity of sport:**
 - 'Help the sector to be welcoming to all, by promoting women's and disability sport, championing diversity across the sector and holding the sector to account for investing in these groups. This will mean groups feel the benefit of public and private investment, that we see meaningful progress by 2030, and that cultural issues which put people off sport are relentlessly tackled'.
 - 'Improve how issues and concerns are dealt with in the sector, starting by launching a call for evidence around sport integrity issues. This will increase confidence in sport so that everyone knows that their welfare is at the heart of the sport system, whatever sport they play'.
- **Making sport more sustainable:**

- 'Supporting the sector to access additional, alternative forms of investment to help it continue to grow and thrive, and by highlighting best practice, good governance mechanisms, and opportunities offered by technology and innovation. This will allow sport to thrive for future generations and support the continuation of our sporting institutions'.
- 'Working towards a more environmentally sustainable sector that delivers on the government's net-zero ambitions. We will do this by championing the role that sport can play in sustainability, and bringing together government departments, the sport sector and subject matter experts to share information and provide support'.

4.6 Sport England Strategy

4.6.1 Vision

Sport England's strategy '*Uniting the Movement*' (2021) contains a vision for 'a nation of more equal, inclusive and connected communities. A country where people live happier, healthier and more fulfilled lives'.

4.6.2 Context

The strategy concludes that 'there are deep-rooted inequalities in sport and physical activity, which mean there are people who feel excluded from being active because the right options and opportunities are not there:

- Disabled people and people with a long-term health condition are twice as likely to be physically inactive than those without a disability or health condition.
- People from a lower socioeconomic group (NS-SEC 6-8) are more likely to be inactive than people in higher social groups.
- Women are less active than men and this gender gap starts with girls being less active from a very young age.
- People from Asian and black backgrounds are far more likely to be physically inactive than people who are white'.

4.6.3 Advocating movement, sport and physical activity

Proposed actions include:

- 'Continue to build, establish and grow partnerships and a common purpose across both the government and our sector to join up policies, strategies and approaches'.
- 'Continue to develop and deliver behavioural change campaigns, building on the success of '*This Girl Can*', '*We Are Undefeatable*' and '*Join the Movement*', to put movement, sport and physical activity at the forefront of national conversations'.

- ‘Keep building evidence that shows the links between the issues we all care about as a nation and the value of movement, sport and physical activity as part of the solution’.
- ‘Grow the extent to which we communicate, both to people and organisations, the power of getting active to help strengthen public consensus around the importance of being physically active’.

4.6.4 Five key issues

These are identified as:

- **Recover and reinvent:** ‘Recovering from the biggest crisis in a generation and reinventing as a vibrant, relevant and sustainable network of organisations providing sport and physical activity opportunities that meet the needs of different people’.
- **Connecting communities:** Focusing on sport and physical activity’s ability to make better places to live and bring people together.
- **Positive experiences for children and young people:** Unrelenting focus on positive experiences for all children and young people as the foundations for a long and healthy life.
- **Connection with health and wellbeing:** Strengthening the connections between sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing, so more people can feel the benefits of, and advocate for, an active life.
- **Active environments:** Creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.

4.6.5 Active Environments

The key proposals for facilities are contained in the ‘Active Environments’ theme. This identifies three types of provision:

- **Dedicated sport and physical activity facilities:** ‘Dedicated sport and leisure facilities like leisure centres need to be co-created, well designed, supported and maintained to benefit the local community and their users’.
- **Other community spaces:** ‘Not usually designed exclusively for exercise, and certainly not for specific sports, these places are a vital resource for many and the activity they host provides a useful income to the venue. They may never be perfect competition or training spaces, but they attract people who might never go to a sports club, leisure centre or private gym. The development of community spaces like these is important to people who are regularly or newly active’.
- **The wider built environment:** ‘These places and spaces influence how much we move. Good design can help to increase activity levels by encouraging walking

and cycling. This means connecting dedicated sport and activity facilities and community spaces, by making it easy for people to walk and cycle, by better design and by using the built and natural environments around us’.

4.7 Sport England Playing Field Policies

Sport England is a statutory consultee on all planning applications involving either the provision, or loss of, playing pitches. It considers proposals affecting playing fields in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (in particular paragraph 103) and against its own playing fields policy which states the following:

‘Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development that would lead to the loss, or prejudice the use of:

- All or any part of a playing field, or
- Land which has been used as a playing field and remains undeveloped, or
- Land allocated for use as a playing field.

Unless in the judgement of Sport England, the development as a whole meets one of more of the following specific exceptions:

- **Exception 1:** A robust and up-to-date assessment has demonstrated to the satisfaction of Sport England that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment, which will remain the case should the development be permitted and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport.
- **Exception 2:** The proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field and does not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use.
- **Exception 3:** The proposal affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:
 - Reduce the size of any playing pitch.
 - Result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas).
 - Reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capacity to rotate or reposition pitches to maintain their quality.
 - Result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site.
 - Prejudice the use of any remaining areas of playing field on the site.

- **Exception 4:** The area of playing field to be lost as a result of the proposed development will be replaced prior to the commencement of the development by a new area of playing field:
 - Of equivalent or better quality.
 - Of equivalent or greater quantity.
 - In a suitable location.
 - Subject to equivalent or better accessibility and management arrangements.
- **Exception 5:** The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss, or prejudice to the use, of the area of playing field’.

4.8 The implications for playing pitch and outdoor sports facilities provision

The implications of strategic influences on playing pitch and outdoor sports facilities provision in Harborough district are:

- **Corporate Plan:** The Plan includes a specific commitment to promote health and wellbeing and encourage healthy lifestyle choices.
- **Planning policy:** A robust, evidence-based assessment of playing pitch needs in the district will inform planning policy and the PPS will provide this to help ensure good future provision.
- **Government planning policy:** Policy emphasises the need to ‘enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs - for example through the provision of sports facilities’.
- **Sport England strategy:** Sport England’s strategy broadens the traditional definition of sports facilities from formal specialist provision, to include other ‘Active Environments’ that provide opportunities for informal and non-specialist activities for ‘Movement’. The Harborough PPS focuses on formal outdoor sports facilities needs as an important sub-set within the wider definition of ‘Active Environments’. Sport England’s playing field policy and its statutory planning role remain unchanged.

5 FOOTBALL PITCH NEEDS

5.1 Introduction

The key stakeholders delivering football in Harborough district are:

- **Leicestershire and Rutland FA:** All football clubs in the district affiliate to the Leicestershire and Rutland FA, which administers the game in the county.
- **FA-affiliated clubs:** There are 23 FA-affiliated clubs in Harborough district, who collectively run 62 men's teams, two women's teams, 53 youth male (11v11) teams, 10 youth female (11v11) teams, 39 youth male (9v9) teams, seven youth female (9v9) teams, 35 mixed mini-soccer (7v7) teams, six female mini-soccer 7v7 teams and 53 mixed mini-soccer (5v5) teams.
- **Pitch providers:** A range of organisations provide football pitches in the district, in particular the council, clubs and schools.

5.2 Strategic context

5.2.1 The Football Association

'Time for Change: The FA Strategy 2020-2024' (2020) has a number of targets with important implications for football and its facilities needs at grassroots level (see box below).

- **Equal opportunities for every girl:** 'We will work in partnership with schools and teachers to provide tailored programmes and training. We will ensure all girls (5-16 years of age) have access to an inclusive club with an appropriate competitive pathway (including our innovative Wildcats programme)'.
- **Deliver 5,000 quality pitches:** 'The poor quality and availability of our pitches remains the number one frustration in grassroots football and an embarrassment for our country. Significantly improving the quality and durability of our grass pitches and building more artificial pitches is a necessity. To achieve this ambition by 2024, we will work through our delivery partner the Football Foundation, to build and improve 5,000 pitches across England, including using new digital methods to support ground staff up and down the country'.

The Football Association's 'National Facilities Strategy' (2020) also contains a number of longer-term (10-year) facilities-related targets:

- 1,000 new '3G' football turf pitches in a mix of sizes and settings, dependent upon local needs, all aimed at enhancing the quality of the playing experience.
- 20,000 improved natural-turf pitches: to help address drop-off due to a poor playing experience.
- 1,000 new changing pavilions/clubhouses all linked to priority sites.

- Small-sided facilities to grow the small-sided game for teams and leagues, recreational and informal play.

5.2.2 The Local Football Facility Plan

The Football Foundation has produced a Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) for each local authority area in England. LFFPs are a portfolio of priority projects for potential investment - it is not a detailed demand and supply analysis of all pitch provision in a local area. It cannot be used as a replacement for a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and it will not be accepted as an evidence base for site change of use or disposal. LFFPs do however build on available/existing local evidence and strategic plans and may adopt relevant actions from a PPS and/or complement these with additional investment priorities. The national funding partners have significantly increased investment to accelerate efforts to deliver more and better football facilities for the grassroots game. The purpose of the 'Harborough LFFP' (2020) is to identify the priority projects for potential investment in the district. It will be updated to reflect the findings of the PPS, but the key existing findings are below:

Overall priorities for football in Harborough

- Increasing access and provision of '3G' football turf pitches for training and match play.
- Improving changing room facilities for adult football.
- Improving or enhancing facilities to support women and girls football.
- Providing appropriate facilities to support participants within BAME communities.
- Working with clubs and partners to provide access to appropriate high-quality facilities.
- Developing or enabling access to suitable facilities countywide to support the development of futsal.
- Providing opportunities to support informal provision and recreational play.

3G' football turf pitches:

- There are currently three full-sized (11v11) '3G' football turf pitches in Harborough district..
- There are four small-sided '3G' football turf pitches in the district.
- There is a current requirement for one additional full-sized '3G' football turf pitch in the district, with Lutterworth the priority location.

Grass pitches:

- Five priority projects for potential investment were identified. Prioritisation was informed by local partners based on a rationale of selecting sites in the poorest condition that are currently/potentially well-utilised and which reflect the strategic focus to improve football participation.
- Potential sites to meet the shortfall are identified as Kibworth Town FC, Fleckney Sports and Leisure Centre, Harborough Town Community Football Ground, Gilmorton Playing Fields and Symington's Recreation Ground.

Changing rooms/pavilions/clubhouses:

Seven priority projects for potential investment were identified for a new '3G' pitch in Lutterworth, Kibworth Town FC, Fleckney Sports and Leisure Centre, Gilmorton Playing Fields, Lutterworth Athletic FC, Symington's Recreation Ground and Thomas Estley Community College.

5.2.3 Neighbouring local authorities

Football needs assessments in the neighbouring local authorities highlighted the following cross-boundary issues:

Rugby

- The *'Rugby Playing Pitch Strategy'* (2013) identified a current shortfall of youth football pitches and a projected future deficit for all pitch types.
- The *'Rugby Local Football Facility Plan'* (2018) notes a shortfall of three '3G' football turf pitches. Four sites are prioritised for grass pitch improvements all of which are close to the Harborough boundary.

Blaby

- The *'Blaby Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment'* (2020) identifies that 'current supply of football pitch provision is insufficient with shortfalls evident on adult and youth 11v11 pitch formats. When considering future demand, these shortfalls will worsen on all formats, with shortfalls emerging on mini pitch types'.
- The *'Blaby Local Football Facility Plan'* (2019) notes a shortfall of six '3G' football turf pitches. Nine sites have been prioritised for grass pitch improvements one of which (Countesthorpe Leysland Community College) is close to the boundary with Harborough.

Oadby and Wigston

- The *'Oadby and Wigston Playing Pitch Strategy'* (2015) identifies a shortfall of youth and mini-soccer pitches.
- The *'Oadby and Wigston Local Football Facility Plan'* (2019) notes that there are sufficient full-sized '3G' football turf pitches. The new 3G pitch at Oadby Beauchamp already has the majority of regular booking slots filled. Six sites have been prioritised for grass pitch improvements one of which (Coombe Park) is close to the boundary with Harborough.

Leicester

- The *'Leicester City Council Playing Pitch Strategy Review'* (2022) identifies a fall of 4% in football participation in the city since 2017, but additional '3G' pitch provision is still identified as a priority.
- The *'Leicester Local Football Facility Plan'* (2020) notes a shortfall of two '3G' football turf pitches, with proposed additional provision in the north-east of the city, close to the Harborough boundary. 16 sites have been prioritised for grass pitch improvements one of which (Judgemeadow Community College) is close to the boundary with Harborough.

Judgemeadow is currently used by several local clubs in addition to lots of social groups. Whilst it borders HDC, it borders large chunks of rural land and draws its users almost exclusively from Evington, Stoneygate and Oadby.

Charnwood

- The '*Charnwood Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2018) identifies that there is spare capacity of all types of grass football pitches in the Rural South-East sub-area that adjoins Harborough district.
- The '*Charnwood Local Football Facility Plan*' (2019) notes a shortfall of three '3G' football turf pitches, with one proposed facility (at Cedars Academy, Birstall) whilst technically within a mile or so of the border with HDC, is north of Leicester and far from the population centres in Harborough.
- 13 sites have been prioritised for grass pitch improvements none of which are close to the boundary with Harborough.

Melton

- Melton Borough Council is working on an updated Playing Pitch Strategy for the borough in 2022. The '*Melton Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2014) identifies that although there is a shortfall of one youth pitch to meet future demand in the East Melton area, but that with spare capacity elsewhere there is sufficient pitch space to meet all future needs.
- The '*Melton Local Football Facility Plan*' (2019) notes a shortfall of two '3G' football turf pitches in Melton. Neither of the proposed sites is in the vicinity of the boundary with Harborough. Three sites have been prioritised for grass pitch improvements none of which are close to the boundary with Harborough.

Rutland

- The '*Rutland Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2024) identifies that 'the current supply and demand analysis for accessible pitch provision shows spare capacity on adult 11v11, youth 11v11 and 9v9 pitches. However, there is a deficit of 7v7 and 5v5 provision. The future supply and demand analysis for accessible pitch provision shows that there will still be spare capacity on youth 11v11 pitches in Rutland. However, when taking into account both population growth and latent demand, there will be no spare capacity on adult 11v11 pitches, the current capacity on 9v9 pitches will be turned into a deficit of -0.5 and the deficit of 7v7 and 5v5 provision will both worsen'.
- The '*Rutland Local Football Facility Plan*' (2019) notes a shortfall of one '3G' football turf pitch in Oakham, although few players would travel the distance from the main population centres of Harborough to Oakham. Three sites have been prioritised for grass pitch improvements, including two in Oakham.

Corby (now part of North Northamptonshire)

- The '*Corby Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan*' (2017) identifies sufficient current supply of all grass pitches and '3G' football turf pitches except for youth 11v11 pitches, but a deficiency of all types of pitch by 2031.

- The ‘*Corby Local Football Facility Plan*’ (2020) notes a shortfall of one ‘3G’ football turf pitch in Corby. Five sites have been prioritised for grass pitch improvements, all of which are close to the East sub-area of Harborough but host clubs playing in the Northamptonshire leagues.

Kettering (now part of North Northamptonshire)

- The ‘*Kettering Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy Needs Assessment Report*’ (2020) identifies a current and future shortfall in all types of football pitch in the borough, although there is no football activity in the ‘Rural sub-area’ which adjoins Harborough district.
- The ‘*Kettering Local Football Facility Plan*’ (2020) notes a shortfall of two ‘3G’ football turf pitches. Six sites have been prioritised for grass pitch improvements, none of which are close to the boundary with Harborough district.

Daventry (now part of West Northamptonshire)

- The ‘*Daventry Playing Pitch Strategy*’ (2018) identifies spare capacity for all types of football pitch in the ‘East sub-area’ adjacent to Harborough district, although a shortfall of four pitches is projected by 2029.
- The ‘*Daventry Local Football Facility Plan*’ (2020) notes a shortfall of one ‘3G’ football turf pitch in the district. Seven sites have been prioritised for grass pitch improvements, including one at Crick Athletic FC that is close to the boundary with Harborough.

5.2.4 Findings of the 2022 Harborough PPS

The key findings of the ‘*Harborough Playing Pitch Strategy*’ (2022) in relation to football are below:

- ***Local clubs:*** There is a strong network of England Accredited football clubs in Harborough district, providing high quality coaching and playing opportunities.
- ***Increased demand:*** The number of FA-affiliated football teams in the district increased from 180 in 2017/17 to 244 in 2022/23, a 35.6% increase. The growth is apparent in all age groups apart from Mini 5v5.
- ***Unmet demand:*** Consultation with local clubs indicated that a total of 37 additional teams of all age groups could be accommodated in Harborough district if the quality and quantity of pitch provision was improved, an increase of 11.5% from the number of existing teams.
- ***Provision in neighbouring areas:*** Assessments of football pitch provision in Playing Pitch Strategies in neighbouring areas mostly indicate deficiencies, particularly for ‘3G’ football turf pitches. The absence of any available spare capacity in surrounding areas means that there is no scope for exporting football demand from Harborough district.
- ***Grass pitch supply:*** An examination of grass pitch supply suggested that in quantitative terms there is little if any local spare capacity.

- **Grass pitch quality:** Just over 10% of pitches in the district are rated as ‘poor’ quality, with consequent reductions in carrying capacity. Several others suffer from poor drainage and so are rated at the lower end of ‘standard’ quality.
- **Changing facilities:** 30 pitches in the district (33.7%) are served by ‘poor’ quality or no changing facilities.
- **Unsecured access:** 18.2% of the pitches with community use and used are on sites without secured use, meaning that in theory community use could be rescinded at any time.
- **‘3G’ football turf pitches:** There are three full-sized ‘3G’ pitches in Harborough district (plus a fourth pitch under construction at Lutterworth Athletic FC), but many local clubs have identified the lack of floodlit, all-weather pitches as an impediment to the development of the game locally.

5.2.5 Implications of the strategic context

The implications of the strategic context for football in Harborough district are as follows:

- **‘3G’ pitches:** The increased dependence on ‘3G’ football turf pitches for youth football and mini-soccer matches will place stresses on existing provision in the district.
- **Neighbouring areas:** There is some evidence of deficiencies in pitch provision in neighbouring areas which are likely to impact on Harborough.
- **Local Football Facility Plan:** The LFFP provides a helpful framework within which to identify priority developments.
- **The 2022 PPS:** The 2018 PPS constitutes a valuable benchmark against which to measure change in the intervening period.

5.3 The views of local stakeholders

5.3.1 Leicestershire and Rutland FA

Consultation with the Leicestershire and Rutland FA highlighted that:

- **Women and girls football:** The FA has big ambitions for the female game. To achieve this requires a combined effort across four pathways: education, recreation, competition and talent.
 - Education environments have a huge impact on the first experience of football for young girls. This pathway can offer many opportunities for females of all ages to develop and grow a lifelong interest in football.

- FA Wildcats girls football centres provide the first step on the recreational pathway, the programme provides girls aged 5-11 with regular opportunities to play football in a fun and engaging environment. Leicestershire and Rutland operates a number of Wildcats girls sessions and the priority is to grow this activity to 15 successful and sustainable centres across the county.
- There are 11 female teams in Harborough district; this is comparable to local areas of a similar size. The County FA's priority is to support existing clubs to grow and encourage more clubs to develop playing opportunities for females. The Leicestershire Women and Girl's League was formed through a merger of two separate leagues in 2020.
- For talented players, the nearest FA Regional Talent Club (RTC) is Leicester City Women's FC which is located in Leicester City. Higher level talent pathway opportunities are also provided regionally and nationally by the FA, culminating in the England Women's national squads. The nearest Women's Super League team is Leicester City Women's FC which provides player pathway opportunities for gifted and talented female players and a spectator interest for fans.
- **Disability football:** In Harborough district there are three football teams specifically for people with a disability. It is a priority of the County FA to grow this provision.
- **Recreational football:** Recreational football is played where facilities are typically booked and there might be someone to help organise. Examples include FA 'Just Play' sessions, walking football and casual pitch hire for small-sided match play. There are currently 12 FA 'Just Play' centres in Leicestershire and Rutland and the County FA is working towards having 15 in place by 2021. 16 walking football sessions are delivered at/by a range of community organisation including leisure centres, community centres and clubs. The County FA has prioritised walking football and Just Play for further growth. Other local recreational football programmes are primarily delivered through Leicester City Community Trust projects.
- **'3G' pitches:** There is potential to share the use of '3G' pitches with rugby users in the district.

5.3.2 Local football clubs

Borough Alliance FC: The club commented that 'we are unable to access enough suitable winter training facilities in the local area to meet the demands of the club'.

Harborough Town FC: The club made the following comments:

- 'The club would like to have a fenced, floodlit hybrid grass pitch for academy teams and to provide additional covered accommodation in the main ground plus a dedicated covered disability platform. The club would also like to build a small

gymnasium and to provide community rooms as an extension in the roof of the clubhouse’.

- ‘The first team changing room and the away team changing room for first team games will need increasing to 16.8m square if the club is promoted to step 4 of the National League System’.
- ‘The football facility at HTFC is one of the best in the country but we are now at max capacity and need either a floodlight hybrid or AGP to meet demand and anticipated growth over the next five years’.

Kibworth Town FC: The club made the following comments:

- ‘Masterplans are already developed for expanding onto adjoining fields to cope with the 400% increase in participation since 2015’.
- ‘Our 'internal waiting list' could support additional teams, specifically a Sunday 11v11 men's team and additional teams throughout the age groups’.
- ‘We have outgrown our current site with pitches overused and little to no additional capacity. This is preventing us from creating an additional men's side and a new women's team offering. Whilst there is a 9v9 3G facility at The Kibworth Mead Academy, it was somewhat short-sighted to create a 9v9 facility that cannot be used for the school matches beyond Yr7/U12 for boys and Yr8/U13 for girls’.
- ‘We'd prefer to be located at one location for ease of logistics and for the commercial sustainability of the club. The school offers the club no potential income streams to support the operations of the club’.
- ‘Kibworth Town FC has seen participation grow exponentially since 2015 and now encompasses 36+ football teams plus 2 additional U5/U6 development squads not included within the questions of this survey and 7 Futsal teams, again not covered within the scope of this survey. During this time the female playing numbers have grown from 3 to 156. The club comprises about 700 regular playing members and about 70 volunteer coaches. The club has outgrown our current facilities and DESPERATELY need larger facilities to support a thriving, ever-expanding club supporting not only local residents for Football, but we're now the home to Kibworth Coyotes Ladies Rounders Club and other local keep fit groups’.
- ‘The demand figures on grass pitches are often seasonal, as clubs use ‘3G’ training facilities wherever possible in the winter. Therefore for six months of the year, the weekly demand on the grass pitches is probably far greater as clubs return to the grass to save on pitch hire during the lighter evenings. Kibworth’s 11v11 pitches, for example, may have the equivalent of 3-4 matches per pitch each weekend and then maybe 8 hours of training through the week. Undrained pitches, such as those at Kibworth and many others around the district, are

recommended for only 2 hours of match equivalent use per week. Our pitches get up to 16 hours of use in the spring and autumn’.

- ‘Unauthorised use of pitches is a major factor on pitch wear - we’d estimate around 1-2 hours use in the school holidays each day by local school children’.
- The new 3G facility at Lutterworth will not relieve pressures on the need for additional 3G space further East as 20-minutes’ drive time in evening traffic doesn’t even reach the A5199. A 11v11 3G pitch in Kibworth could be developed on the Birds Barn site. This facility would be within a 20-minute drive of a far broader population from the edge of Desborough, all of Market Harborough in the south, Kibworth, Fleckney, The Langtons in the East, Great Glen, Most of Oadby and Wigston and as far as Clarendon Park/Knighton in Leicester to the North’.

Lutterworth Town FC: The club commented that ‘the male first team has no training pitch this season and for the last 7 years has trained outside of Harborough District. The juniors have a lack of pitches. A lack of 11-a-side pitches is a major concern’.

Medbourne FC: The club made the following comments:

- ‘Membership has increased due to another team folding and joining us a reserve team this season, however without the addition of a second team, membership would have decreased’.
- ‘We have our own pitch for matchdays, however we have to use alternative floodlit all-weather pitches for training. It proved extremely difficult to secure a booking this year with every facility throughout Corby and Kettering, as well as Uppingham and Harborough being fully booked during midweek. We eventually managed to find the last available spot at Montsaye Academy (Rothwell) otherwise we may not have been able to train this season’.
- ‘It would be brilliant if another artificial pitch was available for hire somewhere. The ones at Harborough Town are pretty much fully utilised by their own teams and the sand based surface at Welland Park isn’t really suitable for football’.

5.4 Developments since the 2022 PPS

The key developments since the assessment of football needs in the 2022 PPS are as follows:

- Expressed demand has increased significantly, with the number of teams playing in Harborough District has increased from 244 in 2022/23, to 279 in 2023/24, a 14.3% increase.
- ‘3G’ football turf pitch provision has improved with the installation of the full-sized pitch at Lutterworth Football Academy but is still below the seven pitches required to meet the FA’s guideline figure of one pitch per 38 teams.
- Welland Park Academy has resurfaced its artificial grass pitch with a GEN2 multisport carpet which caters for the needs of both football (training only) and

hockey. The Academy has also secured pitch improvement funding for its grass pitches, to improve capacity.

- It has been ascertained that it would be difficult for the Football Foundation to invest the Bird's Barn site due to access road issues. However alternative sites are being explored to support Kibworth Town FC's future growth plans.
- Houghton Rangers FC is awaiting a Football Foundation funding window to submit an application to improve facilities at Houghton Field.
- The pitches at Symington's Recreation Ground have been assessed as 'poor', but at this stage, due to lease and licence barriers, investment into the pitches has not yet been triggered.

5.5 Football pitch demand in Harborough district

5.5.1 Expressed demand

The following clubs affiliate to the Leicestershire and Rutland FA and played in Harborough district in season 2023/24. Clubs based outside the district but using Harborough pitches are shown in italics, as are any pitches used by Harborough-based clubs that are outside the district:

Club	Match venue(s)	Training venue(s)	Adult teams	Youth (11v11)	Youth (9v9)	Mini (7v7)	Mini (5v5)
AFC North Kilworth	North Kilworth SC	-	2	1	2	1	-
<i>Aylestone St. James FC</i>	Aylestone Rugby Club	Aylestone Rugby Club	1	-	-	-	-
Borough Alliance JFC	Symington's Recn. Grd. Robert Smyth Academy	Robert Smyth Academy Welland Park Academy	3	4	5	6	7
Brooke House College	Bowden's Park Lutterworth F'ball. Acad.	Bowden's Park	8	-	-	-	-
Countesthorpe Utd FC	Lutterworth F'ball. Acad.	Lutterworth F'ball. Acad.	1	-	-	-	-
Dunton & Broughton Utd	D&B Rangers FC Broughton Astley '3G' Thomas Estley College Frolesworth Road Rec.	D&B Rangers FC Broughton Astley '3G'	12	5	5	8	6
D & B Utd Ladies	D&B Rangers FC	-	1	-	-	-	-
Fleckney Athletic FC	Fleckney Sports Centre Lodge Road Recn. Grd.	Fleckney Sports Centre	1	5	2	2	2
Fleckney Masters FC	Fleckney Sports Centre	Fleckney Sports Centre	1	-	-	-	-
Gilmorton FC	Gilmorton Playing Field	Gilmorton Playing Field	1	-	-	-	-
Glen Villa FC	Great Glen Recn. Ground	Fleckney Sports Centre	3	2	2	2	-
Harborough Churches FC	<i>Clipston Playing Field</i>	-	1	-	-	-	-
Harborough Town FC	Bowden's Park	Bowden's Park	12	18	11	12	9
Houghton Rangers FC	Houghton Field	Houghton Field	2	2	1	3	3
Kibworth Town FC	Bird's Barn Kibworth Sports Centre	Bird's Barn Kibworth Sports Centre	6	11	7	4	6
Lutterworth Athletic FC	Lutterworth Soccer Ctre.	Lutterworth Soccer Ctre.	5	12	5	5	1
Lutterworth Town FC	Dunley Way Fields Moorbarns Way	<i>Aylestone Recn. Ground Brockington College</i>	4	4	2	2	2
Medbourne FC	Medbourne Sports Club	<i>Mountsaye Academy</i>	1	-	-	-	-
North Kilworth FC	Husband's Bosworth PF South Kilworth PF	Husband's Bosworth PF	3	3	2	2	2
River Swift FC	Gilmorton Playing Field	-	1	-	-	-	-
Thompsons United FC	Ullesthorpe PF Assoc.	Ullesthorpe PF Assoc	-	1	2	5	5
<i>Wigston Foxes</i>	Bowden's Park	-	-	-	-	-	1
TOTALS	-	-	69	66	46	52	44

5.5.2 Changes since 2022

Team numbers in 2022, as recorded in the 'Harborough Playing Pitch Strategy' (2022) compare with the current figures as follows:

- District summary:**

Season	Adult t 11v1 1	Youth 11v1 1	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5
2022/23	63	79	42	39	21
2023/24	69	68	46	52	44
Change	+6	-11	+4	+13	+23

- Changes at club level:**

Club	Year/change	Adult teams	Youth (11v11)	Youth (9v9)	Mini (7v7)	Mini (5v5)	TOTAL
AFC North Kilworth	2022/23	2	2	2	2	1	9
	2023/24	2	1	2	1	-	6
	Change	0	-1	0	-1	-1	-3
Aylestone St. James FC	2022/23	1	0	0	0	0	1
	2023/24	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Change	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blaby & Whetstone FC	2022/23	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2023/24	1	0	0	0	1	2
	Change	+1	0	0	0	+1	+2
Borough Alliance JFC	2022/23	3	6	5	6	3	23
	2023/24	3	4	5	6	7	25
	Change	0	-2	0	0	+4	+2
Brooke House College	2022/23	4	2	0	0	0	6
	2023/24	8	0	0	0	0	8
	Change	+4	-2	0	0	0	+2
Countesthorpe United FC	2022/23	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2023/24	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Change	+1	0	0	0	0	+1
Dunton & Broughton Utd	2022/23	6	6	5	7	2	26
	2023/24	12	5	5	8	6	36
	Change	+6	-1	0	+1	+4	+10
Dunton & Broughton United Ladies	2022/23	1	0	0	0	0	1
	2023/24	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Change	0	0	0	0	0	0
FC Cherry Tree	2022/23	1	0	0	0	0	1
	2023/24	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Change	-1	0	0	0	0	-1
Fleckney Athletic FC	2022/23	2	5	2	2	1	12
	2023/24	1	5	2	2	2	12
	Change	-1	0	0	0	+1	0
Fleckney Masters FC	2022/23	1	0	0	0	0	1
	2023/24	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Change	0	0	0	0	0	0

Club	Year/change	Adult teams	Youth (11v11)	Youth (9v9)	Mini (7v7)	Mini (5v5)	TOTAL
Gilmorton FC	2022/23	1	0	0	0	0	1
	2023/24	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Change	0	0	0	0	0	0
Glen Villa FC	2022/23	2	1	2	1	1	7
	2023/24	3	2	2	2	0	9
	Change	+1	+1	0	+1	-1	+2
Harborough Churches FC	2022/23	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2023/24	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Change	+1	0	0	0	0	+1
Harborough Town FC	2022/23	13	19	9	5	5	51
	2023/24	12	18	11	12	9	62
	Change	-1	-1	+2	+7	+4	+11
Houghton Rangers FC	2022/23	4	2	1	2	1	10
	2023/24	2	2	1	3	3	11
	Change	-2	0	0	+1	+2	+1
Kibworth Town FC	2022/23	7	13	7	4	3	34
	2023/24	6	11	7	4	6	34
	Change	-1	-2	0	0	+3	0
Lutterworth Athletic FC	2022/23	7	11	4	1	1	24
	2023/24	5	12	5	5	1	28
	Change	-2	+1	+1	+4	0	+4
Lutterworth Town FC	2022/23	2	4	2	2	1	11
	2023/24	4	4	2	2	2	14
	Change	+2	0	0	0	+1	+3
Medbourne FC	2022/23	2	0	0	0	0	2
	2023/24	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Change	-1	0	0	0	0	-1
North Kilworth FC	2022/23	2	5	2	2	1	12
	2023/24	3	3	2	2	2	12
	Change	+1	-2	0	0	+1	0
River Swift FC	2022/23	1	0	0	0	0	1
	2023/24	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Change	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thompsons United FC	2022/23	0	1	1	5	2	9
	2023/24	0	1	2	5	5	13
	Change	0	0	+1	0	+3	+4
Wigston Foxes FC	2022/23	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2023/24	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Change	0	0	0	0	+1	+1

The key expressed demand issues are as follows:

- **Team numbers:** 64 men's teams, five women's teams, 58 youth male (11v11) teams, eight youth female (11v11) teams, 38 youth male (9v9) teams, eight youth female (9v9) teams, 52 mixed mini-soccer (7v7) teams and 44 mixed mini-soccer (5v5) teams play in Harborough district.
- 15 clubs in Harborough have achieved the FA's quality-assured England Football Accredited status. This is 65.2% which compares with the national average of 27%. In terms of teams, 90.6% (221 out of 244) are part of an England Football Accredited club in Harborough, compared with the national average of 81.1%. This means that the benefits of belonging to an accredited club with formalised safeguarding procedures and qualified coaches is enjoyed by all youth and mini-soccer players in the district.
- **Women and girl's football:** Football for women and girls is relatively well-developed in Harborough, with five adult women's teams, eight youth 11v11 teams and eight youth 9v9 teams.

5.5.3 Expressed demand trends

The number of teams playing in Harborough District has increased from 180 in 2017/17 to 244 in 2022/23 (a 35.6% increase) to 279 in 2023/24 (a further 14.4% increase).

5.5.4 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to play by teams or other users of football pitches from within the study area which takes place outside of the area, or vice versa.

- **Imported demand from external clubs:** Four teams from outside the district play 'home' games on pitches in Harborough district.
- **Exported demand from internal clubs:** Two teams from Harborough district play on pitches outside the district.

The net effect of displaced demand for match pitches in Harborough district is two imported teams but exported demand for floodlit training pitches amounts to a further 14 teams.

5.5.5 Unmet demand

Unmet demand takes a number of forms:

- Teams may have access to a pitch for matches but nowhere to train or vice versa.
- Pitches of a particular size or type may be unavailable to the community.
- The poor quality and consequent limited capacity of pitches in the area and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement.

Responses from the clubs' survey revealed the following unmet demand:

- **Waiting list:** Four clubs have a membership waiting list.
- **Extra pitch needs:** Five clubs have unmet demand for additional match pitches.
- **Extra training needs:** All responding clubs have unmet demand for additional floodlit, all-weather training pitches. The 9v9 '3G' pitch at Kibworth Mead Academy has to support more than 700 players from Kibworth Town FC.

5.5.6 Latent demand

Whereas unmet demand is known to exist, latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from a population if they had access to more or better provision. Consultation with local clubs indicated that a total of 28 additional teams of all age groups could be accommodated in Harborough district if the quality and quantity of pitch provision was improved, an increase of 10% from the number of existing teams.

5.6 Grass football pitch supply in Harborough district

5.6.1 Introduction

This section summarises the detail of grass football pitch supply in Harborough the pitches included in the analysis are defined as natural or artificial turf areas permanently laid out with regulation markings, with the following dimensions as specified in the FA's 'Guide to Pitch Dimensions' (2013):

Pitch Type	Pitch length	Pitch width	Size including run-offs
Adult football	100m	64m	106m x 70m
Youth football 11v11 (U17-U18)	100m	64m	106m x 70m
Youth football 11v11 (U15-U16)	91m	55m	97m x 61m
Youth football 11v11 (U13-U14)	82m	50m	88m x 56m
Youth football 9v9 (U11-U12)	73m	46m	79m x 52m
Mini-soccer 7v7 (U9-U10)	55m	37m	61m x 43m
Mini-soccer 5v5 (U7-U8)	37m	27m	43m x 33m

The categories assessed are as follows:

- Pitches available for community use and used.
- Pitches available for community use but not used.
- Pitches not available for community use.

5.6.2 Available for community use and used

Provision of grass pitches with regulation line markings and goalposts for organised football are as follows. Pitches overmarked on other pitches are shown in brackets:

Site	Address	Adult 11v11	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Sub-area
Aylestone St. James Rugby Club	Covert Lane, Aylestone LE7 9SP	1	-	-	-	-	East
Bird's Barn	Fleckney Road, Kibworth LE8 0HJ	2	-	2	2	2	East
Bowden's Park	Northampton Road, Market Harborough LE16 9HF	3	2	3	2	-	Middle
Dunley Way Playing Field	Dunley Way, Lutterworth LE17 4NP	1	-	-	-	-	West
Dunton & Broughton Rangers FC	Station Road, Dunton Bassett LE17 5LG	1	-	-	-	-	West
Fleckney Sports and Leisure Centre	Leicester Road, Fleckney LE8 8BG	1	2	2	1	1	Middle
Frolesworth Road Recreation Ground	Frolesworth Road, Broughton Astley LE9 6PG	2	-	-	-	-	West
Gilmorton Playing Field	Woodcock Close, Gilmorton LE17 5SE	1	-	-	1	2	West
Great Glen Recreation Ground	Bridgewater Drive, Great Glen LE8 9FA	1	1	1	-	-	East
Houghton Field	Firs Road, Houghton-on-the-Hill LE7 9GU	2	(1)	-	1	(1)	East
Husband's Bosworth Playing Field	Kilworth Road, Husband's Bosworth LE17 6JW	1	-	-	1	-	West
John Wycliffe Primary School	Moorbarns Lane, Lutterworth LE17 4QJ	-	-	-	1	-	West
Lodge Road Recreation Ground	Lodge Road, Fleckney LE8 8BX	-	-	1	-	-	Middle
Lutterworth Football Academy	Hall Lane, Lutterworth LE17 4LN	1	1	1	1	1	West
Lutterworth High School	Woodway Road, Lutterworth LE17 4QH	-	2	2	1	1	West
Medbourne Sports and Social Club	Hallaton Road, Medbourne LE16 8DR	1	-	1	1	-	East
North Kilworth Football Club	South Kilworth Road, North Kilworth LE17 6HF	2	-	1	1	1	West
Robert Smyth Academy	Burnmill Road, Market Harborough LE16 7JG	1	1	-	-	-	Middle
South Kilworth Recreation Ground	North Road, South Kilworth LE17 6DZ	1	1	-	-	-	West
Swinford Playing Field	Lutterworth Road, Swinford LE17 6BA	1	-	-	-	-	West
Symington's Recreation Ground	St. Mary's Road, Market Harborough LE16 7DS	1	1	1	1	2	Middle

Thomas Estley Community College	Station Road, Broughton Astley LE9 6PT	1	1	-	-	-	West
Ullesthorpe Playing Fields Association	Ashby Road, Ullesthorpe LE17 5DN	-	-	1	1	2	West
Warwick Road Recreation Ground	Dairy Way, Kibworth Harcourt LE8 0NH	2	-	-	-	3	East
Welland Park Academy	Welland Park Road, Market Harborough LE16 9DR	-	-	1	-	-	Middle
TOTALS	-	27	12(1)	17	15	15(1)	-

5.6.3 Available for community use and not used

These are as follows:

Site	Address	Adult 11v11	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Sub-area
Kibworth Mead Academy	Smeeton Road, Kibworth Beauchamp LE8 0LG	-	2	-	-	-	East
TOTALS	-	0	2	0	0	0	-

5.6.4 Not available for community use

These are as follows:

Site	Address	Adult 11v11	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Sub-area
Billesdon Primary School	Gaulby Road. Billesdon LE7 9AG	-	-	-	1	-	East
Church Langton Primary Academy	Stonton Road, Church Langton LE16 7SZ	-	-	-	1	-	East
Farndon Fields Primary School	Argyle Park, Market Harborough LE16 9JH	-	-	1	1	1	Middle
Fernvale Primary School	Somerby Road, Scraftoft LE7 9PR	-	2	-	-	-	East
Fleckney Primary School	Batchelor Road, Fleckney LE8 8BE	-	1	-	1	-	Middle
Foxton Primary School	Gallow Field Road, Foxton LE16 7QZ	-	-	-	1	-	Middle
Great Glen St. Cuthbert's Primary	The Chase, Great Glen LE8 9EQ	-	-	-	1	-	East

Husband's Bosworth Primary School	School Lane, Husband's Bosworth LE17 6JU	-	-	-	1	-	West
Kibworth Primary School	Hillcrest Avenue, Kibworth Harcourt LE8 0NH	-	-	-	2	-	East
Lubenham All Saints Primary School	School Lane, Lubenham LE16 9TW	-	-	-	1	-	Middle
Lutterworth College	Bittesworth Road, Lutterworth LE17 4EX	2	1	-	1	-	West
Market Harborough Academy	Fairfield Road, Market Harborough LE16 9QH	-	-	-	1	-	Middle
Ridgeway Primary Academy	The Ridgeway, Market Harborough LE16 7HQ	-	-	-	1	-	Middle
Sherrier Primary School	Bitteswell Road, Lutterworth LE17 4EX	-	-	-	2	-	West
St. Andrew's Primary School	Dag Lane, North Kilworth LE17 6HD	-	-	-	1	-	West
St. Luke's Primary School	Main Street, Thurnby LE7 9PN	-	-	-	2	-	East
TOTALS		2	6	1	18	1	-

5.6.5 Provision by sub-area

Pitches with community use and used by sub-area are as follows.

Sub-area	Adult 11v11	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5
West	12	5	5	7	7
Middle	7	6	9	1	3
East	9	1	3	7	6
HARBOROUGH	28	12	17	15	16

5.6.6 Grass pitch quality

The quality of all grass football pitches in Harborough with community use and used was assessed from site visits during the playing season as part of the 2023 PPS update, to apply the Non-technical Visual Assessment criteria developed by the FA for use in conjunction with the 'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance'. The criteria assessed are as follows. A percentage score and associated ratings are generated as an overall measure of quality:

- **The playing surface:** This includes grass cover, pitch dimensions, gradient, evenness, length of grass, drainage and evidence of any unauthorised use.

- **The changing facilities:** This includes the availability of changing rooms, kitchen and/or bar, the interior and exterior appearance, showering and toilet provision, medical room, disability access and parking arrangements.
- **Grounds maintenance:** This includes the frequency of grass cutting, seeding, aeration, sand-dressing, fertilising, weed killing and chain harrowing.

The ratings for each grass football pitch in Harborough are below. The percentage scores generated equate to ratings of 'Good' for scores of 100% - 75% (highlighted in green below), 'Standard' for scores of 74.9% - 50% (highlighted in yellow below), 'Poor' for scores of 49.9% - 25% (highlighted in red below) and 'Unsuitable' below 25%: These have been cross-referenced with the Football Foundation's 'Pitch Power' reports where available, which rate pitches as 'poor', 'basic', 'good' and 'advanced'.

Site	Pitches	Pitch	Changing	Comments
Aylestone St. James Rugby Club	Adult pitch	Standard	Good	Pitch is sloping but 'standard' quality with floodlights. Changing currently being upgraded to 'good' standard.
Bird's Barn	Adult pitch 1 Adult pitch 2 Youth 9v9 pitch 1 Youth 9v9 pitch 2 Mini 7v7 pitch 1 Mini 7v7 pitch 2 Mini 5v5 pitch 1 Mini 5v5 pitch 2	Good Good Good Good Good Good Good Good	Poor	Pitches are 'good' quality (rated as 'good' and 'advanced' by Pitch Power). Changing facilities are basic and 'poor' quality. Parking facilities are limited and the access road is unsuitable.
Bowden's Park	Adult pitch 1 Adult pitch 2 Adult pitch 3 Youth 11v11 pitch 1 Youth 11v11 pitch 2 Youth 9v9 pitch 1 Youth 9v9 pitch 2 Youth 9v9 pitch 3 Mini 7v7 pitch 1 Mini 7v7 pitch 2	Standard Standard Standard Standard Standard Standard Standard Standard Standard	Good	'Standard' quality pitches (rated as 'basic' by Pitch Power) with 'good' quality changing. Car parking is inadequate at peak periods.
Dunley Way Playing Field	Adult pitch	Good	Good	'Good' quality pitch and changing.
Dunton and Broughton Rangers FC	Adult pitch	Standard	Good	'Standard' quality pitch (rated as 'basic' by Pitch Power) and 'standard' changing.

Fleckney Sports and Leisure Centre	Adult pitch Youth 11v11 pitch 1 Youth 11v11 pitch 2 Youth 9v9 pitch 1 Youth 9v9 pitch 2 Mini 7v7 pitch Mini 5v5 pitch	Standard Good Good Good Good	Standard	Adult pitch is standard (rated as 'basic' by Pitch Power). Other pitches are at the lower end of 'good' quality (rated as 'good' by Pitch Power). Changing facilities attached to the Sports Centre are 'standard'. Car parking capacity is limited.
Frolesworth Road Recreation Ground	Adult pitch 1 Adult pitch 2	Poor Poor	Poor	'Poor' quality pitches and changing facilities.
Gilmorton Playing Field	Adult pitch Mini 7v7 Pitch 1 Mini 5v5 Pitch 1 Mini 5v5 Pitch 2	Good Standard Standard Standard	Good	'Good' quality adult pitch with 'standard' quality mini pitches. 'Good' quality changing shared with cricket.
Great Glen Recreation Ground	Adult pitch Youth 11v11 pitch Youth 9v9 pitch	Poor Good Good	Standard	Adult pitch is 'poor' quality (rated 'poor' by Pitch Power), but youth pitches are 'good' quality (rated 'good' by Pitch Power). Changing facilities are 'standard' quality.

Site	Pitches	Pitch	Changing	Comments
Houghton Field	Adult pitch 1 Adult pitch 2 (Youth 11v11 pitch) Mini 7v7 pitch (Mini 5v5 pitch)	Good Good Good Good Good	Poor	'Good' quality pitches (rated as 'good' by Pitch Power). Youth 11v11 and mini 5v5 pitches are overmarked. Changing facilities are 'poor' quality.
Husband's Bosworth Playing Field	Adult pitch Mini 7v7 pitch	Good Good	Good	Pitches towards the lower end of 'good' quality. 'Good' quality changing.
John Wycliffe Primary School	Mini 7v7 pitch	Standard	None	'Standard' quality pitch. Changing not available to community users.
Lodge Road Recreation Ground	Youth 9v9 pitch	Standard	Poor	'Standard' quality pitch with 'poor' quality shipping container changing.
Lutterworth Football Academy	Adult pitch Youth 11v11 pitch Youth 9v9 pitch Mini 7v7 pitch Mini 5v5 pitch	Good Good Good Good Good	Good	'Good' quality pitches (rated as 'good' and 'advanced' by Pitch Power) with 'good' quality changing. Home of Lutterworth Athletic FC.
Lutterworth High School	Youth 11v11 pitch 1 Youth 11v11 pitch 2 Youth 9v9 pitch 1 Youth 9v9 pitch 2 Mini 7v7 pitch 2 Mini 5v5 pitch	Standard Standard Standard Standard Standard Standard	None	Marked and maintained by Lutterworth Town FC. Pitches at the lower end of 'standard' quality due to poor drainage. Changing facilities not available to community users.
Medbourne Sports and Social Club	Adult pitch Youth 9v9 pitch Mini 7v7 pitch	Standard Standard Standard	Good	'Standard' quality pitches (slightly sloping, rated as 'basic' by Pitch Power). 'Good' quality changing.
North Kilworth Football Club	Adult pitch 1 Adult pitch 2 Youth 9v9 pitch Mini 7v7 pitch Mini 5v5 pitch	Good Good Good Good Good	Standard	'Good' quality pitches (rated as 'good' by Pitch Power). 'Standard' quality changing.
Robert Smyth Academy	Adult pitch Youth 11v11 pitch	Standard Standard	Standard	'Standard' quality pitches (rated as 'basic' by Pitch Power), with 'standard' changing.
South Kilworth Recreation Ground	Adult pitch Youth 11v11 pitch	Standard Standard	Standard	'Standard' quality pitches, with 'standard' changing.
Swinford Playing Field	Adult pitch	Good	Good	'Good' standard pitch on cricket outfield and 'Good' changing.
Symington's Recreation Ground	Adult pitch Youth 11v11 pitch Youth 9v9 pitch Mini 7v7 pitch Mini 5v5 pitch 1 Mini 5v5 pitch 2	Standard Standard Poor Poor Poor Poor	Poor	Adult and Youth 11v11 pitch are 'standard' (rated a 'basic by Pitch Power). Other pitches are 'poor' quality (rated as 'poor' by Pitch Power) and changing is 'poor' quality.

Thomas Estley Community College	Adult pitch Youth 11v11 pitch	Standard	Standard	'Standard' quality pitches (rated as 'basic' by Pitch Power) and 'standard' changing.
Ullesthorpe Playing Field	Youth 9v9 pitch Mini 7v7 pitch Mini 5v5 pitch 1 Mini 5v5 pitch 2	Standard Standard Standard Standard	Standard	'Standard' quality pitches (rated as 'basic' by Pitch Power) and 'standard' changing.
Warwick Road Recreation Ground	Adult pitch 1 Adult pitch 2 Mini 5v5 pitch 1 Mini 5v5 pitch 2 Mini 5v5 pitch 3	Poor Poor Poor Poor Poor	Standard	'Poor' quality sloping pitches and 'standard' quality changing.
Welland Park Academy	Youth 9v9 pitch	Standard	Standard	'Standard' quality pitches (rated as 'basic' by Pitch Power) and 'standard' changing.

5.6.7 Summary of grass pitch quality

The number and percentage of pitches in each quality band is tabulated below. 12.5% of pitches in the district are rated as 'poor' quality, with consequent reductions in carrying capacity.

Pitch type	Good		Standard		Poor	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Adult 11v11	11	40.1%	12	44.4%	4	14.8%
Youth 11v11	4	30.8%	9	69.2%	0	0.0%
Youth 9v9	7	41.2%	9	52.9%	1	5.9%
Mini-soccer 7v7	7	46.7%	7	46.7%	1	6.6%
Mini-soccer 5v5	6	37.5%	5	31.3%	5	31.2%
TOTAL	35	39.8%	42	47.7%	11	12.5%

5.6.8 Summary of changing facilities quality

The number and percentage of pitches of each type that are served by 'poor' quality or no changing facilities is tabulated below. 31.8% of pitches are served by 'poor' quality or no changing facilities and the adverse impact on such a high proportion of pitch users makes it more difficult to recruit and retain new players, particularly women and girls.

Pitch type	Number	%
Adult 11v11	9	33.3%
Youth 11v11	4	30.8%
Youth 9v9	5	39.4%
Mini-soccer 7v7	4	26.7%
Mini-soccer 5v5	6	37.5%
TOTAL	28	31.8%

5.6.9 Grass pitch maintenance

Football pitch maintenance in the district is organised as follows:

- **Club-managed pitches:** Dunton and Broughton United FC, Harborough Town FC, Kibworth Town FC, Lutterworth Athletic FC and Lutterworth Town FC all maintain the pitches they use. This involves a combination of external contractors and volunteer help.
- **Council-owned pitches:** The council has an in-house grounds maintenance team to undertake football pitch maintenance.
- **Pitches on education sites:** The school sites with community use all employ or contract their pitch maintenance staff.

5.6.10 Pitch hire charges

The cost of hiring grass football pitches in Harborough district and areas are as follows.

Pitch	Cost per match (£)
<i>Harborough District</i>	
11v11 pitch	£60
9v9 pitch	£35
7v7 pitch	£25
5v5 pitch	£15
<i>Blaby District Council</i>	
Adult pitch	£40
Youth pitch	£12.50
Mini-Soccer pitch	£7.50
<i>Rugby Borough Council</i>	
Adult pitch	£41
Youth pitch	£32
Mini-Soccer pitch	£16
<i>Charnwood District Council</i>	
Adult	£60
Junior	£30
<i>Corby Borough Council</i>	
Adult pitch	£23
Youth pitch	£15

The comparison of prices shows that the cost of hiring grass pitches in Harborough are generally comparable to those in neighbouring areas.

5.6.11 Ownership, management and security of access

The ownership, management and security of community access of football pitch sites is below. Security of access refers to the extent to which community use is protected (through public ownership, community use agreements etc.), rather than the security of tenure of specific users.

Site	Ownership	Management	Access
Aylestone St. James RFC	Aylestone St. James RFC	Aylestone St. James RFC	Secured
Bird's Barn	Private landowner	Kibworth Town FC	Secured
Bowden's Park	Harborough District Council	Harborough Town Community Trust	Secured
Dunley Way Playing Field	Harborough District Council	Harborough District Council	Secured
Dunton and Broughton Rangers FC	Dunton and Broughton Rangers FC	Dunton and Broughton Rangers FC	Secured
Fleckney Sports and Leisure Centre	Fleckney Parish Council	Fleckney Sports and Leisure Centre	Secured
Frolesworth Road Recreation Ground	Broughton Astley Parish Council	Broughton Astley Parish Council	Secured
Gilmorton Playing Field	Gilmorton Parish Council	Gilmorton Parish Council	Secured
Great Glen Recn. Ground	Great Glen Parish Council	Great Glen Parish Council	Secured
Houghton Field	Houghton-on-the-Hill Parish Council	Houghton-on-the-Hill Parish Council	Secured
Husband's Bosworth Playing Field	Husband's Bosworth Parish Council	Husband's Bosworth Parish Council	Secured
John Wycliffe Primary School	Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust	John Wycliffe Primary School	Secured
Lodge Road Recn. Ground	Fleckney Parish Council	Fleckney Parish Council	Secured
Lutterworth Football Academy	Lutterworth Athletic FC	Lutterworth Athletic FC	Secured
Lutterworth High School (Woodway Road)	Lutterworth High School	Lutterworth High School	Unsecured
Medbourne Sports and Social Club	Medbourne Sports and Social Club	Medbourne Sports and Social Club	Secured
North Kilworth Football Club	North Kilworth Football Club	North Kilworth Football Club	Secured
Robert Smyth Academy	Robert Smyth Academy	Robert Smyth Academy	Unsecured
South Kilworth Recreation Ground	South Kilworth Parish Council	South Kilworth Parish Council	Secured
Swinford Playing Field	Private Landowner	Oakfield and Rowland CC	Secured
Symington's Recreation Ground	Harborough District Council	Harborough District Council	Secured
Thomas Estley Community College	Success Academy Trust	Thomas Estley Community College	Unsecured
Ullesthorpe Playing Fields Association	Ullesthorpe Playing Fields Association	Ullesthorpe Playing Fields Association	Secured
Warwick Road Recreation Ground	Kibworth Joint Recreation Committee	Kibworth Joint Recreation Committee	Secured
Welland Park Academy	Welland Park Academy	Welland Park Academy	Secured

The number and proportion of grass football pitches in Harborough with community use and used that have secured access is as follows. 17.0% of the pitches with community use and used are on sites without secured use, meaning that in theory

community use could be rescinded at any time. Measures to secure community use at education sites, such as formal Community Use Agreements, would therefore be advisable.

<i>Pitch Type</i>	<i>Secured</i>		<i>Unsecured</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Adult football	25	92.6 %	2	7.4%
Youth football (11v11)	7	53.8 %	6	46.2 %
Youth football (9v9)	13	76.5 %	4	23.5 %
Mini-soccer (7v7)	13	86.7 %	2	13.3 %
Mini-soccer (5v5)	15	93.8 %	16	6.2%
TOTALS	73	83.0 %	15	17.0 %

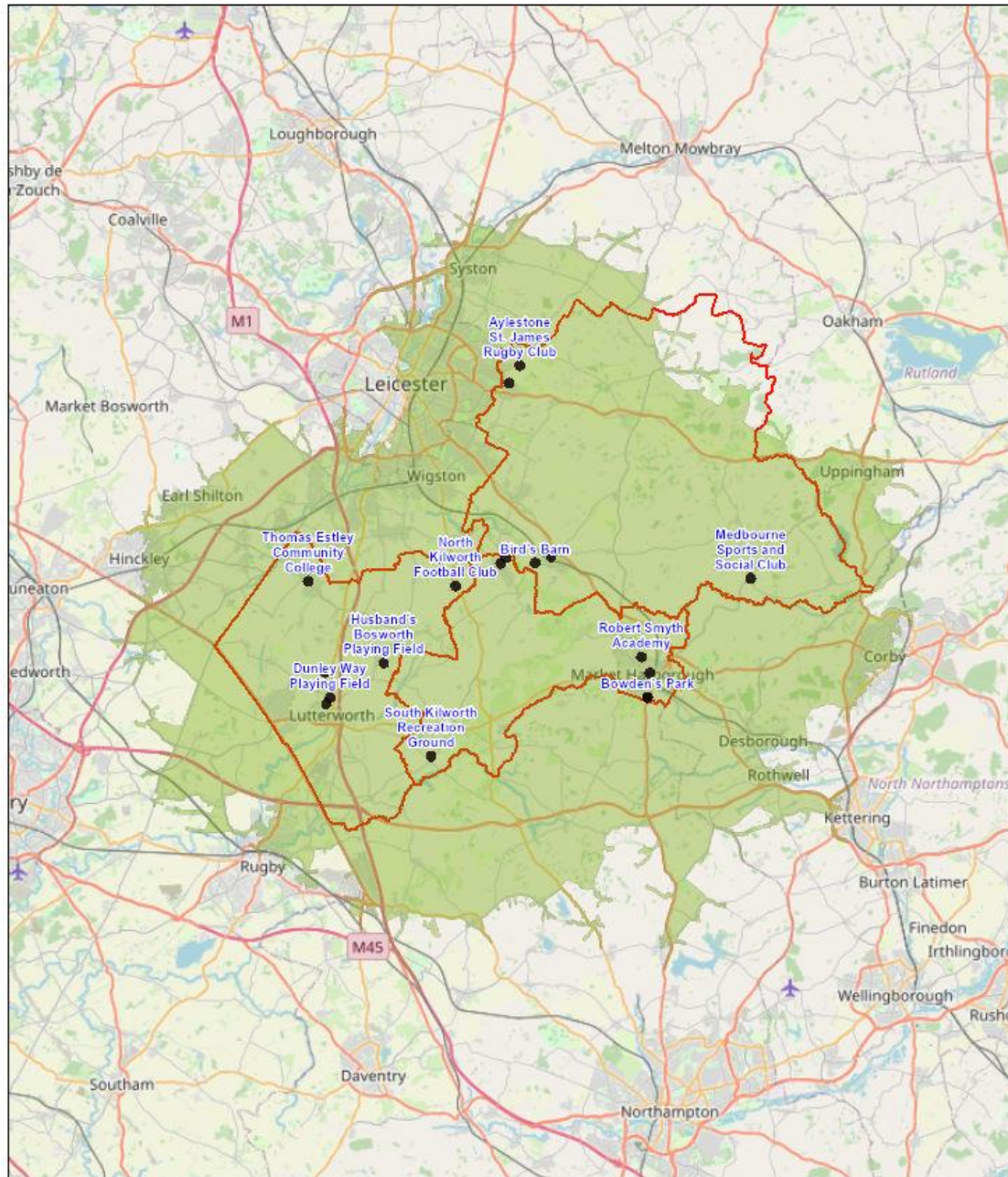
5.7 Geographical distribution

The geographical distribution of football pitches in Harborough has been assessed by identifying catchments to illustrate local level accessibility. This is based on the results of the clubs' survey, which identifies 15-minutes travel time as the typical maximum for grass pitches and 20 minutes for '3G' football turf pitches. Maps for each type of football pitch are overleaf and they illustrate the following:

- **Adult grass pitches:** The whole of Harborough district is within 15 minutes of an adult grass pitch, with the exception of a small area in the extreme east of the district.
- **Youth 11v11 pitches:** The whole of Harborough district is within 15 minutes of a youth 11v11 pitch, with the exception of an area in the extreme north and east of the district.
- **Youth 9v9 pitches:** The whole of Harborough district is within 15 minutes of a youth 9v9 pitch, with the exception of an area in the extreme north and east of the district.
- **Mini 7v7 pitches:** The whole of Harborough district is within 15 minutes of mini 7v7 pitch, with the exception of a small area in the extreme east of the district.
- **Mini 5v5 pitches:** The whole of Harborough district is within 15 minutes of a mini 5v5 pitch, with the exception of an area in the extreme north and east of the district.
- **'3G' football turf pitches:** The whole of Harborough district is within 20 minutes of a '3G' football turf pitch, with the exception of an area in the north of the district.

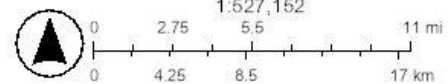
5.7.1 Adult grass football

HARBOROUGH Adult Football Pitches 15 Mins Drive



10/28/2022

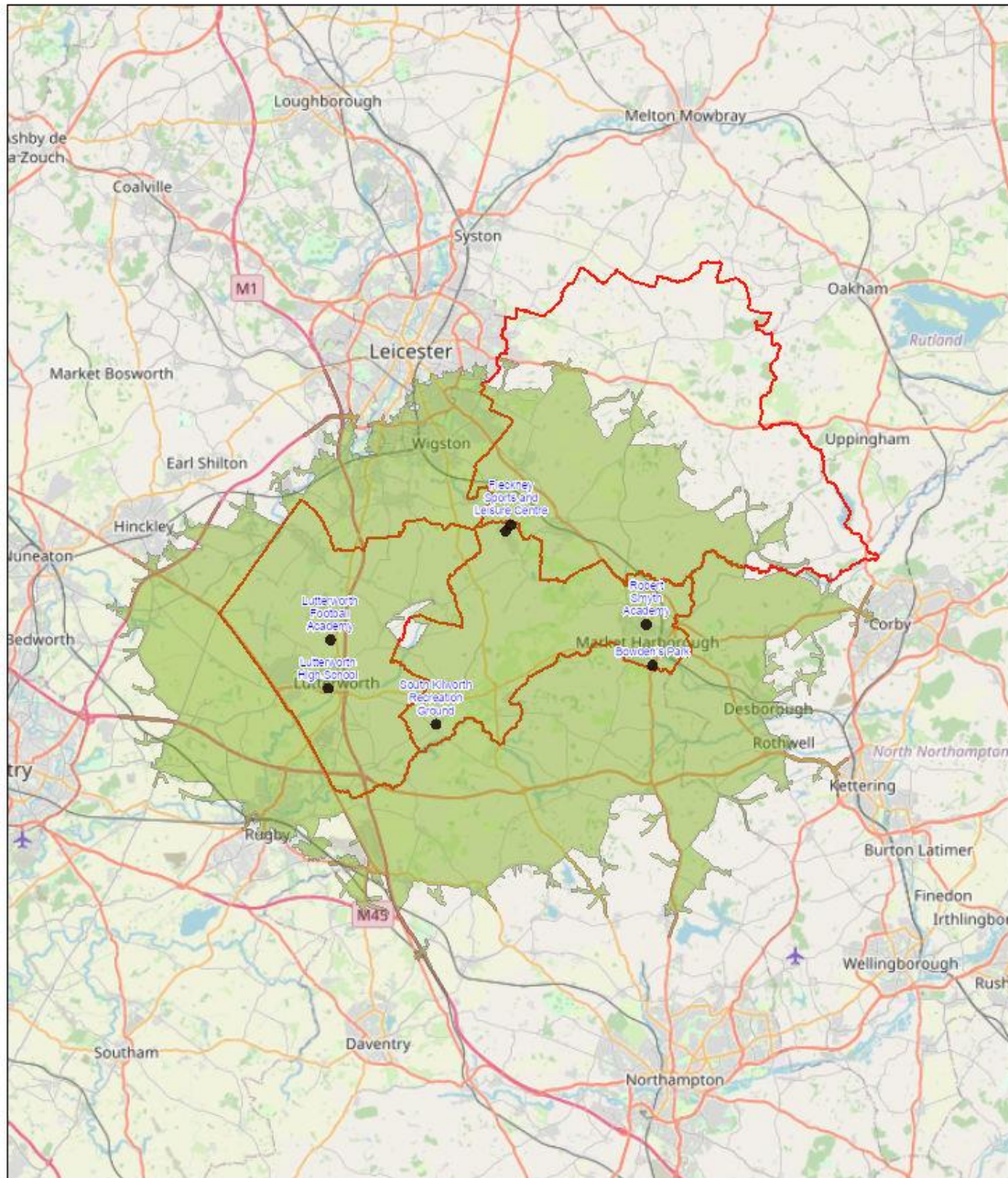
- ADULT FOOTBALL PITCHES 15 MINS
- 15.0 Minutes
- ▭ West Sub Area, Middle Sub Area, East Sub Area
- ▭ HARBOROUGH DISTRICT



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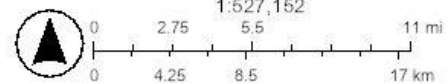
5.7.2 Youth 11v11 football

HARBOROUGH Youth 11v11 Football Pitches 15 Mins Drive



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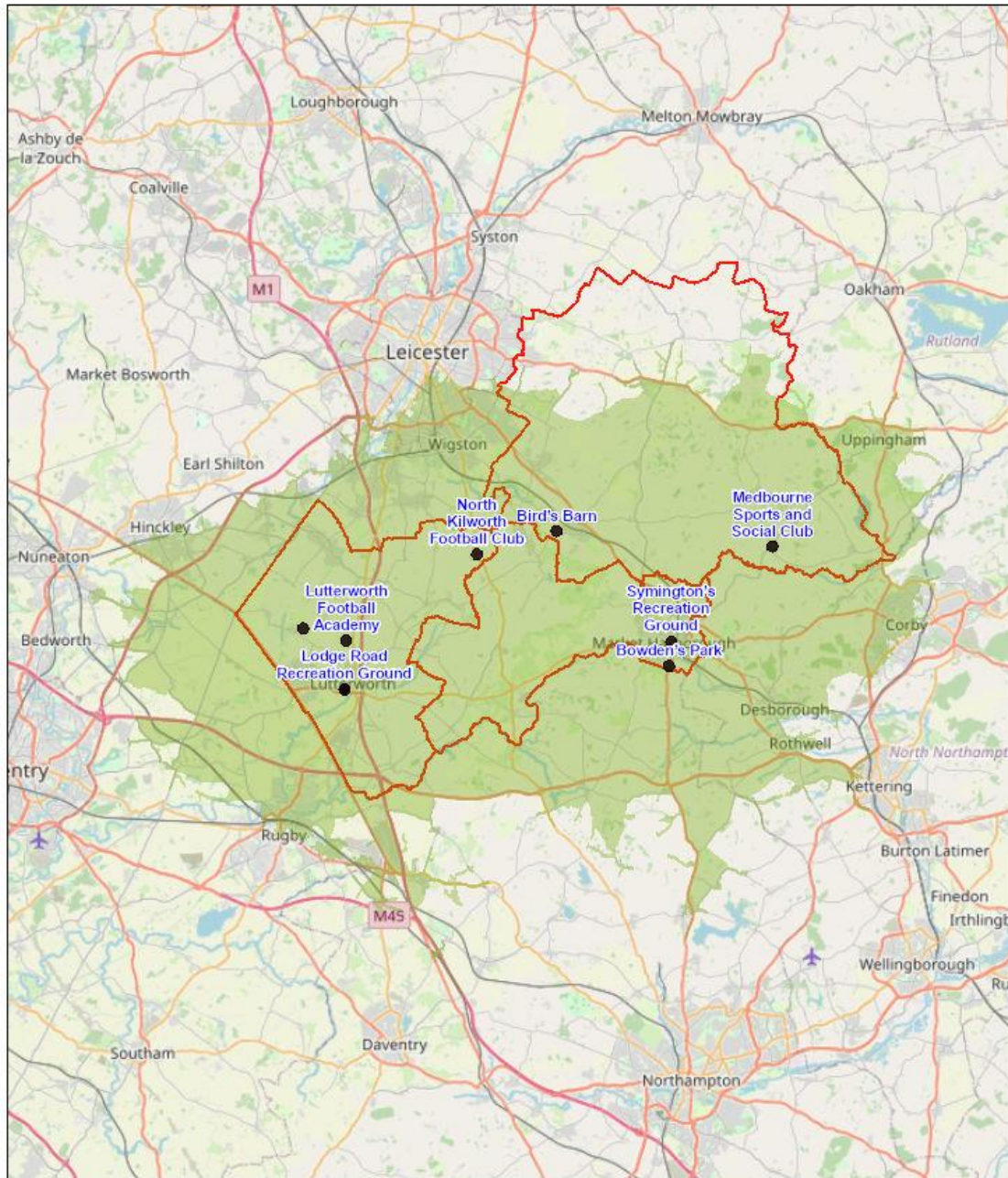
- YOUTH 11V11 FOOTBALL PITCHES 15 MINS
- 15.0 Minutes
- West Sub Area, Middle Sub Area, East Sub Area
- HARBOROUGH DISTRICT



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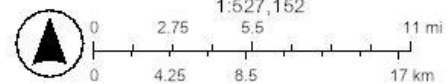
5.7.3 Youth 9v9 pitches

HARBOROUGH Youth 9V9 Football Pitches 15 Mins Drive



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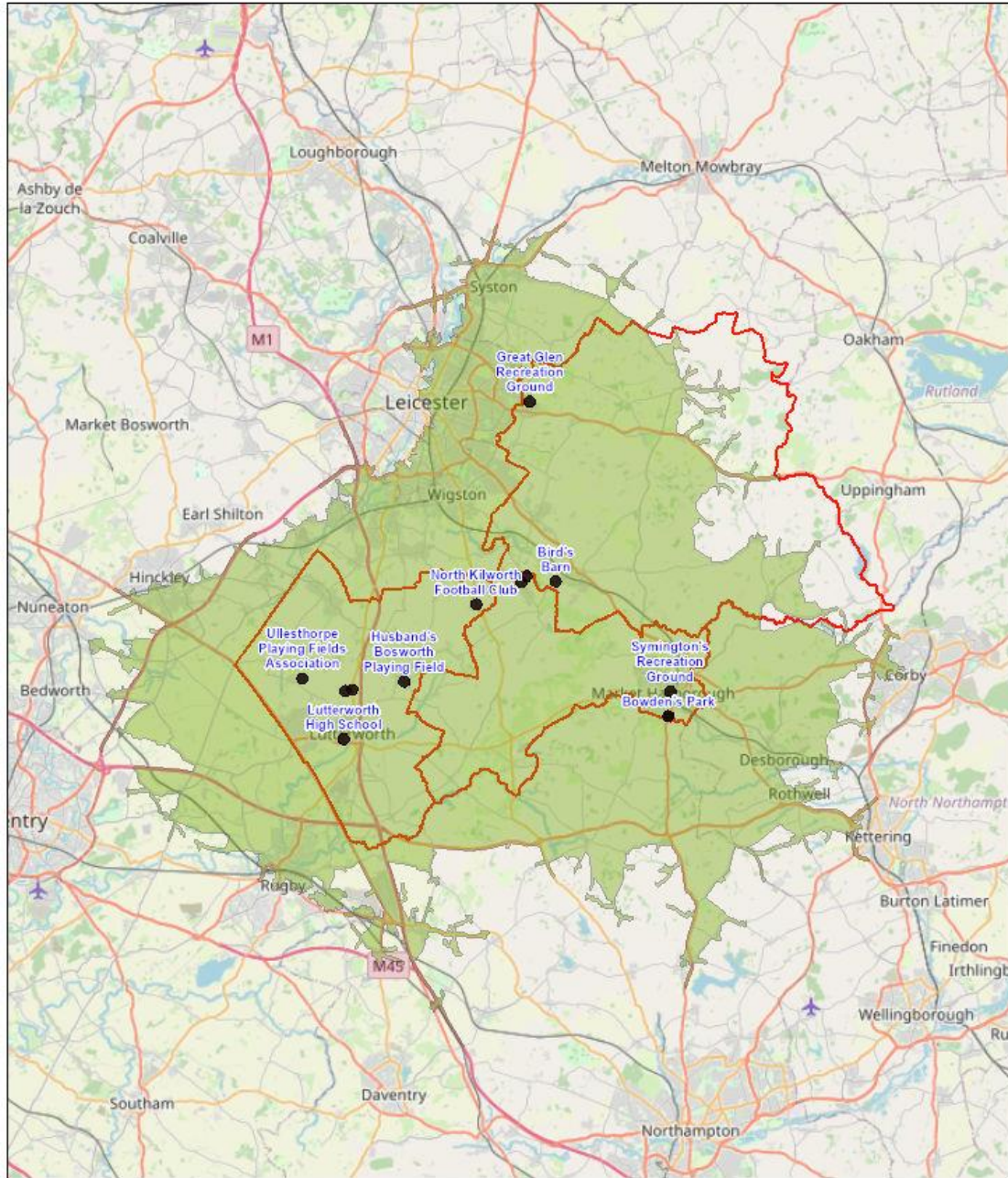
- YOUTH 9V9 FOOTBALL PITCHES 15 MINS
- 15.0 Minutes
- West Sub Area, Middle Sub Area, East Sub Area
- HARBOROUGH DISTRICT



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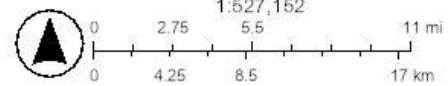
5.7.4 Mini-soccer 7v7 pitches

HARBOROUGH Mini Soccer 7V7 Pitches 15 Mins Drive



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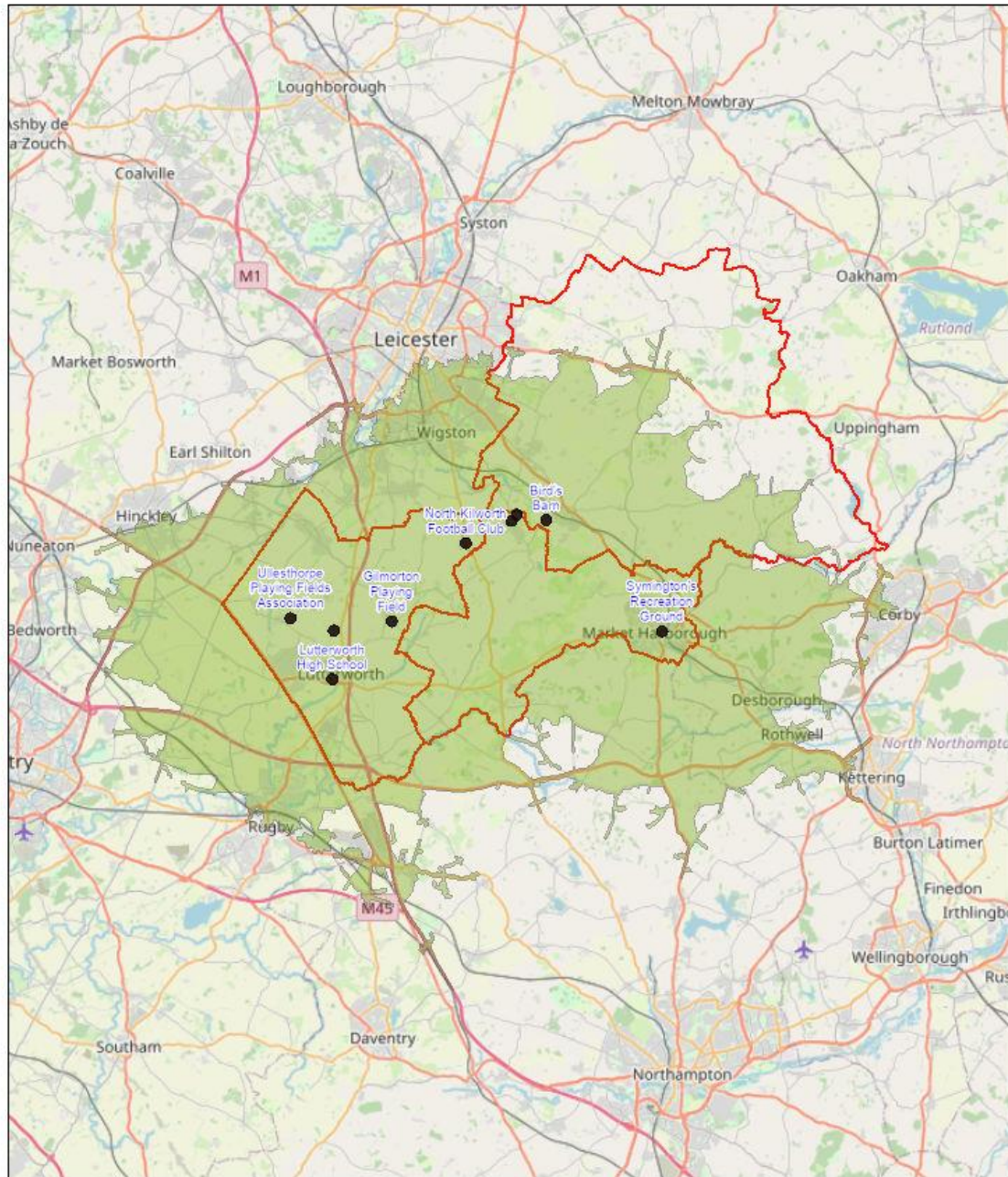
- MINI SOCCER 7V7 PITCHES 15 MINS
- 15.0 Minutes
- West Sub Area, Middle Sub Area, East Sub Area
- HARBOROUGH DISTRICT



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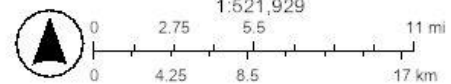
5.7.5 Mini-soccer 5v5 pitches

HARBOROUGH Mini Soccer 5V5 Piches 15 Mins Drive



10/28/2022

- MINI SOCCER 5V5 PICHES 15 MINS
- 15.0 Minutes
- ▭ West Sub Area, Middle Sub Area, East Sub Area
- ▭ HARBOROUGH DISTRICT



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5.8 The views of local stakeholders

5.8.1 Leicestershire and Rutland FA

Consultation with the Leicestershire and Rutland FA highlighted that:

- **Women and girls football:** The FA has big ambitions for the female game. To achieve this requires a combined effort across four pathways: education, recreation, competition and talent.
 - Education environments have a huge impact on the first experience of football for young girls. This pathway can offer many opportunities for females of all ages to develop and grow a lifelong interest in football.
 - FA Wildcats girls football centres provide the first step on the recreational pathway, the programme provides girls aged 5-11 with regular opportunities to play football in a fun and engaging environment. Leicestershire and Rutland operates a number of Wildcats girls sessions and the priority is to grow this activity to 15 successful and sustainable centres across the county.
 - There are 11 female teams in Harborough district; this is comparable to local areas of a similar size. The County FA's priority is to support existing clubs to grow and encourage more clubs to develop playing opportunities for females. The Leicestershire Women and Girl's League was formed through a merger of two separate leagues in 2020.
 - For talented players, the nearest FA Regional Talent Club (RTC) is Leicester City Women's FC which is located in Leicester City. Higher level talent pathway opportunities are also provided regionally and nationally by the FA, culminating in the England Women's national squads. The nearest Women's Super League team is Leicester City Women's FC which provides player pathway opportunities for gifted and talented female players and a spectator interest for fans.
- **Disability football:** In Harborough district there are three football teams specifically for people with a disability. It is a priority of the County FA to grow this provision.
- **Recreational football:** Recreational football is played where facilities are typically booked and there might be someone to help organise. Examples include FA 'Just Play' sessions, walking football and casual pitch hire for small-sided match play. There are currently 12 FA 'Just Play' centres in Leicestershire and Rutland and the County FA is working towards having 15 in place by 2021. 16 walking football sessions are delivered at/by a range of community organisation including leisure centres, community centres and clubs. The County FA has prioritised walking football and Just Play for further growth. Other local recreational football programmes are primarily delivered through Leicester City Community Trust projects.

- **'3G' pitches:** There is potential to share the use of '3G' pitches with rugby users in the district.

5.8.2 Local football clubs

Borough Alliance FC: The club commented that 'we are unable to access enough suitable winter training facilities in the local area to meet the demands of the club'.

Harborough Town FC: The club made the following comments:

- 'The club would like to have a fenced, floodlit hybrid grass pitch for academy teams and to provide additional covered accommodation in the main ground plus a dedicated covered disability platform. The club would also like to build a small gymnasium and to provide community rooms as an extension in the roof of the clubhouse'.
- 'The first team changing room and the away team changing room for first team games will need increasing to 16.8m square if the club is promoted to step 4 of the National League System'.
- 'The football facility at HTFC is one of the best in the country but we are now at max capacity and need either a floodlight hybrid or AGP to meet demand and anticipated growth over the next five years'.

Kibworth Town FC: The club made the following comments:

- 'Masterplans are already developed for expanding onto adjoining fields to cope with the 400% increase in participation since 2015'.
- 'Our 'internal waiting list' could support additional teams, specifically a Sunday 11v11 men's team and additional teams throughout the age groups'.
- 'We have outgrown our current site with pitches overused and little to no additional capacity. This is preventing us from creating an additional men's side and a new women's team offering. Whilst there is a 9v9 3G facility at The Kibworth Mead Academy, it was somewhat short-sighted to create a 9v9 facility that cannot be used for the school matches beyond Yr7/U12 for boys and Yr8/U13 for girls'.
- 'We'd prefer to be located at one location for ease of logistics and for the commercial sustainability of the club. The school offers the club no potential income streams to support the operations of the club'.
- 'Kibworth Town FC has seen participation grow exponentially since 2015 and now encompasses 36+ football teams plus 2 additional U5/U6 development squads not included within the questions of this survey and 7 Futsal teams, again not covered within the scope of this survey. During this time the female playing

numbers have grown from 3 to 156. The club comprises about 700 regular playing members and about 70 volunteer coaches. The club has outgrown our current facilities and DESPERATELY need larger facilities to support a thriving, ever-expanding club supporting not only local residents for Football, but we're now the home to Kibworth Coyotes Ladies Rounders Club and other local keep fit groups'.

- 'The demand figures on grass pitches are often seasonal, as clubs use '3G' training facilities wherever possible in the winter. Therefore for six months of the year, the weekly demand on the grass pitches is probably far greater as clubs return to the grass to save on pitch hire during the lighter evenings. Kibworth's 11v11 pitches, for example, may have the equivalent of 3-4 matches per pitch each weekend and then maybe 8 hours of training through the week. Undrained pitches, such as those at Kibworth and many others around the district, are recommended for only 2 hours of match equivalent use per week. Our pitches get up to 16 hours of use in the spring and autumn'.
- 'Unauthorised use of pitches is a major factor on pitch wear - we'd estimate around 1-2 hours use in the school holidays each day by local school children'.
- The new 3G facility at Lutterworth will not relieve pressures on the need for additional 3G space further East as 20-minutes' drive time in evening traffic doesn't even reach the A5199. A 11v11 3G pitch in Kibworth could be developed on the Birds Barn site. This facility would be within a 20-minute drive of a far broader population from the edge of Desborough, all of Market Harborough in the south, Kibworth, Fleckney, The Langtons in the East, Great Glen, Most of Oadby and Wigston and as far as Clarendon Park/Knighton in Leicester to the North'.

Lutterworth Town FC: The club commented that 'the male first team has no training pitch this season and for the last 7 years has trained outside of Harborough District. The juniors have a lack of pitches. A lack of 11-a-side pitches is a major concern'.

Medbourne FC: The club made the following comments:

- 'Membership has increased due to another team folding and joining us a reserve team this season, however without the addition of a second team, membership would have decreased'.
- 'We have our own pitch for matchdays, however we have to use alternative floodlit all-weather pitches for training. It proved extremely difficult to secure a booking this year with every facility throughout Corby and Kettering, as well as Uppingham and Harborough being fully booked during midweek. We eventually managed to find the last available spot at Montsaye Academy (Rothwell) otherwise we may not have been able to train this season'.
- 'It would be brilliant if another artificial pitch was available for hire somewhere. The ones at Harborough Town are pretty much fully utilised by their own teams and the sand based surface at Welland Park isn't really suitable for football'.

5.9 *Developments since the 2022 PPS*

The key developments since the assessment of football needs in the 2022 PPS are as follows:

- Expressed demand has increased significantly, with the number of teams playing in Harborough District has increased from 244 in 2022/23, to 279 in 2023/24, a 14.3% increase.
- '3G' football turf pitch provision has improved with the installation of the full-sized pitch at Lutterworth Football Academy but is still below the seven pitches required to meet the FA's guideline figure of one pitch per 38 teams.
- Welland Park Academy has resurfaced its artificial grass pitch with a GEN2 multisport carpet which caters for the needs of both football (training only) and hockey. The Academy has also secured pitch improvement funding for its grass pitches, to improve capacity.
- It has been ascertained that it would be difficult for the Football Foundation to invest the Bird's Barn site due to access road issues. However alternative sites are being explored to support Kibworth Town FC's future growth plans.
- Houghton Rangers FC is awaiting a Football Foundation funding window to submit an application to improve facilities at Houghton Field.
- The pitches at Symington's Recreation Ground have been assessed as 'poor', but at this stage, due to lease and licence barriers, investment into the pitches has not yet been triggered.

The implications of these changes are assessed below.

5.10 *The implications for football in Harborough district*

Analysis of local supply of grass football pitches in Harborough indicates the following:

- **Local clubs:** There is a strong network of England Accredited football clubs in Harborough district, providing high quality coaching and playing opportunities.
- **Increased demand:** The number of FA-affiliated football teams in the district has increased from 244 in 2022/23 to 279 in 2023/24, a 14.3% increase. The growth is apparent in all age groups apart from Youth 11v11.
- **Unmet demand:** Consultation with local clubs indicated that a total of 28 additional teams of all age groups could be accommodated in Harborough district if the quality and quantity of pitch provision was improved, an increase of 10% from the number of existing teams.
- **Provision in neighbouring areas:** Assessments of football pitch provision in Playing Pitch Strategies in neighbouring areas mostly indicate deficiencies. The

absence of any available spare capacity in surrounding areas means that there is no scope for exporting football demand from Harborough district.

- **Grass pitch supply:** An examination of grass pitch supply suggests that in quantitative terms there is little if any local spare capacity.
- **Grass pitch quality:** 12.5% of pitches in the district are rated as 'poor' quality, with consequent reductions in carrying capacity. Several others suffer from poor drainage and so are rated at the lower end of 'standard' quality.
- **Changing facilities:** 28 pitches in the district (31.8%) are served by 'poor' quality or no changing facilities.
- **Unsecured access:** 17% of the pitches with community use and used are on sites without secured use, meaning that in theory community use could be rescinded at any time.

5.11 Assessment of current grass pitch needs

5.11.1 Introduction

To assess whether the current supply of grass pitches is adequate to meet existing demand an understanding of the situation at all sites available to the community needs to be developed. This is achieved by providing a brief overview for each site, which comprises:

- A comparison between the carrying capacity of a site with how much demand currently takes place there. The carrying capacity of a site is defined as the amount of play it can regularly accommodate without adversely affecting its quality and use. Demand is defined in terms of the number of 'match equivalent sessions' at each site. A 'match equivalent session' represents the wear and tear on a pitch equivalent to a formal match, so the impact of training sessions and unauthorised use can also be accounted for.
- An indication of the extent to which pitches are being used during their peak periods.

The site overviews identify the extent to which pitches are:

- **Being overplayed:** Where use exceeds the carrying capacity (highlighted in red in the tables below).
- **Being played to the level the site can sustain:** Where use matches the carrying capacity (highlighted in yellow in the tables below).
- **Potentially able to accommodate some additional play:** Where use falls below the carrying capacity (highlighted in green in the tables below).

In line with the PPS guidance, the following assumptions have been made in relation to the number of weekly match equivalents that can be accommodated by different quality pitches:

<i>Pitch type</i>	<i>Good quality</i>	<i>Standard quality</i>	<i>Poor quality</i>
Adult	3	2	1
Youth 11v11	4	2	1
Youth 9v9	4	2	1
Mini-soccer 7v7	6	4	2
Mini-soccer 5v5	6	4	2

5.11.2 Adult pitches

Site	Pitches	Users	Weekly capacity	Weekly demand	Weekly balance	Peak capacity	Peak demand	Peak balance
Aylestone St. James Rugby Club	1	Aylestone St. James FC	3.0	1.0	+2.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Bird's Barn	2	Kibworth Town FC	6.0	7.0	-1.0	2.0	4.0	-2.0
Bowden's Park	3	Harborough Town FC Brooke House College FC Cherry Tree	6.0	6.0	Balanced	3.0	3.0	Balanced
Dunley Way Pl. Field	1	Lutterworth Town FC	3.0	1.0	+2.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Dunton & Broughton Rangers FC	1	Dunton & Broughton Utd FC Oadby & Wigston ladies FC	2.0	3.0	-1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Fleckney Sports and Leisure Centre	1	Fleckney Athletic FC Fleckney Masters FC	2.0	3.0	-1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Frolesworth Road Recreation Ground	2	Dunton & Broughton Utd FC	1.0	1.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Gilmorton Playing Field	1	Gilmorton FC	3.0	1.0	+2.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Great Glen Recreation Ground	1	Glen Villa FC	1.0	2.0	-1.0	1.0	2.0	-1.0
Houghton Field	2	Houghton Rangers FC	6.0	4.0	+2.0	2.0	2.0	Balanced
Husband's Bosworth Playing Field	1	North Kilworth FC	3.0	2.0	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Lutterworth Football Academy	1	Lutterworth Athletic FC River Swift FC	3.0	4.0	-1.0	1.0	2.0	-1.0
Medbourne Sports and Social Club	1	Medbourne FC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
North Kilworth Football Club	2	AFC North Kilworth	6.0	4.0	+2.0	2.0	2.0	Balanced
Robert Smyth Academy	1	Borough Alliance FC Robert Smyth Academy	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
South Kilworth Recreation Ground	1	North Kilworth FC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Swinford Pl. Field	1	North Kilworth FC	3.0	1.0	+2.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Symington's Recreation Ground	1	Borough Alliance FC	2.0	3.0	-1.0	1.0	2.0	-1.0
Thomas Estley Community College	1	Dunton & Broughton Utd FC Thomas Estley Comm Coll	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Warwick Road Recreation Ground	2	Blaby & Whetstone FC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	2.0	1.0	+1.0

TOTALS	27	-	60.0	53.0	+7.0	27.0	30.0	-3.0
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The supply-demand balance for adult pitches by sub-area is as follows:

Sub-area	Weekly capacity	Weekly demand	Weekly balance	Peak capacity	Peak demand	Peak balance
West	27.0	20.0	+7.0	12.0	15.0	-3.0
Middle	11.0	12.0	-1.0	6.0	4.0	+2.0
East	22.0	21.0	+1.0	9.0	11.0	-2.0
HARBOROUGH	60.0	53.0	+7.0	27.0	30.0	-3.0

The key findings are:

- Peak time utilisation shows an overall deficit at four sites, is balanced at 15 sites and there is spare capacity at one site.
- The collective peak time supply-demand position in the district is a deficit of 3.0 match equivalent sessions. This figure increases to a deficit of 6.0 match equivalent sessions if the education sites without secured community access are excluded.
- The sub-area analysis shows that there is a peak time deficit in the West and East sub-areas.

5.11.3 Youth 11v11 pitches

Site	Pitches	Users	Weekly capacity	Weekly demand	Weekly balance	Peak capacity	Peak demand	Peak balance
Bowden's Park	2	Harborough Town FC	4.0	8.0	-4.0	2.0	4.0	-2.0
Fleckney Sports and Leisure Centre	2	Fleckney Athletic FC	8.0	3.0	+5.0	2.0	2.0	Balance d
Great Glen Recreation Ground	1	Glen Villa FC	4.0	2.0	+2.0	1.0	1.0	Balance d
Houghton Field	(1)	Houghton Rangers FC	2.0	2.0	Balance d	1.0	1.0	Balance d
Lutterworth Football Academy	1	Lutterworth Athletic FC	2.0	4.0	-2.0	1.0	2.0	-1.0
Lutterworth High School	2	Lutterworth Town FC Lutterworth High School	6.0	4.0	+2.0	2.0	4.0	-2.0
Robert Smyth Academy	1	Borough Alliance FC Robert Smyth Academy	2.0	3.0	-1.0	1.0	2.0	-1.0
South Kilworth Recreation Ground	1	North Kilworth FC	2.0	3.0	-1.0	1.0	2.0	-1.0
Symington's Recreation Ground	1	Borough Alliance FC	2.0	2.0	Balance d	1.0	2.0	-1.0
Thomas Estley Comm. College	1	Dunton & Broughton Utd FC Thomas Estley Comm Coll	2.0	2.0	Balance d	1.0	1.0	Balance d
TOTALS	12(1)	-	34.0	33.0	+1.0	13.0	21.0	-8.0

The supply-demand balance for youth 11v11 pitches by sub-area is as follows:

Sub-area	Weekly capacity	Weekly demand	Weekly balance	Peak capacity	Peak demand	Peak balance
West	8.0	8.0	Balance d	4.0	8.0	-4.0
Middle	20.0	21.0	-1.0	8.0	11.0	-3.0
East	6.0	4.0	+2.0	2.0	2.0	Balance d
HARBOROUGH	34.0	33.0	+1.0	13.0	21.0	-8.0

The key findings are:

- Peak time use shows a deficit at six sites with balanced provision at four sites.
- The collective peak time supply-demand position in the district is a deficit of 8.0 match equivalent sessions. The deficit increases to 17.0 match equivalent sessions if the education sites without secured community access are excluded.
- The sub-area analysis shows that there is a peak time deficit in the West and Middle sub-areas.

5.11.4 Youth 9v9 pitches

Site	Pitches	Users	Weekly capacity	Weekly demand	Weekly balance	Peak capacity	Peak demand	Peak balance
Bird's Barn	2	Kibworth Town FC	8.0	7.0	+1.0	2.0	3.0	-1.0
Bowden's Park	3	Harborough Town FC	6.0	5.0	+1.0	3.0	5.0	-1.0
Fleckney Sports and Leisure Centre	2	Fleckney Athletic FC	6.0	1.0	+5.0	2.0	1.0	+1.0
Great Glen Recreation Ground	1	Glen Villa FC	4.0	2.0	+2.0	1.0	1.0	Balance d
Lodge Road Recreation Ground	1	Fleckney Athletic FC	2.0	1.0	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balance d
Lutterworth Football Academy	1	Lutterworth Athletic FC	4.0	4.0	Balance d	1.0	2.0	-1.0
Lutterworth High School	2	Lutterworth Town FC Lutterworth High School	4.0	2.0	+2.0	2.0	2.0	Balance d
Medbourne Sports Club	1	No recorded use	2.0	0.0	+2.0	1.0	0.0	+1.0
North Kilworth FC	1	AFC North Kilworth	4.0	2.0	+2.0	1.0	1.0	Balance d
Symington's Recreation Ground	1	Borough Alliance JFC	1.0	3.0	-2.0	1.0	3.0	-2.0
Ullesthorpe Playing Fields Association	1	Thompsons United FC	2.0	1.0	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balance d
Welland Park Academy	1		2.0	2.0	Balance d	1.0	1.0	Balance d
TOTALS	17	-	45.0	30.0	+15.0	17.0	20.0	-3.0

The supply-demand balance for youth 9v9 pitches by sub-area is as follows:

Sub-area	Weekly capacity	Weekly demand	Weekly balance	Peak capacity	Peak demand	Peak balance
West	13	14	-1.0	5	7	-2.0
Middle	16	7	+9.0	8	9	-1.0
East	16	9	+7.0	4	4	Balance d
HARBOROUGH	45.0	30.0	+15.0	17.0	20.0	-3.0

The key findings are:

- There is a peak time deficit at four sites, a balance at six sites and spare capacity at two sites.
- The collective peak time deficit is 3.0 match equivalent sessions, which increases to 6.0 match equivalent sessions if the site without secured community access is excluded.
- The sub-area analysis shows that there is a peak time deficit in the West sub-area.

5.11.5 Mini-soccer 7v7 pitches

Site	Pitches	Users	Weekly capacity	Weekly demand	Weekly balance	Peak capacity	Peak demand	Peak balance
Bird's Barn	2	Kibworth Town FC	12.0	4.0	+8.0	2.0	2.0	Balanced
Bowden's Park	2	Harborough Town FC	8.0	5.0	+3.0	2.0	3.0	-1.0
Fleckney Sports and Leisure Centre	1	Fleckney Athletic FC	6.0	2.0	+4.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Gilmorton Playing Field	1	No recorded use	4.0	0.0	+4.0	1.0	0.0	+1.0
Houghton Field	1	Houghton Rangers FC	6.0	2.0	+4.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Husband's Bosworth Playing Field	1	North Kilworth FC	6.0	2.0	+4.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
John Wycliffe Primary School	1	No recorded use	4.0	0.0	+4.0	1.0	0.0	+1.0
Lutterworth Football Academy	1	Lutterworth Athletic FC	6.0	1.0	+5.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Lutterworth High School	1	Lutterworth Town FC	4.0	2.0	+2.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Medbourne Sports Club	1	No recorded use	4.0	0.0	+4.0	1.0	0.0	+1.0
North Kilworth FC	1	AFC North Kilworth	6.0	2.0	+2.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Symington's Recreation Ground	1	Borough Alliance JFC	2.0	3.0	-1.0	1.0	3.0	-2.0
Ullesthorpe Playing Fields Association	1	Thompsons United FC	4.0	5.0	-1.0	1.0	3.0	-2.0

TOTALS	15	-	72.0	28.0	+44.0	15.0	18.0	-3.0
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The supply-demand balance for mini-soccer 7v7 pitches by sub-area is as follows:

Sub-area	Weekly capacity	Weekly demand	Weekly balance	Peak capacity	Peak demand	Peak balance
West	26.0	7.0	+19.0	7.0	6.0	+1.0
Middle	6.0	8.0	-2.0	1.0	5.0	-4.0
East	40.0	13.0	+27.0	7.0	7.0	Balanced
HARBOROUGH	72.0	28.0	+47.0	15.0	18.0	-3.0

The key findings are:

- There is a peak time deficit at three sites, use is balanced at seven sites and there is spare capacity at three sites.
- The collective peak time position shows a deficit of 3.0 match equivalent session, which increases to a deficit of 5.0 match equivalent sessions if the site without secured access is excluded.
- There is a collective peak time capacity deficit in the Middle sub-area.

5.11.6 Mini-soccer 5v5 pitches

Site	Pitches	Users	Weekly capacity	Weekly demand	Weekly balance	Peak capacity	Peak demand	Peak balance
Bird's Barn	2	Kibworth Town FC	12.0	6.0	+6.0	2.0	3.0	-1.0
Fleckney Sports and Leisure Centre	1	Fleckney Athletic FC	6.0	2.0	+4.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Gilmorton Playing Field	2	No recorded use	8.0	0.0	+8.0	2.0	0.0	+2.0
Houghton Field	(1)	Houghton Rangers FC	6.0	3.0	+3.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Lutterworth Football Academy	1	Lutterworth Athletic FC	6.0	1.0	+5.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Lutterworth High School	1	Lutterworth Town FC	4.0	2.0	+2.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
North Kilworth FC	1	AFC North Kilworth	6.0	2.0	+4.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Symington's Recreation Ground	2	Borough Alliance JFC	2.0	3.0	-1.0	2.0	4.0	-2.0
Ullesthorpe Playing Fields Association	2	Thompsons United FC	8.0	5.0	+3.0	2.0	2.0	Balanced
Warwick Road Recreation Ground	3	Blaby & Whetstone FC	6.0	1.0	+5.0	3.0	1.0	+2.0
TOTALS	15(1)	-	64.0	25.0	+39.0	16.0	15.0	+1.0

The supply-demand balance for mini-soccer 5v5 pitches by sub-area is as follows:

Sub-area	Weekly capacity	Weekly demand	Weekly balance	Peak capacity	Peak demand	Peak balance
West	28.0	9.0	+19.0	7	4	+3.0
Middle	10.0	6.0	+4.0	3	7	-4.0
East	26.0	10.0	+16.0	6	4	+2.0
HARBOROUGH	64.0	25.0	+39.0	16.0	15.0	+1.0

The key findings are:

- Peak time utilisation shows an overall deficit at two sites, it is balanced at six sites and there is spare capacity at two sites.
- The collective peak time spare capacity is 1.0 match equivalent session. This decreases to balanced provision if the education site without secured community access is excluded.

5.12 Artificial grass pitches

5.12.1 Introduction

This section assesses the need for artificial grass pitches for football, including:

- '3G' football turf pitches.
- Other artificial turf pitches used for football.

5.12.2 Full-sized '3G' football turf pitches

There are four full-sized pitches in the district. Three are on the FA's '3G' Pitch Register and are therefore certified for competitive play, the exception being the Lutterworth pitch whose certification has expired:

Site	Address	Dimensions	Floodlit	Built	Sub-area
Bowden's Park	Northampton Road, Market Harborough LE16 9HF	107m x 71m 106m x 70m	Yes Yes	2008 2018	Middle
Broughton Astley Leisure Centre	Broughton Way, Broughton Astley LE9 6AZ	105m x 70m	Yes	2019	West
Lutterworth Athletic FC	Hall Lane, Lutterworth LE17 4LN	106m x 70m	Yes	2022	West

5.12.3 Small-sided '3G' football turf pitches

The following small pitches are available for community use. None of the pitches are on the FA's '3G' Pitch Register and so can only be used for training:

Site	Address	Dimensions	Floodlit	Built	Sub-area
Dunton & Broughton Rangers FC	Station Road, Dunton Bassett LE17 5LG	25m x 16m	No	2015	West
Fleckney Sports Centre	Leicester Road, Fleckney LE8 8BG	47m x 34m	Yes	2017	Middle
Kibworth Mead Academy	Smeeton Road, Kibworth Beauchamp LE8 0LG	73m x 46m	Yes	2015	East

5.12.4 Full-sized '2G' pitches

There are three full-sized (or almost full-sized) '2G' pitches in the district, which are capable of accommodating football training but not competitive matches:

Site	Address	Dimensions	Floodlit	Built	Sub-area
Lutterworth College	Bitteswell Road, Lutterworth LE17 4EW	97m x 61m	Yes	2001	West
Robert Smyth Academy	Burnmill Road, Market Harborough LE16 7JG	97m x 61m	Yes	2023	Middle
Welland Park Academy	Welland Park Road, Market Harborough LE16 9DR	102m x 63m	Yes	2008	Middle

5.12.5 Artificial turf pitch quality

The quality of the '3G' football turf pitches in the district was assessed from site visits, to apply the Non-technical Visual Assessment criteria developed for use in conjunction with the *'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance'*. The assessment generates an overall 'score' by evaluating the playing surface, fencing, floodlighting, disability access and changing provision.

- **Full-sized '3G' football turf pitches:**

Site	Pitch	Changing
Bowden's Park (pitch one)	Good	Good
Bowden's Park (pitch two)	Good	Good
Broughton Astley Leisure Centre	Good	Good
Lutterworth Athletic FC	Good	Good

- **Small-sided '3G' football turf pitches:**

Site	Pitch	Changing
Dunton & Broughton Rangers FC	Good	Good
Fleckney Sports and Leisure Centre	Good	Good
Kibworth Mead Academy	Standard	Good

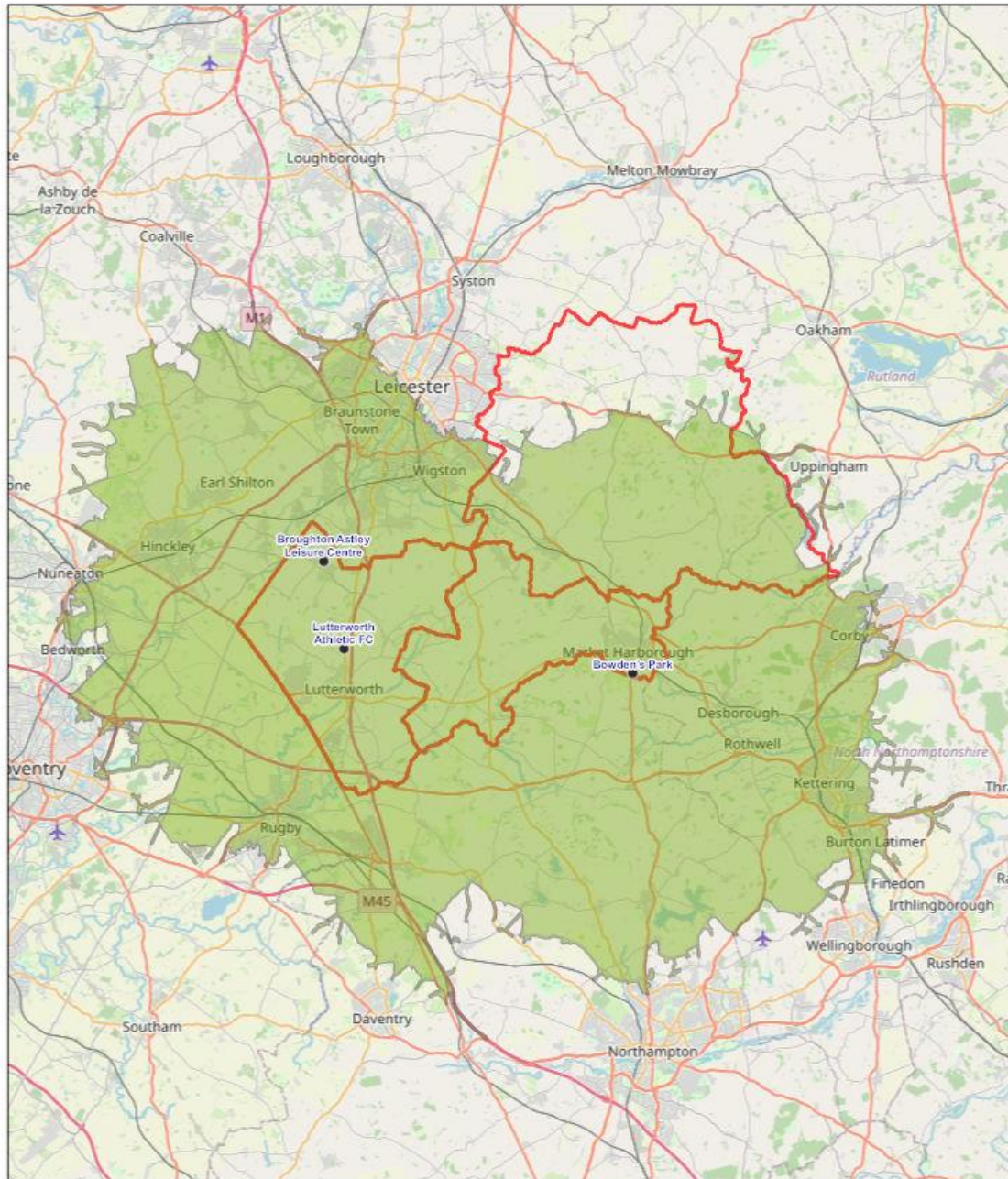
5.12.5 Artificial turf pitch cost

The cost of hiring artificial grass football pitches in the peak period in Harborough district and comparisons with other areas are as follows:

Pitch	Cost per match (£)
<i>Harborough District</i>	
<i>Harborough Town '3G' pitches</i>	
Whole pitch (with lights)	£110
Whole pitch (without lights)	£90
One-third pitch	£30
<i>Broughton Astley Leisure Centre</i>	£83.50
Whole pitch	£52
Half-pitch	£26
One-third pitch	
<i>Leicester City Council</i>	
<i>Judgemeadow College</i>	
Whole pitch	£90
One-third pitch	£42
<i>Melton Borough Council</i>	
<i>John Fernley College</i>	
Whole pitch	£90
Half pitch	£50

5.12.5 Artificial turf pitch locations

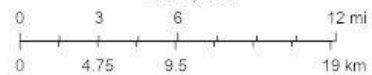
HARBOROUGH - Full-sized 3G Football Turf Pitches 20 Mins Drive



2/14/2022

1:577,790

- FULL-SIZED 3G FOOTBALL TURF PITCHES
- 20.0 Minutes
- ▭ West Sub Area, Middle Sub Area, East Sub Area
- ▭ Harborough District Boundary



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5.12.6 '3G' football turf pitch capacity

There are four full-sized '3G' pitches in Harborough district. In addition, there are three small-sided pitches and two '2G' pitches capable of accommodating football training. The capacity of these pitches to accommodate football usage is calibrated against the FA's calculation that one full-sized '3G' football turf pitch can meet the training needs of 38 teams per week. Smaller pitches and other artificial grass surfaces are calibrated as 0.5 or 0.25 '3G' pitch equivalents, dependent on access and usage. The capacity of the pitches in Harborough district is tabulated below:

Pitch	Dimensions	Playing surface	'3G' pitch equivalent	Justification
Bowden's Park 1	107m x 71m	'3G'	1.0	Full-sized '3G' on FA Register
Bowden's Park 2	106m x 70m	'3G'	1.0	Full-sized '3G' on FA Register
Broughton Astley Leisure Centre	105m x 70m	'3G'	1.0	Full-sized '3G' on FA Register
Lutterworth Athletic FC	106m x 70m	'3G'	1.0	Full-sized '3G'
Dunton & Broughton Rangers FC	25m x 16m	'3G'	0	Small-sided '3G' no floodlights so unavailable in peak periods
Fleckney Sports Centre	47m x 34m	'3G'	0.25	Small-sided '3G'
Kibworth Mead Academy	73m x 46m	'3G'	0.5	Youth 9v9-sized '3G'
Lutterworth College	97m x 61m	Sand-dressed	0.25	'2G' surface with hockey priority
Robert Smyth Academy	97m x 61m	Sand-dressed	0.25	'2G' surface with hockey priority
Welland Park Academy	102m x 63m	Sand-dressed	0.5	'2G' surface with 50% football use written into the CUA
TOTAL	-	-	5.75	-

Based upon the FA calculation that there should be one full-sized '3G' pitch per 38 teams, these provide collectively the equivalent of 219 team training sessions per week. This compares with 279 teams in the district, so there is a shortfall of 1.58 full-sized '3G' pitches in the district:

The supply-demand balance for '3G' football turf pitches by sub-area is as follows. It shows that there is a deficit in all sub-areas:

Sub-area	Teams	Current '3G' needs	Current '3G' supply	'3G' pitch deficit
West	97	2.5	2.25	-0.25
Middle	114	3	2.75	-0.25
East	68	2	0.75	-1.25
HARBOROUGH	279	7.5	5.75	-1.75

- Many local clubs have identified the lack of floodlit, all-weather pitches as an impediment to the development of the game locally.
- There is very limited spare capacity in the peak periods at existing pitches.
- There is also an accessibility deficiency in the northern part of the East sub-area, based on a 20-minute drivetime catchment.
- If the 37 additional teams identified by local clubs as representing currently unmet demand are included, total team demand for 313 sessions per week creates a shortfall of 2.31 full-sized pitches.

5.12.7 Use of hockey pitches for football

Due to the current shortfall in '3G' football turf pitches, most of the sand-filled artificial grass pitches in the district are used for football training on midweek evenings.

Site	Hockey use	Hockey use (%)	Football use	Football use (%)	Unused	Unused (%)
Lutterworth College	4 hours	12.5%	20 hours	62.5%	8 hours	25.0%
Robert Smyth Academy	9 hours	32.1%	12 hours	42.9%	7 hours	25.0%
Welland Park Academy	0 hours	0.0%	14 hours	50.0%	14 hours	50.0%

- **Lutterworth College:** The pitch is sand-filled (so only suitable for football training) and at 97m x 61m is undersized for adult football. It has limited hockey use at present, from Welford HC, but accommodates 15 hours per week of football training. It is not subject to a formal Community Use Agreement, so in theory access could be withdrawn at any time.
- **Robert Smyth Academy:** The pitch is sand-filled (so only suitable for football training) and at 97m x 61m is undersized for adult football. AS a condition of planning consent, the floodlights cannot be used after 9pm. It is the main base for Market Harborough HC, which limits its use for football. It is subject to a Community Use Agreement.
- **Welland Park Academy:** The pitch is sand-filled (so only suitable for football training). It has no hockey use at present but accommodates 14 hours per week of football training. It is unavailable on Sundays and is subject to a formal

Community Use Agreement, which provides for football access up to 50% of the available time.

5.13 Assessment of future needs

5.13.1 Population growth

The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 104,839 by 2031, an increase of 6,064 (or 6.1%). Comparison of the projections for 2024 and 2031 shows that the percentage of people aged under 50 falls from 54.2% to 53.2%, with proportionate population increases amongst the over 50s.

5.13.2 Potential changes in demand

Consultation with local clubs indicated that the following 37 additional teams could be accommodated in Harborough district if the quality and quantity of pitch provision was improved. The projected increase is equivalent to a 13.3% rise in current team numbers.

Club	Adult teams	Youth (11v11)	Youth (9v9)	Mini (7v7)	Mini (5v5)
Borough Alliance FC	0	0	0	0	0
Glen Villa FC	1	0	0	0	0
Harborough Town FC	1	2	2	3	3
Houghton Rangers FC	0	0	0	0	0
Kibworth Town FC	2	3	2	3	3
Lutterworth Town FC	1	5	2	2	2
Medbourne FC	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	5	10	6	8	8

5.13.3 Site-specific pressures

Harborough District Council needs to identify sites upon which it can deliver its housing targets. Whilst planning policy offers protection to playing pitches, some sites may be vulnerable unless it can be proved that they are needed to accommodate existing or future shortfalls in supply or serve some other green space functions. At present, the analysis in section 5.9 above shows that there is no effective spare capacity in the peak periods, so the case for retention is strong.

5.13.4 Potential changes in supply

These are as follows:

- Pitch provision associated with the West of Leicester Road development in Market Harborough may be achieved via an off-site financial contribution,

potentially involving a '3G' football turf pitch in conjunction with Borough Alliance FC although this proposal has not currently been actively addressed.

- An adult grass football pitch will be provided in conjunction with the housing development at Uppingham Road, Bushby.
- Lutterworth High School has aspirations to provide a '3G' football turf pitch.
- Kibworth Town FC has aspirations to provide a '3G' football turf pitch.
- There are proposals to provide additional grass football pitches on the outfield of Illston Abey Cricket Club.
- The football pitch at Aylestone Rugby Club is currently under threat of development.

5.13.5 Existing grass pitch spare capacity

The existing position for grass football pitch peak-time capacity has been calculated in terms of 'match equivalent sessions' in section 5.9 above and is as follows, for all sites and for sites with secured community access only. It is important to note that the shortfalls cannot be met by improvements to pitch quality (and related capacity), because they relate to peak period demand, which is defined by the number of pitches:

Pitch type	All sites	Secured sites
Adult	-5.0	-6.0
Youth 11v11	-8.0	-17.0
Youth 9v9	-3.0	-6.0
Mini-soccer 7v7	-3.0	-5.0
Mini-soccer 5v5	+1.0	Balanced

5.13.6 Future grass pitch needs

Future formal grass pitch needs to 2031 are modelled below using 'Team Generation Rates' (TGRs), which identify how many people in a specified age group in the district are required to generate one team. These are then applied to projected changes in population to identify the likely number of teams in the future:

Sport	Age range	Current population	Current teams	Unmet demand	TGR	Population 2031	Teams 2031	Extra teams
Adult male football	17-45	14,828	64	2	1: 225	15,597	69	+5
Adult female football	17-45	15,056	5	3	1: 1,882	15,840	8	0
Boys youth 11v11 football	12-16	3,046	58	5	1: 49	3,026	62	-1
Girls youth 11v11 football	12-16	2,883	8	5	1: 222	2,906	13	0
Boys youth 9v9 football	10-11	1,258	38	2	1: 31	1,214	39	-1

Girls youth 9v9 football	10-11	1,225	8	4	1: 102	1,189	12	0
Mini-soccer 7v7 (mixed)	8-9	2,168	52	8	1: 36	2,199	61	+1
Mini-soccer 5v5 (mixed)	6-7	2,168	44	8	1: 42	2,179	52	0

5.13.7 Existing '3G' football turf pitch spare capacity

Peak-time utilisation rates of the full-sized '3G' pitches in the district is as follows. There is no effective spare capacity.

Site	Midweek used hours	% capacity	Saturday used hours	% capacity	Sunday used hours	% capacity
Bowden's Park (pitch one)	18	90%	8	100%	6	75%
Bowden's Park (pitch two)	20	100%	8	100%	6	75%
Broughton Astley Leisure Centre	20	100%	8	100%	4	50%
Lutterworth Football Academy	20	100%	8	100%	6	75%
TOTALS	78	97.5%	32	100%	22	68.8%

5.13.8 Future '3G' pitch needs

Based upon the small net projected increase in team numbers of four by 2031, there will be an increase in demand equivalent to 0.11 '3G' football turf pitches.

5.13.9 Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator

A supplementary way of modelling future playing pitch needs is Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator. The model applies Team Generation Rates to the projected population increases to estimate the additional pitch needs arising and in addition generates capital and revenue cost estimates for providing the extra pitches. The results of applying the Calculator for football needs arising from major planned developments in Harborough are below

Development	Number of dwellings	Population	Pitch type	Number of pitches	Capital costs (£)	Annual costs (£)
East of Lutterworth Strategic Development Area	1,260	2,772	Adult	1.0	£103,930	£70,787
			Youth	1.81	£150,605	
			Mini	1.59	£41,428	
			'3G'	0.23	£239,794	
			Changing	4.58	£820,959	
TOTALS				-	£1,356,716	£70,787
Overstone Park, Market Harborough	600	1,320	Adult	0.48	£49,489	£33,709
			Youth	0.86	£71,720	
			Mini	0.76	£19,729	
			'3G'	0.11	£114,193	
			Changing	2.18	£390,976	
TOTALS				-	£646,057	£33,709

East of Blackberry Grange, Market Harborough	350	770	Adult	0.28	£28,868	£19,662
			Youth	0.50	£41,835	
			Mini	0.44	£11,506	
			'3G'	0.06	£66,606	
			Changing	1.27	£228,032	
			TOTALS	-	£376,847	
Arnesby Road, Fleckney	130	286	Adult	0.10	£10,723	£7,305
			Youth	0.19	£15,545	
			Mini	0.16	£4,275	
			'3G'	0.02	£24,726	
			Changing	0.47	£84,733	
			TOTALS	-	£140,022	
Burnmill Farm, Market Harborough	128	282	Adult	0.10	£10,577	£7,202
			Youth	0.18	£15,317	
			Mini	0.16	£4,218	
			'3G'	0.02	£24,401	
			Changing	0.42	£83,506	
			TOTALS	-	£138,018	
Scraptoft North Strategic Development Area	1,200	2,640	Adult	0.95	£98,978	£67,416
			Youth	1.72	£143,430	
			Mini	1.52	£39,458	
			'3G'	0.22	£228,378	
			Changing	4.36	£781,878	
			TOTALS	-	£1,292,122	
OVERALL TOTAL	3,668	8,070	-	-	£3,949,782	£206,081

5.14 Key findings and issues

5.14.1 What are the main characteristics of current supply and demand?

- **Local clubs:** There is a strong network of England Accredited football clubs in Harborough district, providing high quality coaching and playing opportunities.
- **Increased demand:** The number of FA-affiliated football teams in the district has increased from 244 in 2022/23 to 279 in 2023/24, a 14.3% increase. The growth is apparent in all age groups apart from Youth 11v11.
- **Unmet demand:** Consultation with local clubs indicated that a total of 28 additional teams of all age groups could be accommodated in Harborough district if the quality and quantity of pitch provision was improved, an increase of 10% from the number of existing teams.
- **Provision in neighbouring areas:** Assessments of football pitch provision in Playing Pitch Strategies in neighbouring areas mostly indicate deficiencies, particularly for '3G' football turf pitches. The absence of any available spare

capacity in surrounding areas means that there is no scope for exporting football demand from Harborough district.

- **Grass pitch supply:** An examination of grass pitch supply suggests that in quantitative terms there is little if any local spare capacity.
- **Grass pitch quality:** 12.5% of pitches in the district are rated as 'poor' quality, with consequent reductions in carrying capacity. Several others suffer from poor drainage and so are rated at the lower end of 'standard' quality.
- **Changing facilities:** 28 pitches in the district (31.8%) are served by 'poor' quality or no changing facilities.
- **Unsecured access:** 17.0% of the pitches with community use and used are on sites without secured use, meaning that in theory community use could be rescinded at any time.
- **'3G' football turf pitches:** There are four full-sized '3G' pitches in Harborough district but many local clubs have identified the lack of floodlit, all-weather pitches as an impediment to the development of the game locally. There is a calculated shortfall of 1.34 full-sized '3G' football turf pitches in the district at present, or 2.31 pitches if additional teams identified by local clubs as representing currently unmet demand are included. The main deficiency is in the East sub-area.

5.14.2 Is there enough accessible and secured community use to meet current demand? **NO** - there is a significant deficit for most pitch types in the peak period

- **Adult grass pitches:** There is a collective peak deficit of 4.0 weekly match equivalent sessions at accessible, community-secured sites.
- **Youth 11v11 pitches:** There is a collective peak deficit of 16.0 weekly match equivalent sessions at the community-secured sites.
- **Youth 9v9 pitches:** There is a collective peak deficit of 6.0 weekly match equivalent session at community-secured sites.
- **Mini-soccer 7v7 pitches:** There is a collective peak deficit of 1.0 weekly match equivalent session at community-secured sites.
- **Mini-soccer 5v5 pitches:** There is collective spare capacity of 1.0 weekly match equivalent session at the community-secured sites.
- **'3G' football turf pitches:** There is a calculated shortfall of 1.34 full-sized '3G' football turf pitches in the district at present, or 2.31 pitches if additional teams identified by local clubs as representing currently unmet demand are included. The main deficiency is in the East sub-area.

5.14.3 Is the accessible provision of suitable quality and appropriately maintained? **MOSTLY** - 15% of pitches are 'poor' quality

15% of pitches in the district are rated as 'poor' quality, with consequent reductions in carrying capacity. However, several others suffer from poor drainage and so are rated at the lower end of 'standard' quality.

5.14.4 What are the main characteristics of future supply and demand?

- **Population growth:** The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 104,839 by 2031, an increase of 6,064 (or 6.1%). Comparison of the projections for 2024 and 2031 shows that the percentage of people aged under 50 falls from 54.2% to 53.2%, with proportionate population increases amongst the over 50s.
- **Changes in demand:** Projecting future need based on current demand patterns (including identified unmet demand) is a reasonable basis for forecasting.
- **Existing spare capacity:** There is a significant deficit in all pitch types apart from mini 5v5 pitches.
- **Future needs:** Based on projected population growth, changes in demand for football pitches by 2031 will be equivalent to the following number of peak time match equivalent sessions:

<i>Pitch type</i>	<i>Change in pitch demand</i>
Adult	+5.0
Youth 11v11	-1.0
Youth 9v9	-1.0
Mini-soccer 7v7	+1.0
Mini-soccer 5v5	0
'3G' football turf	+0.10

5.14.5 Is there enough accessible and secured provision to meet future demand? **No** - there is a deficit for all pitch types.

The situation at community accessible pitches in the district is summarised below, to show total pitch needs in 2031, taking into account any current deficiencies and the effect of additional future demand:

- **Current secured pitches:** The number of pitches of each type with secured community access is listed in the second column.
- **Current secured peak spare pitch capacity:** The spare capacity at secured pitches is listed in the third column, with deficits indicated by a minus sign.
- **Current peak pitch demand:** The number of pitches currently required to meet peak demand is listed in the fourth column.

- **Extra peak pitch needs by 2031:** The number of extra pitches needed to meet projected demand by 2041 is listed in the fifth column.
- **Total peak pitch needs by 2031:** Total pitch needs in 2031 are listed in the sixth column, derived by adding the current and future assessed needs.

Pitch type	Current secured pitches	Current secured peak spare pitch capacity	Current peak pitch demand	Extra peak pitch needs by 2031	Total peak pitch needs by 2031
Adult football	24	-6.0	30.0	+5.0	35.0
Youth 11v11	8	-17.0	25.0	-1.0	24.0
Youth 9v9	10	-6.0	16.0	-1.0	15.0
Mini 7v7	17	-5.0	22.0	+1.0	21.0
Mini 5v5	15	Balanced	15.0	0	15.0

5.15 Scenario Testing

5.15.1 Introduction

Based upon the key findings and issues identified above, a number of scenarios have been examined, to identify the optimum approach to addressing needs.

5.15.2 Scenario 1: Accessing pitches on education sites

- **Rationale:** The following pitches on school sites have no community use at present:

Site	Address	Adult 11v11	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Sub-area
Billesdon Primary School	Gaulby Road, Billesdon LE7 9AG	-	-	-	1	-	East
Church Langton Primary Academy	Stonton Road, Church Langton LE16 7SZ	-	-	-	1	-	East
Farndon Fields Primary School	Argyle Park, Market Harborough LE16 9JH	-	-	1	1	1	Middle
Fernvale Primary School	Somerby Road, Scraftoft LE7 9PR	-	2	-	-	-	East
Fleckney Primary School	Batchelor Road, Fleckney LE8 8BE	-	1	-	1	-	Middle
Foxton Primary School	Gallow Field Road, Foxton LE16 7QZ	-	-	-	1	-	Middle
Great Glen St. Cuthbert's Primary	The Chase, Great Glen LE8 9EQ	-	-	-	1	-	East

Site	Address	Adult 11v11	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Sub-area
Husband's Bosworth Primary School	School Lane, Husband's Bosworth LE17 6JU	-	-	-	1	-	West
Kibworth Primary School	Hillcrest Avenue, Kibworth Harcourt LE8 0NH	-	-	-	2	-	East
Lubenham All Saints Primary School	School Lane, Lubenham LE16 9TW	-	-	-	1	-	Middle
Lutterworth College	Bittesworth Road, Lutterworth LE17 4EX	2	1	-	1	-	West
Market Harborough Academy	Fairfield Road, Market Harborough LE16 9QH	-	-	-	1	-	Middle
Ridgeway Primary Academy	The Ridgeway, Market Harborough LE16 7HQ	-	-	-	1	-	Middle
Sherrier Primary School	Bitteswell Road, Lutterworth LE17 4EX	-	-	-	2	-	West
St. Andrew's Primary School	Dag Lane, North Kilworth LE17 6HD	-	-	-	1	-	West
St. Luke's Primary School	Main Street, Thurnby LE7 9PN	-	-	-	2	-	East
TOTALS	-	2	4	1	18	1	-

- The table below models the effect of gaining access to school pitches to meet future community demand. It shows that whilst additional capacity would still need to be provided for youth 9v9 and mini 5v5, the amount of provision required would be reduced. Whilst pitch capacity is reduced by the education use, it would nevertheless make sense to consider investigating the potential for securing community use of these pitches to meet additional future demand, prior to making entirely new provision.

Pitch type	Current School pitches	Peak match equivalent capacity	Unmet current peak demand (match equivalents)	Balance
Adult football	2	2.0	-6.0	-4.0
Youth 11v11	4	4.0	-17.0	-13.0
Youth 9v9	1	1.0	-6.0	-5.0
Mini 7v7	18	18.0	-5.0	+13.0
Mini 5v5	1	1.0	Balanced	+1.0

- Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
 - The pitches already exist and therefore could be brought into use at little or no additional cost, depending on the current quality of the respective pitches.

- There would be opportunities to establish closer school-club links if community-based clubs were playing on school sites.
 - The pitches should be available during the peak demand periods for community-based teams at weekends.
 - Seven of the schools are in the Middle sub-area, where the greatest shortfalls in peak time capacity are located.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
 - None of the schools has community use at present, so there is no guarantee that they would be prepared to commence such an arrangement.
 - No site has a Community Use Agreement so continued access would be unsecured.
 - No assessment has been made of the quality of schools pitches without community use, so the extent of their capacity to accommodate additional use is unknown.
 - **Conclusions:** This scenario offers some advantages for enhancing local pitch capacity on a cost-effective basis and should therefore be examined further on a site-by-site basis.

5.15.3 Scenario 2: Improve existing grass pitch carrying capacity

- **Rationale:** The following football pitches in Harborough district are either 'standard' or 'poor' quality and as such their carrying capacity is compromised:

Site	Pitch rating	Adult 11v11	Youth 11v11	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5
Bowden's Park	Standard	3	2	3	2	-
Dunton and Broughton Rangers FC	Standard	1	-	-	-	-
Frolesworth Road Recreation Ground	Poor	2	-	-	-	-
Fleckney Sports and Leisure Centre	Standard	1	-	-	-	-
Gilmorton Playing Field	Standard	-	-	-	1	2
Great Glen Recreation Ground	Poor	1	-	3	-	-
Lodge Road Recreation Ground	Standard	-	1	-	-	-
Lutterworth High School	Standard	-	2	2	1	1

Medbourne Sports and Social Club	Standard	1	-	1	1	-
Robert Smyth Academy	Standard	1	1	-	-	-
South Kilworth Recreation Ground	Standard	1	-	-	-	-
Symington's Recreation Ground	Standard	1	1	-	-	-
	Poor	-	-	1	1	2
Thomas Estley Academy	Standard	1	1	-	-	-
Ullesthorpe Playing Field	Standard	-	-	1	1	2
Warwick Road Recreation Ground	Poor	2	-	-	-	3
Welland Park Academy	Standard	-	-	1	-	-
TOTALS	-	15	8	12	7	10

- The table below models the effect of improving the pitches to 'good' quality and subsequently maintaining them as such.

Pitch type	Improved pitch capacity (match equivalents)	Unmet current peak demand (match equivalents)	Balance (match equivalents)
Adult football	20.0	-6.0	+14.0
Youth 11v11	16.0	-17.0	-1.0
Youth 9v9	28.0	-6.0	+22.0
Mini 7v7	16.0	-5.0	+11.0
Mini 5v5	27.0	Balanced	+27.0

- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
 - Overall usage capacity would be improved, the districtwide collective weekly capacity deficiencies would be eliminated with the exception of youth 11v11 and the distribution of the sites gives good geographical coverage across the whole district.
 - This would be a cost-effective option compared with the expense of providing new pitches, particularly if land acquisition costs are factored in.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
 - A Pitch Power assessment will need to be completed to accurately assess the quality of each pitch and to access funding to help improve them if required.
 - The grounds maintenance specification at council-owned pitches is not consistent with maintaining the pitches to a high standard, so the only option for achieving this at council-owned pitches is through an asset transfer to user clubs.

- The major benefit of capacity improvements are on weekly capacity and would have very limited impact on the peak period shortfalls, unless fixtures can be scheduled back-to-back, as is sometimes the case with youth football and mini-soccer games.

- **Conclusions:** Improvements should be based on the outcome of Pitch Power assessments.

5.15.4 Scenario 3: Bringing unused pitches back into use.

- **Rationale:** There are two pitches in the district available for community use but unused and bringing these back into use would be a way of adding additional capacity.

Site	Address	Adult 11v11 1	Youth 11v11 1	Youth 9v9	Mini 7v7	Mini 5v5	Sub-area
Kibworth Mead Academy	Smeeton Road, Kibworth Beauchamp LE8 0LG	-	2	-	-	-	East
TOTALS	-	0	2	0	0	0	-

- **Advantage:** The advantage of this scenario is that the pitches could be brought back into use with no capital outlay.
- **Disadvantages:** The only disadvantage is that it would have a limited impact upon deficits.

Pitch type	Improved pitch capacity (match equivalents)	Unmet current peak demand (match equivalents)	Balance (match equivalents)
Adult football	0.0	-6.0	-6.0
Youth 11v11	4.0	-17.0	-13.0
Youth 9v9	0.0	-6.0	-6.0
Mini 7v7	0.0	-5.0	-5.0
Mini 5v5	0.0	Balanced	Balanced

- **Conclusions:** There are benefits in pursuing this scenario.

5.15.5 Scenario 4: The effect of FA participation targets

- **Rationale:** As an alternative to estimates of additional team formation by local clubs that have already been factored into future need projections via the Team Generation Rate calculations, the FA has a number of national participation targets by 2028 as follows:

Team type	Participation targets	Current teams	Extra teams	Total teams
Adult male	-3%	66	-2	64
Adult female	+48%	5	3	8
Youth 11v11 male	+15%	58	9	67
Youth 11v11 female	+48%	8	4	12
Youth 9v9 male	+15%	38	6	44
Youth 9v9 female	+48%	8	4	12
Mini 7v7	+15%	52	8	60
Mini 5v5	+15%	44	7	51
TOTALS	-	279	39	318

The FA participation target projections suggest an additional 39 teams in the borough by 2028, whereas the local club estimates indicate 37 teams.

- **Advantages:** The advantage of the FA growth scenario is that it is based upon recent national participation patterns, so is grounded in demonstrable current trends.
- **Disadvantages:** The FA growth scenario corresponds closely with local club estimates of additional team potential, so there is no disadvantage in applying either.
- **Conclusions:** Future needs in the Harborough PPS will continue to be based upon local club estimates of growth in team formation. The projected figure allows for an 13.3% increase in teams, compared with the FA figure of 14% and it is considered prudent to plan for the higher figure.

5.15.6 Scenario 5: Replacing the proposed grass pitches in the West of Leicester Road development with an off-site financial contribution towards a '3G' pitch.

- **Rationale:** The West of Leicester Road development in Market Harborough includes provision for three grass football pitches (one adult pitch, one youth 11v11 pitch and one small training pitch (equivalent to a mini 5v5 pitch), plus a changing facility. The topography of the area where the pitches are proposed is poor and therefore there may be greater benefit in seeking an off-site financial contribution from the developer to provide alternative facilities elsewhere in the vicinity.
- Assuming that the proposed pitches were provided as 'good' quality, the adult pitch would have a weekly carrying capacity of three match equivalent sessions, the youth 11v11 pitch could accommodate four match equivalent sessions and the mini 5v5 pitch could accommodate six match equivalent sessions. This would have the following impact on grass pitch deficiencies in the middle sub-area:

<i>Pitch type</i>	<i>Improved pitch capacity (match equivalents)</i>	<i>Sub-area deficit (match equivalents)</i>	<i>Balance (match equivalents)</i>
Adult football	3.0	+3.0	+6.0
Youth 11v11	4.0	-3.0	+1.0
Youth 9v9	0.0	-3.0	-3.0
Mini 7v7	0.0	-3.0	-3.0
Mini 5v5	6.0	-3.0	+3.0

- Based upon Sport England’s most recent facilities cost guidance third quarter of 2024), the capital cost of providing the pitches and changing facilities (excluding any land acquisition costs and topographic groundworks) would be as follows:

<i>Provision</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Adult football pitch	£110,000
Youth 11v11 pitch	£95,000
Mini 5v5 pitch	£30,000
4 team changing pavilion	£810,000
TOTAL	£1,045,000

- The cost of providing a ‘3G’ football turf pitch is £1,155,000, based upon Sport England’s most recent facilities cost guidance (third quarter of 2024) and such a facility would have much greater carrying capacity than the on-site grass pitches. This would have the following impact on ‘3G’ pitch deficiencies in the middle sub-area:

<i>Improved pitch capacity</i>	<i>Sub-area deficit</i>	<i>Balance</i>
1.0	-0.25	+0.75

- Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
 - A ‘3G’ football turf pitch could accommodate more than 20 match equivalent sessions per week in the peak period, compared with 13 on the proposed on-site grass pitches.
 - The topography of the West of Leicester Road site is unsuited to accommodating pitches in the location proposed and there would be additional capital costs for levelling and drainage works.
- Disadvantage:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
 - The geographical focus of additional ‘3G’ pitch needs in the district is in the East sub-area, rather than the Middle sub-area.
 - There are deficiencies in the Middle sub-area for all types of grass football pitch apart from adult football, so the existing proposals would also address unmet needs in the area.

- No suitable site has currently been identified in the Middle sub-area for an additional '3G' pitch.
- **Conclusions:** Altering the planning obligation at the West of Leicester Road site from on-site grass pitch provision to a financial contribution towards the off-site provision of a '3G' football turf pitch would meet unmet needs for '3G' football turf pitches if the investment could be made in the East sub-area or it could evidence its impact to meet the shortfall and demand within the East sub-area. Otherwise, grass pitch needs in the Middle sub-area are relatively greater than for additional '3G' provision in Market Harborough, where there are already two facilities.

5.16 Policy recommendations

5.16.1 Introduction

The Harborough district PPS is a robust and evidence-based assessment of the current and future needs for football in the district. The recommendations in relation to football are made in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which stipulates that existing open space including playing pitches, should not be built upon unless:

- An assessment has taken place which has clearly shown the open space to be surplus to requirements, or;
- The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality, in a suitable location, or;
- The development is for alternative sport and recreation provision, the needs for which clearly outweighs the loss.

The following recommendations are arranged under the three main headings of 'protect', 'enhance' and 'provide'.

5.16.2 Protect

Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision: The Strategy identifies a need for all current and disused football pitch sites to be retained, on the basis of the specific identified roles that each can play in delivering the needs of the sport and/or other wider open space functions in Harborough district both now and in the future. It is therefore recommended that existing planning policies continue to support the retention and protection of all sites, based upon the evidence in the PPS. If any pitch sites do become the subject of development proposals, this will only be permissible if they are replaced and meet policy exception E4 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. This states that 'the playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development must be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development'.

Recommendation 2 - Security of tenure: Just over 10% of the football pitches in the district are on sites without secured community use. The absence of Community Use Agreements makes it impossible to assume the continued availability of the pitches for the community. It is therefore recommended that efforts are made to achieve security of Community Use Agreements at sites without them at present.

5.16.3 Enhance

Recommendation 3 - Improving existing 'poor' quality provision, including disused sites: Eight pitches (8.7%) in the district are rated as 'poor' quality and several more are rated at the lower end of 'standard' quality. Additionally, 34.8% of pitches are served by 'poor' quality or no changing facilities. This reduces the quality of playing experience and may deter some potential participants. Based upon the sub-area assessment, improving the pitches at Bowden's Park and Symington's Recreation Ground would have the greatest impact on current deficiencies. Subject to security of tenure issues, it is recommended that:

- The site owners concerned should subscribe to the Football Foundation's Pitch Power programme, a low-cost service that provides a pitch quality assessment and recommendations on how to improve maintenance to enhance capacity.
- The site owners concerned should be supported to apply for external funding for facility enhancements, including the receipt of developer contributions (see below) where the usage capacity would be enhanced, where this would address deficits in the peak period.

Recommendation 4 - Developer contributions and external funding (enhancements): Some of the additional demand for football arising from the proposed housing development in Harborough district to 2031, should be accommodated through enhancements to existing pitches and facilities. Improving the pitches at Bowden's Park, Lutterworth Football Academy, North Kilworth FC and Symington's Recreation Ground would have the greatest impact on current deficiencies. It is recommended that the site-specific action plan in the Harborough

PPS be used as the basis for determining facility enhancements that demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under S106 arrangements, on-site provision in larger developments and/or through applications for external funding to cover the capital and revenue implications of the enhancements.

5.16.4 Provide

Recommendation 5 - ‘3G’ football turf pitches: If unmet demand for football teams is included, based upon the FA’s guide figure, there is a shortfall of ‘3G’ football turf pitches in the district. ‘3G’ pitches are an important component of provision because their all-weather nature and floodlights enable a high volume of play to be accommodated on good quality playing surfaces. The provision of an additional ‘3G’ pitch to meet needs identified in the Harborough PPS should be supported as a priority in an appropriate location.

Recommendation 6 - Developer contributions and external funding (new provision): Some of the extra demand for football in particular arising from the proposed housing development in Harborough district to 2031, may need to be accommodated through the provision of new pitches and facilities, once options for improving capacity at existing sites have been explored. It is recommended that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under S106 arrangements, on-site provision in larger developments and/or through applications for external funding to cover the capital and revenue implications of the new provision.

5.17 Action Plan

5.17.1 Introduction

In the context of the high-level recommendations above, the tables below set out the football site-specific action plan to guide the implementation of the strategy. The abbreviations stand for HDC - Harborough District Council, FF - Football Foundation and PP - Pitch Power (the Football Foundation’s pitch improvement tool). The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England’s ‘Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2023’ (2023), but actual costs will vary based on site-specific conditions.

5.17.2 Key strategic actions

Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Community access to pitches	Pursue formal Community Use agreements at all existing and any future proposed pitches on education sites.	HDC	Academies and schools	Possible funding for improvements to physical accessibility.	High
Securing developer contributions	Ensure that policy provision is made to secure developer contributions towards new and improved football facilities.	HDC	Developers	Determined by Sport England’s Playing Pitch Calculator	High
Identify site for a ‘3G’ football turf pitch	Examine the feasibility of providing a ‘3G’ pitch at an appropriate site in the East sub-area.	Potential host site	FF S106 funding	£10,000 for feasibility study £1,045,000 for pitch	High

Co-operation with the RFU and England Hockey	Dialogue between the respective governing bodies on coordinating shared artificial grass pitch needs	FA	RFU England Hockey	-	High
Site specific grounds maintenance needs	Review site specific grounds maintenance needs through the FA Pitch Improvement Programme.	FA	PP	£100 per site annually.	High

5.17.3 Site specific actions

Site	Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Aylestone St. James RFC	No current issues.	No action required.	-	-	-	-
Bird's Barn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult, youth 9v9 and mini 5v5 pitches used to over-capacity at peak times. • 'Poor' quality changing facilities. 	Road access issues make the site unsuitable for expansion. Assist the Club to identify and develop new facilities at an alternative site.	Kibworth Town FC	HDC FF	TBC	High
Bowden's Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth 11v11, youth 9v9 and mini 7v7 pitches used to over-capacity at peak times. • Harborough Town FC wishes to extend changing facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reschedule fixtures using the '3G' pitch. • Improve changing facilities. 	Harborough Town FC	HDC FF	£200,000 for changing.	High
Dunley Way Playing Field	No current issues.	No action required.	-	-	-	-
Dunton & Broughton Rangers FC	Adult pitch used to over capacity at peak times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess pitch using Pitch Power. • Implement improved maintenance. 	Dunton & Broughton Rangers FC	PP	TBC	High
Fleckney Sports & Leisure Centre	No current issues.	No action required.	-	-	-	-
Frolesworth Road Recreation Ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Poor' quality pitches. • 'Poor' quality changing facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess pitch using Pitch Power. • Implement improved maintenance. 	Broughton Astley PC	PP	TBC	Medium
Gilmorton Playing Field	No current issues.	No action required.	-	-	-	-
Great Glen Recreation Ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult pitch used to over capacity at peak times. • 'Poor' quality mini 7v7 pitches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess pitch using Pitch Power. • Implement improved maintenance. 	Great Glen PC	PP	TBC	Medium
Houghton Field	'Poor' quality changing.	Improve changing facilities.	Houghton-on-the-Hill PC	FF	£100,000	Medium
Husband's Bosworth Playing Field	No current issues.	No action required.	-	-	-	-
Lodge Road Recreation Ground	'Poor' quality changing.	Review the need for on-site changing.	Fleckney PC	Fleckney Athletic FC	-	Low

Lutterworth Football Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult, youth 11v11 and 9v9 pitches used to over capacity at peak times. '3G' pitch registration has expired 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renew '3G' pitch registration Reschedule play to the '3G' pitch on-site 	Lutterworth Athletic FC	-	-	High
Site	Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Lutterworth High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches used to over-capacity at peak times. Unsecured community access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess pitch using Pitch Power. Implement improved maintenance. Negotiate Community Use Agreement 	Lutterworth HS	HDC PP	TBC	Medium
Medbourne Sports and Social Club	No current issues.	No action required.	-	-	-	-
North Kilworth Football Club	No current issues.	No action required.	-	-	-	-
Robert Smyth Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth 11v11 pitch used to over-capacity at peak times. Unsecured community access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess pitch using Pitch Power. Implement improved maintenance. Negotiate Community Use Agreement 	Robert Smyth Academy	HDC PP	TBC	Medium
South Kilworth Recreation Ground	Youth 11v11 pitch used to over-capacity at peak times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess pitch using Pitch Power Implement improved maintenance. 	South Kilworth PC	PP	TBC	Medium
Swinford Playing Field	No current issues.	No action required.	-	-	-	-
Symington's Recreation Ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Poor' quality pitches. Youth 9v9, mini 7v7 and 5v5 pitches all used to over capacity at peak times. 'Poor' quality changing facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolve tenancy issues Assess pitches using Pitch Power. Implement improved maintenance. Improve changing facilities. 	Borough Alliance FC	HDC PP	TBC £100,000 for changing.	High
Thomas Estley Community College	No current issues.	No action required.	-	-	-	-
Ullesthorpe Playing Fields Association	Mini 7v7 pitch used to over capacity at peak times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess pitch using Pitch Power. 	Ullesthorpe Playing	PP	TBC	Medium

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement improved maintenance 	Fields Association			
Warwick Road Recreation Ground	No current issues.	No action required.	-	-	-	-

6 CRICKET PITCH NEEDS

6.1 Key stakeholders

The key stakeholders delivering cricket in Harborough district are:

- **Leicestershire Cricket Board:** The Leicestershire Cricket Board manages cricket in the county, from its grass-roots foundations through to the first-class game.
- **Cricket clubs:** There are 21 affiliated clubs in Harborough district, who collectively run 58 men’s teams, 15 women’s teams, 55 mixed junior teams and seven junior girl’s teams.
- **Pitch providers:** Pitches in the district are managed and maintained by the district and parish councils and voluntary sector clubs.

6.2 Strategic context

6.2.1 National cricket strategy

The England and Wales Cricket Board’s (ECB) strategy for 2020 -2024 ‘Inspiring Generations’ (2019) contains the following priorities and activities:

Grow and nurture the core: The following will be prioritised:

- A new investment fund for County Cricket Boards.
- Investment in club facilities.
- Further investment in county competitions.

Inspire through elite teams: The following will be prioritised:

- Increasing investment in the county talent pathway.
- Incentivising the counties to develop England players.
- Driving the performance system through technology and innovation.
- Creating heroes and connect them with a new generation of fans.

Make cricket accessible: The following will be prioritised:

- Creating a new digital community for cricket.
- Installing non-traditional playing facilities in urban areas.
- Continuing to deliver the South Asian Action Plan.
- Launching a new participation product linked to the new 100-ball competition.

Engage children and young people: The following will be prioritised:

- Doubling cricket participation in primary schools.
- Delivering a compelling and coordinated recreational playing offer from age five upwards.
- Developing safeguarding to promote safe spaces for children and young people.

Transform women and girl's cricket: There will be a structured pathway for women and girls in both softball and hardball cricket that will include:

- Growing the base through participation and facilities investment.
- Launching centres of excellence and a new elite domestic structure.
- Investing in girls' county age group cricket.
- Delivering a girls' secondary school programme.

Support our communities: The following will be prioritised:

- Doubling the number of volunteers in the game.
- Creating a game-wide approach to Trusts and Foundations through the cricket network.
- Developing a new wave of officials and community coaches.
- Increasing participation in disability cricket.

6.2.2 Neighbouring local authorities

Pitch needs assessments in neighbouring local authorities highlighted the following:

Rugby

The '*Rugby Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2013) identifies a need for one additional cricket site to cater for the planned growth, with the preferred option being the Rugby Radio Station site. No significant issues were identified in relation to cross-boundary movement of players with Harborough.

Blaby

The '*Blaby Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment*' (2020) identifies that 'existing cricket pitch provision can meet all current and future needs in the district'.

Oadby and Wigston

The '*Oadby and Wigston Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2018) identifies that 'there is limited cricket played in the Borough and it is predominantly played through pay and play access, as opposed to long-term agreements for clubs'.

Leicester:

The '*Leicester City Council Playing Pitch Strategy Review*' (2022) identifies that 'migrated use continues to affect the city. 11 clubs that have participants based in the City but who play their cricket in neighbouring authorities. The PPS identifies a shortfall of 6 pitches.

Charnwood

The '*Charnwood Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2018) identifies 'a deficit in capacity of 165 match equivalents per season in the Rural South-East sub-area that adjoins Harborough district. At peak time there are no available cricket pitches. There is projected demand for an additional 4 teams (2 adult and 2 junior) by 2036'.

Melton

Melton Borough Council is working on an updated Playing Pitch Strategy for the borough in 2022. The '*Melton Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2014) identifies that although there is a shortfall of one pitch to meet future demand in the Central Melton area and two pitches in West Melton, that with spare capacity elsewhere there is sufficient pitch space to meet all future needs.

Rutland

The '*Rutland Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2024) identifies that there is a collective shortfall of 48 seasonal match equivalent sessions currently, increasing to a shortfall of 116 match equivalent session by 2041.

Corby (now part of North Northamptonshire)

The '*Corby Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan*' (2017) identifies a 'current collective seasonal shortfall of 13 match equivalent sessions, which is projected to rise to 38 match equivalent sessions by 2031'.

Kettering (now part of North Northamptonshire)

The '*Kettering Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy Needs Assessment Report*' (2020) identifies a 'current collective seasonal shortfall of 43 match equivalent sessions, which is projected to rise to 64 match equivalent sessions by 2031'.

Daventry (now part of West Northamptonshire)

The '*Daventry Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2018) identifies that 'there is sufficient pitch provision, both at peak time and in relation to the total capacity of the pitches to meet all of the future projected demand up to 2029'.

6.2.3 Findings of the 2018 Harborough PPS

The key findings of the '*Harborough Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2022) in relation to cricket are below:

- **Cricket clubs:** There are 23 affiliated clubs in Harborough district, who collectively run 59 men's teams, 10 women's teams, 65 junior boy's teams and eight junior girl's teams.
- **Pitch quality:** The quality of pitches is generally rated as at least 'standard'. No pitches are rated as 'poor' quality.

- **Shared usage:** There are dual use issues at some sites with football including Great Glen Recreation Ground, Medbourne Sports Club, North Kilworth Sports Club and Ullesthorpe Playing Field.

6.2.4 Implications of the strategic context

The implications of the strategic context for cricket in Harborough are as follows:

- **Women and Girls:** Expansion of female participation in cricket is a key objective of the ECB and Leicestershire Cricket and will lead to a significant increase in participation. This will require additional pitches and new and/or improved changing pavilions.
- **Neighbouring areas:** The majority of neighbouring areas have an assessed deficiency of cricket pitches, which limits the potential for exported demand from Harborough district and is likely to lead to pressures for imported demand.

6.3 Cricket demand in Harborough district

6.3.1 Expressed demand

The cricket clubs and teams based in Harborough district are detailed below. Home grounds and teams in italics are located outside the district:

Club	Home Ground(s)	Adult male teams	Adult female teams	Junior mixed teams	Junior female teams
Billesdon Cricket Club	Billesdon Cricket Club	2	0	3	0
Bitteswell Cricket Club	Bitteswell Cricket Ground	3	0	2	0
Bowden Cricket Club	Great Bowden Recreation Ground <i>East Carlton Cricket Club</i>	3	0	4	0
Broughton Astley CC	Broughton Astley Recreation Ground	3	0	4	1
<i>Countesthorpe Cricket Club</i>	Gilmorton Cricket Club	4	1	4	1
Dunton Bassett CC	Dunton Bassett CC	4	0	1	0
Fleckney Village CC	Fleckney Recreation Ground Dixon's Field Mowsley Cricket Ground <i>Upland's Park, Oadby</i>	3	2	3	0
Gilmorton Cricket Club	Gilmorton Cricket Club	0	0	3	0
Great Glen Cricket Club	Great Glen Recreation Ground	3	0	0	0
Gumley Cricket Club	Gumley Cricket Club	2	0	0	0
Harborough South CC	Little Bowden Recreation Ground	1	0	0	0
Houghton and Thurnby CC	Wadkins Way Recreation Ground Dixon's Field	3	2	4	2
Illston Abey Cricket Club	Illston Abey Cricket Club	4	2	1	0
Kibworth Cricket Club	Kibworth Cricket Club	5	4	9	2

Langtons Cricket Club	Langtons Cricket Club <i>Marston Trussell Cricket Ground</i>	4	0	4	0
Laughton and Mowsley CC	Mowsley Cricket Ground	1	0	0	0
Lutterworth Cricket Club	Lutterworth Cricket Club Lutterworth College	5	3	7	1
Market Harborough CC	Market Harborough CC	2	0	2	0
Medbourne Cricket Club	Medbourne Sports Club	1	0	3	0
Neville Holt CC	Neville Holt CC	1	0	0	0
North Kilworth CC	North Kilworth Sports & Social Club	1	1	2	0
Oakfield and Rowland CC	Oakfield and Rowland C	6	1	3	1
Tilton and Lowesby CC	Lowesby Cricket Ground	1	0	0	0
<i>Wigston Town Cricket Club</i>	Dunton Bassett Cricket Club	1	0	0	0
TOTALS	-	58(5)	15(1)	55(4)	7(1)

The number of teams by sub-area is as follows:

Sub-area	Men's teams	Women's teams	Junior mixed teams	Girl's teams
West	17	5	13	3
Middle	16	4	11	2
East	25	6	31	2
HARBOROUGH	58	15	55	7

6.3.2 Changes since 2022

Teams in the 'Harborough Playing Pitch Strategy' (2022) compare with the current figures as follows:

- District summary:**

Season	Men's teams	Women's teams	Junior mixed teams	Girl's teams
2021	61	9	68	8
2024	58	15	55	7
Change	-3	+6	-13	-1

- Changes at club level:**

Club	Year/change	Men's teams	Women's teams	Junior mixed teams	Girl's teams	TOTAL
Billesdon Cricket Club	2021	3	0	4	0	7
	2024	2	0	3	0	5
	Change	-1	0	-1	0	-2
Bitteswell Cricket Club	2021	3	0	2	0	5
	2024	3	0	2	0	5
	Change	0	0	0	0	0
Bowden Cricket Club	2021	2	1	4	1	8
	2024	3	0	4	0	7
	Change	+1	-1	0	-1	-1
Broughton Astley CC	2021	2	0	0	0	2
	2024	3	0	4	1	8
	Change	+1	0	+4	+1	+5
Dunton Bassett Cricket Club	2021	4	0	2	0	6
	2024	4	0	1	0	5
	Change	0	0	-1	0	-1
Fleckney Village CC	2021	4	1	4	0	9
	2024	3	2	3	0	8
	Change	-1	+1	-1	0	-1
Gilmorton Cricket Club	2021	0	0	4	0	4
	2024	0	0	3	0	3
	Change	0	0	-1	0	0
Great Glen Cricket Club	2021	2	0	0	0	2
	2024	3	0	0	0	3
	Change	+1	0	0	0	+1

Club	Year/change	Men's teams	Women's teams	Junior mixed teams	Girl's teams	TOTAL
Gumley Cricket Club	2021	2	0	0	0	2
	2024	2	0	0	0	2
	Change	0	0	0	0	0
Harborough South CC	2021	1	0	0	0	0
	2024	1	0	0	0	0
	Change	0	0	0	0	0
Houghton and Thurnby CC	2021	4	1	6	1	12
	2024	3	2	4	2	11
	Change	-1	+1	-2	+1	-1
Houghton-on-the-Hill CC	2021	1	0	0	0	1
	2024	0	0	0	0	0
	Change	-1	0	0	0	-1
Illston Abey Cricket Club	2021	3	0	2	0	5
	2024	4	2	1	0	7
	Change	+1	+2	-1	0	+2
Kibworth Cricket Club	2021	6	2	11	2	21
	2024	5	4	9	2	20
	Change	-1	+2	-2	0	-1
Langtons Cricket Club	2021	4	0	6	1	11
	2024	4	0	4	0	8
	Change	0	0	-2	-1	-3
Laughton & Mowsley CC	2021	1	0	0	0	1
	2024	1	0	0	0	1
	Change	0	0	0	0	0
Lutterworth Cricket Club	2021	5	2	10	2	19
	2024	5	3	7	1	16
	Change	0	+1	-3	-1	-3
Market Harborough CC	2021	2	0	0	0	2
	2024	2	0	2	0	4
	Change	0	0	+2	0	+2
Medbourne Cricket Club	2021	1	0	7	0	8
	2024	1	0	3	0	4
	Change	0	0	-4	0	-4
Neville Holt Cricket Club	2021	1	0	0	0	0
	2024	1	0	0	0	0
	Change	0	0	0	0	0
North Kilworth CC	2021	3	1	1	0	5
	2024	1	0	2	0	3
	Change	-2	-1	+1	0	-2
Oakfield and Rowland CC	2021	6	1	2	1	10
	2024	6	1	3	1	11
	Change	0	0	+1	0	+1
Tilton and Lowesby CC	2021	1	0	0	0	1
	2024	1	0	0	0	1
	Change	0	0	0	0	0

6.3.3 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to play by teams or other users of playing pitches from within the study area which takes place outside of the area and vice versa.

- Oakfield and Rowland Cricket Club plays most of its matches at a site in Rugby district, but also uses Swinford Cricket Ground.
- Fleckney Village Cricket Club plays some matches at Uplands Park in Oadby.
- Bowden CC’s Third XI plays its home matches at East Carlton Cricket Club in North Northamptonshire district.
- Langtons CC play some junior matches at Marston Trussell CC in West Northamptonshire.
- Ten teams from Countesthorpe CC from Blaby play their home matches at Gilmorton CC.
- One team from Wigston Town CC from Oadby and Wigston plays its home matches at Dunton Bassett CC.
- Two teams from Leicester Stars CC play their home matches at Wadkins Way Recreation Ground.

6.3.4 Unmet demand

Unmet demand takes a number of forms:

- Teams may have access to a pitch for matches but nowhere to train or vice versa.
- Some pitches may be unavailable to the community.
- The poor quality and consequent limited capacity of pitches in the area and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement.

Consultation with local clubs in 2022 indicated that a total of 16 additional teams of all age groups could be accommodated in Harborough district if the quality and quantity of pitch provision was improved, an increase of 11.9% from the number of existing teams.

Club	Men’s teams	Women’s teams	Junior mixed teams	Girl’s teams
Billesdon Cricket Club	0	1	1	0

Bitteswell Cricket Club	0	0	0	0
Dunton Bassett Cricket Club	0	0	0	0
Great Glen Cricket Club	0	1	8	2
Illston Abey Cricket Club	0	0	0	1
Langtons Cricket Club	0	1	0	0
North Kilworth Cricket Club	0	0	1	0
TOTALS	0	3	10	3

6.3.5 Latent demand

Latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from a population if they had access to more or better provision. There is no evidence of any latent demand for cricket locally.

6.4 Cricket supply in Harborough district

6.4.1 Cricket facilities quantity

Provision of cricket pitches in Harborough district is set out below. The pitches included in the analysis are defined as natural grass or non-turf pitches (shown in brackets).

- **Available for community use and used:**

Site	Address	Pitches	Wickets	Sub-area
Billesdon Cricket Club	Coplow Lane, Billesdon LE7 9AD	1	8(1)	East
Bitteswell Cricket Ground	Ullesthorne Road, Bitteswell LE17 4LR	1	6(1)	West
Dixon's Field	Stretton Lane, Houghton-on-the-Hill LE7 9GD	1	7(1)	East
Broughton Astley Recn Gnd	Frolesworth Road, Broughton Astley LE9 6PE	1	8	West
Dunton Bassett CC	Lutterworth Road, Dunton Bassett LE17 5LF	1	12(1)	West
Fleckney Recreation Ground	Leicester Road, Fleckney LE8 8BG	1	14(1)	East
Gilmorton Cricket Club	Kimcote Lane, Gilmorton LE17 5SE	1	8	East
Great Bowden Recn. Ground	Station Road, Great Bowden LE16 7HN	1	8(1)	Middle
Great Glen Cricket Club	Bindley's Lane, Great Glen LE8 9FA	1	7(1)	East
Gumley Cricket Club	Laughton Road, Gumley LE16 7RX	1	6	Middle
Hallaton Recreation Ground	East Norton Road, Hallaton LE16 8UJ	1	6	Middle
Houghton and Thurnby CC	Wadkins Way, Bushby LE7 9NA	1	10	East
Illston Abey Cricket Club	Gaulby Road, Illston-on-the-Hill LE7 9ET	1	8(1)	East
Kibworth Cricket Club	Fleckney Road, Kibworth Beauchamp LE8 0HG	2	25(2)	East
Langtons Cricket Club	Main Street, East Langton LE16 7TW	1	10(1)	Middle

Loughton and Mowsley CC	Laughton Lane, Mowsley LE17 6NS	1	4	Middle
Lutterworth College	Bitteswell Road, Lutterworth LE17 4EW	1	(1)	West
Lutterworth Cricket Club	Coventry Road, Lutterworth LE17 4RE	1	14	West
Market Harborough CC	Fairfield Road, Market Harborough LE16 9QH	1	12(1)	Middle
Medbourne Cricket Club	Hallaton Road, Medbourne LE16 8DR	1	6(1)	East
Neville Holt Cricket Club	Neville Holt Hall, Medbourne LE16 8EG	1	6	East
North Kilworth CC	South Kilworth Road, North Kilworth LE17 6HF	1	4	Middle
Oakfield and Rowland CC	Lutterworth Road, Swinford LE17 6BA	1	10	West
Tilton and Lowesby CC	Hungarton Lane, Lowesby LE7 9DD	1	4	East
TOTAL	-	25	203(14)	-

- **Pitches where use was recently discontinued:**

Site	Address	Pitches	Wickets
Little Bowden Recn. Ground	Scotland Road, Little Bowden LE16 8GD	1	6(1)
Ullesthorpe Playing Field	Ashby Road, Ullesthorpe LE17 5DN	1	6
TOTAL	-	2	12(1)

- **Not available for community use:**

Site	Address	Pitches	Wickets
Leicester Grammar School	London Road, Great Glen LE8 9FL	2	12(1)
Robert Smyth Academy	Burnmill Road, Market Harborough LE16 7JG	1	(1)
TOTAL	-	3	12(2)

- **Provision by sub-area:** Pitches with community use and used by sub-area are as follows:

Sub-area	Population	No. Pitches	Pitches per capita	No. wickets	Wickets per capita
West	28,963	6	1: 4,827	49	1: 591
Middle	35,494	8	1: 4,437	64	1: 555
East	28,197	11	1: 2,563	104	1: 271
HARBOROUGH	95,537	25	1: 3,821	217	1: 440

6.4.2 Cricket facilities quality

The qualitative analysis of cricket pitches and facilities in Harborough district involved visits to all cricket pitches during the playing season, to undertake the non-technical visual inspections produced by the ECB for Sport England's 'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance' (2013). The assessment evaluated the condition of:

- **Grass wickets:** This includes presence of line markings, evidence of rolling, grass cut and height, repaired wickets, grass coverage and ball bounce.
- **Outfield:** This includes grass coverage, length of grass, evenness and evidence of unofficial use or damage to the surface.
- **Non-turf pitches:** This includes integration with the surrounding grass, evenness, stump holes any evidence of moss, tears or surface lifting and ball bounce.
- **Changing facilities:** This includes the presence or absence of umpires' provision, toilets, hot/cold water, heating and an assessment of the condition of the building.
- **Non-turf practice nets:** This includes integration with the surrounding grass, surface quality, ball bounce, safety and integrity of the steel frame and nets and safety signage.

The assessment generates a 'score' for each site. The percentage scores generated equate to ratings of 'Good' for scores of 81% or more (shaded green in the table below) 'Standard' for scores of 80% - 51% (shaded yellow in the table below) and 'Poor' for scores of 50% or below (denoted by shaded red in the table below). Blank cells in the

table mean that the feature concerned is absent from the site in question. The scores are as follows:

Site	Wicket	Non-turf	Outfield	Changing	Practice nets
Billesdon Cricket Club	Standard	Good	Poor	Standard	Standard
Bitteswell Cricket Ground	Standard	None	Standard	Standard	Standard
Dixon's Field	Good	Good	Good	Standard	Good
Broughton Astley Recn. Ground	Standard	None	Standard	Standard	None
Dunton Bassett CC	Good	Poor	Good	Standard	Standard
Fleckney Recreation Ground	Good	Good	Standard	Standard	Standard
Gilmorton Cricket Club	Standard	None	Standard	Standard	Poor
Great Bowden Recreation Ground	Standard	Standard	Standard	Good	Good
Great Glen Cricket Club	Standard	Standard	Standard	Standard	None
Gumley Cricket Club	Standard	None	Poor	Poor	None
Hallaton Recreation Ground	Standard	None	Standard	Good	Standard
Houghton and Thurnby CC	Good	Good	Standard	Poor	Good
Illston Abey Cricket Club	Good	None	Good	Good	Standard
Kibworth Cricket Club	Good	Good	Good	Good*	Poor
Langtons Cricket Club	Standard	Good	Standard	Standard	Good
Laughton and Mowsley CC	Standard	Good	Standard	Poor	None
Lutterworth College	None	Good	Standard	Standard	None
Lutterworth Cricket Club	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Market Harborough CC	Good	Standard	Good	Good	Good
Medbourne Cricket Club	Standard	Good	Standard	Good	Standard
Neville Holt Cricket Club	Standard	None	Standard	Standard	None
North Kilworth CC	Standard	None	Standard	Standard	Good
Oakfield and Rowland CC	Standard	None	Standard	Poor	None
Tilton and Lowesby CC	Standard	None	Standard	Poor	None

* Second pavilion is 'poor' quality.

6.4.3 Pitch carrying capacity

The carrying capacity of pitches is related to their quality and is expressed as the number of 'match equivalents' that can be accommodated each season. The '*Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance*' indicates the following seasonal carrying capacities for cricket pitches:

- A 'good' quality wicket will accommodate five matches per season, a 'standard' quality wicket will accommodate four and a 'poor' quality wicket will accommodate none.

- ‘Good’ and ‘Standard’ quality non-turf pitches accommodate 60 matches per season and a ‘poor’ quality wicket will accommodate none.
- The seasonal pitch carrying capacity of each cricket site in Harborough district is as follows:

The pitch carrying capacity of each site with cricket pitches with community use in Harborough district, expressed in seasonal match equivalents, is as follows:

Site	Grass wickets	Artificial wickets	Total capacity
Billesdon Cricket Club	8	1	92
Bitteswell Cricket Ground	6	1	84
Dixon’s Field	7	1	95
Broughton Astley Recn Gnd	8	-	32
Dunton Bassett CC	12	1*	60
Fleckney Recreation Ground	14	1	130
Gilmorton Cricket Club	8	-	32
Great Bowden Recn. Ground	8	1	92
Great Glen Cricket Club	7	1	88
Gumley Cricket Club	6	-	24
Hallaton Recreation Ground	6	-	24
Houghton and Thurnby CC	10	-	50
Illston Abey Cricket Club	8	1	100
Kibworth Cricket Club	25	2	245
Langtons Cricket Club	10	1	100
Loughton and Mowsley CC	4	-	16
Lutterworth College	-	1	60
Lutterworth Cricket Club	14	-	70
Market Harborough Cricket Club	12	1	120
Medbourne Cricket Club	6	1	84
Neville Holt Cricket Club	6	-	24
North Kilworth CC	4	-	16
Oakfield and Rowland CC	10	-	40
Tilton and Lowesby CC	4	-	16
TOTAL	203	14	1,694

* The non-turf pitch is rated as ‘poor’ quality and has therefore been assessed as having no current carrying capacity.

6.4.4 Pitch maintenance

The pitches owned and managed by local sports clubs are all maintained by the clubs themselves. This involves a combination of paid grounds staff, external contractors

and volunteer help. Parish Council-owned pitches are variously maintained by external contractors or the incumbent clubs.

6.4.5 Ownership, management and security of access

The ownership, management and security of community access of all cricket pitch sites in Harborough district is detailed below. Security of access refers to the extent to which community use of the site is protected (through public ownership, planning policy ownership covenants etc.), rather than the security of tenure of specific club users. The pitches not available for community use, listed in section 6.4.1 above, are all owned and managed by the schools concerned.

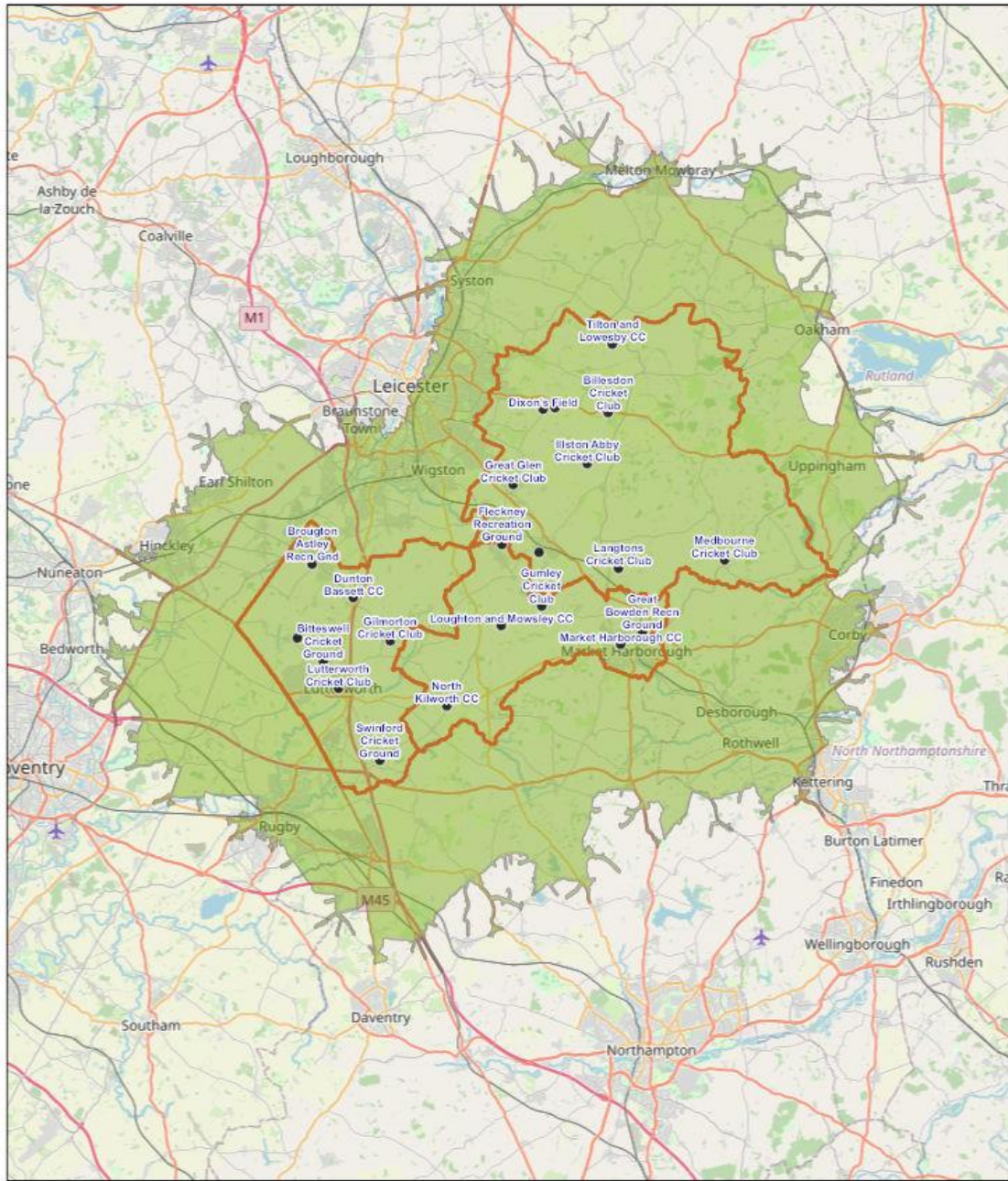
Site	Ownership	Management	Security of access
Billesdon Cricket Club	Private Owner	Billesdon Cricket Club	Secured
Bitteswell Cricket Ground	Bitteswell Cricket Club	Bitteswell Cricket Club	Secured
Dixon's Field	Houghton and Thurnby CC	Houghton and Thurnby CC	Secured
Broughton Astley Recn. Grd.	Broughton Astley Parish Council	Broughton Astley Parish Council	Secured
Dunton Bassett CC	Dunton Bassett CC	Dunton Bassett CC	Secured
Fleckney Recreation Ground	Fleckney Parish Council	Fleckney Parish Council	Secured
Gilmorton Cricket Club	Gilmorton Parish Council	Gilmorton Parish Council	Secured
Great Bowden Recn. Grd.	Harborough District Council	Bowden Cricket Club	Secured
Great Glen Cricket Club	Great Glen Parish Council	Great Glen Cricket Club	Secured
Gumley Cricket Club	Private Landowner	Gumley Cricket Club	Unsecured
Hallaton Recreation Ground	Hallaton & Isabella Stenning Trust	Hallaton & Isabella Stenning Trust	Secured
Houghton and Thurnby CC	Harborough District Council	Houghton and Thurnby CC	Secured
Illston Abey Cricket Club	Private Owner	Illston Abey Cricket Club	Secured
Kibworth Cricket Club	Kibworth Cricket Club	Kibworth Cricket Club	Secured
Langtons Cricket Club	Hignett Family Trust	Langtons Cricket Club	Secured
Laughton and Mowsley CC	Loughton and Mowsley CC	Loughton and Mowsley CC	Secured

Lutterworth College	Lutterworth College	Lutterworth College	Unsecured
Lutterworth Cricket Club	Lutterworth Cricket Club	Lutterworth Cricket Club	Secured
Market Harborough CC	Market Harborough CC	Market Harborough CC	Secured
Medbourne Cricket Club	Medbourne Sports & Social Club	Medbourne Sports & Social Club	Secured
Neville Holt Cricket Club	Private Owner	Neville Holt Cricket Club	Unsecured
North Kilworth CC	North Kilworth SSC	North Kilworth SSC	Secured
Swinford Cricket Ground	Oakfield and Rowland CC	Oakfield and Rowland CC	Secured
Tilton and Lowesby CC	Private Landowner	Tilton and Lowesby CC	Secured

6.4.6 Geographical distribution

The geographical distribution of cricket pitches in Harborough district has been assessed by identifying catchments to illustrate local level accessibility. This is based on the results of the clubs' survey, which identifies 15-minutes travel time as the typical maximum. Based upon this, the map overleaf shows that the entire local population is within the catchment of at least one pitch.

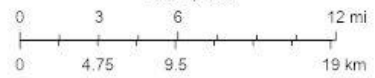
HARBOROUGH - Cricket Pitches 15 Minutes Drive



2/14/2022

1:577,790

- CRICKET PITCHES
- 15.0 Minutes
- ▭ West Sub Area, Middle Sub Area, East Sub Area
- ▭ Harborough District Boundary



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6.5 The views of local stakeholders

6.5.1 Leicestershire Cricket

Consultation with Leicestershire Cricket highlighted that:

- There are 21 clubs with a good geographical spread in the district.
- Women and girls cricket is well developed in the district.
- There are dual use issues at some sites with football including Great Glen Recreation Ground and Medbourne Sports Club.
- Dunton Bassett CC hosts pathway activities for Leicestershire Cricket and as a result needs to upgrade its 'poor' quality non-turf pitch.
- The introduction of cricket development programmes (see below) has placed added emphasis on the quality of outfield, where much of the activity is based.
- In 2017, the ECB introduced the All Stars Cricket programme to provide an introduction to the game for 5 - 8 year olds. Dynamos Cricket was subsequently introduced for 8 - 11 year olds, providing a softball version of the game. In Harborough, the following clubs ran the programmes in 2024:

Club	All Stars	Dynamos
Bowden CC	Yes	
Fleckney CC	Yes	Yes
Great Glen CC	Yes	Yes
Kibworth CC	Yes	
Lutterworth CC	Yes	
Market Harborough CC	Yes	

6.6.2 Local cricket clubs

Billesdon CC: The club made the following comments:

- 'An issue for us in future is ensuring security of tenure. The club have leased the ground for many years but have only one year left on current agreement. This will make it increasingly difficult to obtain grants to improve facilities. The close proximity of neighbouring houses is always a problem (i.e. ball damage or lost balls).
- 'We are always looking to improve the facilities on offer to all that visit the ground. We would like to improve the scoreboard and also the seating area for spectators around the clubhouse. We would also like to increase storage area for ground equipment. We are in process of fitting a defibrillator which will also be a benefit to the local community'.

- 'In 2021 we found senior membership had decreased due to running only 1 senior team in 2020 due to the restrictions. The decrease was mainly due to players moving away from area or retiring. We have found numbers have started to increase again in 2022, mainly younger players, and hope this continues. Financially we were very fortunate to receive the covid support grants as we were unable to arrange any of our own fundraising activities. When restrictions were relaxed we took the opportunity to arrange extra junior coaching sessions which helped young people get back to at least some sort of normality'.

Bitteswell CC: The club made the following comments:

- 'The polarization of players, volunteers and resources to large/mega clubs and the incredible increase in red tape and regulations is killing grass roots cricket for smaller and village teams'.
- 'The availability of indoor practice facilities in Lutterworth area is poor - none are dedicated and all have downsides. Hence travel to Leicester city centre to train'.

Bowden CC: The club made the following comments:

- 'Our Saturday Third Team play their home games at East Carlton, Northamptonshire'.
- 'We are keen to put out female senior and junior sides, but struggle to recruit and retain female members'.

Fleckney Village CC: The club made the following comments:

- 'There is a lack of pitches in the area. We require an extra ground if we are to expand further. We currently have only one pitch of our own'.
- 'We are occasional renting grounds outside the district through Oadby and Wigston DC'.
- 'We would like to have a 3rd XI out on Saturdays. Women's cricket is currently played at the same time as junior cricket due to the lack of an available ground'.
- 'We offer walking cricket which is open to those 55+ and those who may have a disability preventing them from playing standard format cricket'.
- 'We would love an indoor facility in Fleckney or Kibworth'.
- 'It would be good if Harborough DC could provide council-maintained pitches available to hire like Leicester City and Oadby and Wigston, even if it was just a couple of strips between football pitches'.

Great Glen CC: The club made the following comments:

- 'There is a lack of funding available for pitch maintenance upgrades, our maintenance equipment is 20-30 years old and gives us regular issues accordingly'.
- 'We have future plans to start a junior cricket program, we are also looking into the possibility of ladies cricket'.

Houghton and Thurnby CC: The club made the following comments:

- 'We cannot run disability cricket, as the clubhouse does not currently have disabled toilets/showers/facilities. We also lack ladies changing rooms and shower room for mixed cricket'.
- 'We would like another girls junior team - we currently share players for girls U16 with another club. We would like to look at setting up disability cricket'.
- 'We had to raise our own funds and re-instate our nets ourselves using the skills of our members - we couldn't afford to replace them professionally and very few grants available for replacing existing equipment'.
- 'Our numbers appear to be increasing from the local area due to the increase in new housing but also we are on the edge of the city boundary, so we also have a large number of new members approach us from the city boundary as well which is beneficial for membership numbers but a large percentage of these members are not in a position to buy the right kit (juniors especially) we have spent club funds in supporting these members to help them purchase kit or the club have purchased kit for loan'.
- 'We find it hard to find grants for replacement items - such as when our sightscreens were old and came to the end of their natural life - most grants will only provide funds for 'new items' not replacement items - however, nothing lasts forever and we struggle to replace old worn out items without some help'.

Kibworth CC: The club made the following comments:

- 'We are having to cap the number of juniors due to lack of qualified and volunteer coaches and facilities available at the club. Improvements to nets are required'.
- 'We have plans to refurbish our second pavilion and practice nets area'.

Lutterworth CC: The club made the following comments:

- 'We hope to have a permanent second pitch and to refurb existing club house. We will increase membership if successful with second pitch plans'.
- 'We have a waiting list due to lack of coaches for Junior sessions (U11s). We are also at capacity for pitch space so looking at a permanent second pitch development'.

Medbourne CC: The club made the following comments:

- 'We have fitted out our disabled toilet so that it can be used for limited female changing. We have one female playing adult cricket'.
- 'Like many other rural clubs attracting and retaining players is difficult, as is sharing the [outfield] playing surface with football'.

North Kilworth CC: The club made the following comments:

- 'We have a refurbishment happening to the club building around changing rooms. We're also very keen to relay our wicket'.
- 'We've been using a self-made wicket for some time, and the county grounds team recently came and advised that it needs properly laying. Getting this completed is a big priority for us, but such a large job is challenging to find funds for'.

6.6 The implications for cricket in Harborough District

Analysis of local supply of cricket pitches in Harborough district indicates the following:

- **Pitch quality:** The quality of pitches is generally rated as at least 'standard'. No pitches are rated as 'poor' quality.
- **Shared usage:** Several sites with cricket pitches are also used for football, which causes problems in the seasonal overlap periods (April-May and August-September).

6.7 Developments since the 2022 PPS

The key developments since the assessment of cricket needs in the 2022 PPS are as follows:

- Expressed demand has fallen, with the number of teams playing in the district decreasing from 147 in 2021 to 135 in 2024, an 8.2% decrease. Houghton-on-the-Hill CC and Harborough South CC both folded at the end of the 2023 season. Only women's team numbers have increased.
- One additional pitch has been made available for community use since 2022 (at Lutterworth College). Use of the pitches at Ullesthorpe Playing Field and Little Bowden Recreation Ground have been discontinued in the same period.
- Langtons Cricket Club, Lutterworth Cricket Club, Houghton and Thurnby Cricket Club, Illston Abey Cricket Club and Kibworth Cricket Club all have aspirations to improve their facilities using S106 and potentially other funding.

6.8 Assessment of current needs

6.7.1 The basis of the assessment

To assess whether the current supply of pitches is adequate to meet existing demand an understanding of the situation at all sites available to the community needs to be developed. This is achieved by providing a brief overview for each site, which comprises:

- A comparison between the carrying capacity of a site with how much demand currently takes place there. The carrying capacity of a site is defined as the amount of play it can regularly accommodate without adversely affecting its quality and use. Demand is defined in terms of the number of 'match equivalent sessions' per season at each site.
- An indication of the extent to which pitches are being used during their peak periods.

The site overviews identify the extent to which pitches are:

- **Being overplayed:** Where use exceeds the carrying capacity (highlighted in red in the tables below).
- **Being played to the level the site can sustain:** Where use matches the carrying capacity (highlighted in yellow in the tables below).
- **Potentially able to accommodate some additional play:** Where use falls below the carrying capacity (highlighted in green in the tables below).

In line with ECB guidance, the following assumptions have been made in relation to the number of weekly match equivalents that can be accommodated by different quality pitches:

- Overall capacity is expressed as match equivalents per **season**, as opposed to per **week** for all other pitch types.
- The number of wickets at each site is shown below.
- The supply-demand balance for grass and artificial turf wickets respectively have been assessed separately because there is little or no use of artificial wickets by adult teams, with use confined to junior teams.
- In line with the guidance it has been assumed that a 'good' quality grass wicket will accommodate five matches per season, a 'standard' quality wicket will accommodate four and a 'poor' quality wicket will accommodate no play.
- 'Good' and 'standard' quality non-turf pitches will accommodate 60 matches per season and the additional capacity that they provide is analysed in a separate table.
- Adult teams typically play ten home games per season and junior teams typically play seven home games per season.

- Aspects of each site shaded in red indicate a deficiency, those shaded in yellow indicate that supply and demand are balanced and those shaded in green have some spare capacity.

6.7.2 Grass wickets

Site	Users	Seasonal demand	Seasonal capacity	Seasonal balance	Peak capacity	Peak demand	Peak balance
Billesdon Cricket Club	Billesdon Cricket Club	41	32	+12	1	1	Balanced
Bitteswell Cricket Ground	Bitteswell Cricket Club	30	24	-6	1	1	Balanced
Dixon's Field	Houghton & Thurnby CC Fleckney CC	40	35	-5	1	1	Balanced
Broughton Astley Recn. Grd.	Broughton Astley CC	65	32	-33	1	1	Balanced
Dunton Bassett CC	Dunton Bassett CC Wigston Town CC	47	60	+13	1	1	Balanced
Fleckney Recreation Ground	Fleckney Village CC	61	70	+9	1	1	Balanced
Site	Users	Seasonal demand	Seasonal capacity	Seasonal balance	Peak capacity	Peak demand	Peak balance
Gilmorton Cricket Club	Gilmorton Cricket Club Countesthorpe CC	21	32	+11	1	1	Balanced
Great Bowden Recn. Grd.	Bowden Cricket Club	30	32	+2	1	1	Balanced
Great Glen Cricket Club	Great Glen CC	30	28	-2	1	1	Balanced
Gumley Cricket Club	Gumley Cricket Club	20	24	+4	1	1	Balanced
Hallaton Recreation Ground	Barkby United CC	20	24	+4	1	1	Balanced
Houghton and Thurnby CC	Houghton & Thurnby CC	42	50	+8	1	1	Balanced
Illston Abey CC	Illston Abey CC	40	40	Balanced	1	1	Balanced
Kibworth Cricket Club	Kibworth Cricket Club	90	125	+35	2	2	Balanced
Langtons Cricket Club	Langtons Cricket Club	40	40	Balanced	1	1	Balanced
Laughton and Mowsley CC	Laughton and Mowsley CC Fleckney Village CC	10	16	+6	1	1	Balanced
Lutterworth Cricket Club	Lutterworth Cricket Club	80	70	-10	1	1	Balanced

Market Harborough CC	Market Harborough CC	20	60	+40	1	1	Balanced
Medbourne Cricket Club	Medbourne CC	10	24	+14	1	1	Balanced
Neville Holt Cricket Club	Neville Holt Cricket Club	10	24	+14	1	1	Balanced
North Kilworth CC	North Kilworth CC	27	16	-11	1	1	Balanced
Oakfield & Rowland CC	Oakfield & Rowland CC	30	40	+10	1	1	Balanced
Tilton and Lowesby CC	Tilton and Lowesby CC	10	16	+6	1	1	Balanced
TOTALS	-	834	854	+20	24	24	Balanced

The supply-demand balance of grass cricket pitches by sub-area is as follows:

Sub-area	Seasonal capacity	Seasonal demand	Seasonal balance	Peak capacity	Peak demand	Peak balance
West	262	254	+8	7	7	Balanced
Middle	208	204	+4	5	5	Balanced
East	384	376	+8	12	12	Balanced
HARBOROUGH	854	834	+20	24	24	Balanced

The key findings are as follows:

- There is a collective seasonal spare capacity of 20 match equivalent sessions.
- Six sites show a seasonal deficit although peak usage in the district is balanced.

6.7.3 Non-turf pitches

Site	Users	Seasonal demand	Seasonal capacity	Seasonal balance	Peak capacity	Peak demand	Peak balance
Billesdon Cricket Club	Billesdon Cricket Club	21	60	+39	1	1	Balanced

Bitteswell Cricket Ground	Bitteswell Cricket Club	14	60	+46	1	1	Balanced
Dixon's Field	Houghton & Thurnby CC	42	60	+18	1	1	Balanced
Dunton Bassett CC	Dunton Bassett CC	14	0	-14	0	1	-1
Fleckney Recreation Ground	Fleckney Village CC	21	60	+39	1	1	Balanced
Great Bowden Recn. Grd.	Bowden Cricket Club	28	60	+32	1	1	Balanced
Great Glen Cricket Club	Great Glen CC	0	60	+60	1	1	Balanced
Illston Abey Cricket Club	Illston Abey CC	27	60	+33	1	1	Balanced
Kibworth Cricket Club	Kibworth CC	77	120	+43	2	2	Balanced
Langtons Cricket Club	Langtons CC	28	60	+32	1	1	Balanced
Lutterworth College	Lutterworth Cricket Club Lutterworth College	56	60	+4	1	1	Balanced
Market Harborough CC	Market Harborough CC	14	60	+46	1	1	Balanced
Medbourne Cricket Club	Medbourne CC	21	60	+39	1	1	Balanced
Oakfield & Rowland CC	Oakfield & Rowland CC	28	60	+32	1	1	Balanced
TOTALS	-	391	840	+449	13	14	-1

The supply-demand balance of artificial turf cricket wickets by sub-area is as follows:

Sub-area	Seasonal capacity	Seasonal demand	Seasonal balance	Peak capacity	Peak demand	Peak balance
West	180	24	+156	1	2	-1
Middle	180	105	+75	4	4	Balanced
East	480	262	+210	8	8	Balanced
HARBOROUGH	840	391	+449	13	14	-1

The key findings are as follows:

- There is collective seasonal spare capacity of 449 match equivalent sessions.
- There is a peak time deficit of 1 match equivalent session in both the West sub-area and the district as a whole, due to the 'poor' quality wicket at Dunton Bassett Cricket Club.

6.8 Assessment of future needs

6.8.1 Population growth

The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 104,839 by 2031, an increase of 6,064 (or 6.1%). Comparison of the projections for 2024 and 2031 shows that the percentage of people aged under 50 falls from 54.2% to 53.2%, with proportionate population increases amongst the over 50s.

6.8.2 Potential changes in demand

Changes in demand for cricket in the future can be modelled on a trend-based projection. The ECB's most recent pre-covid '*National Cricket Playing Survey*' (2019), which reflects club and league cricket only (it does not include Women's Soft Ball Cricket, or junior cricket) identified:

- A 1.2% increase in player numbers between 2018 and 2019.
- Of the 822,000 players nationally, 229,000 are 'core' players (playing at least 12 weeks per season), 353,000 are 'occasional' players (playing between three and 11 weeks per season) and 238,000 are 'cameo' players (playing one or two weeks per season).
- 81.4% of completed fixtures were played in 2019, 5.4% of completed fixtures were abandoned and 7.5% of completed fixtures were cancelled.
- Compared with 2018, conceded fixtures decreased by 15% to 5.7% of completed fixtures and short-sided game cancellations decreased by 11% in 2019 to 11.7% of fixtures.

6.8.3 Site-specific pressures

Harborough District Council needs to identify sites upon which it can deliver its housing targets. Whilst planning policy offers protection to playing pitches, some sites may be vulnerable unless it can be proved that they are needed to accommodate existing or future shortfalls in supply or serve some other green space functions. At present, the analysis in section 6.7 above shows that all sites are used to capacity in the peak periods, so the case for retention is strong.

6.8.4 Potential changes in supply

There are proposals to provide additional grass football pitches on the outfield of Illston Abey Cricket Club, which might impact on cricket usage.

6.8.5 Existing spare capacity

There is no effective spare capacity at peak times based on the assessment.

6.8.6 Future cricket pitch needs

Future cricket pitch needs to 2031 are modelled below using 'Team Generation Rates' (TGRs), which identify how many people in a specified age group in the district generate one team. These are then applied to projected changes in population to identify the likely number of teams in the future. The projections include provision for the unmet demand identified by local clubs.

Team type	Age range	Current population	Current teams	Unmet demand	TGR	Population 2031	Teams 2031	Extra teams
Adult males	18-55	21,061	48	0	1: 439	21,728	49	+1
Adult females	18-55	21,739	10	3	1: 1,672	22,558	13	0
Junior mixed	7-17	12,787	59	10	1: 185	12,785	69	0
Junior females	7-17	6,290	8	3	1: 572	6,290	11	0

6.8.7 Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator

A supplementary way of modelling future playing pitch needs is Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator. The model applies Team Generation Rates to the projected population increases to estimate the additional pitch needs arising and in addition generates capital and revenue cost estimates for providing the extra pitches. The model needs to be applied alongside an assessment of the various options for meeting unmet demand but provides helpful context for the site-specific supply-demand assessment and the TGR calculations above. The results of applying the Calculator for cricket needs arising from major planned developments in Harborough are set out below.

Development	Number of dwellings	Population	Number of pitches	Changing rooms	Capital costs (£)	Annual costs (£)
East of Lutterworth Strategic Development Area	1,260	2,772	0.90	1.79	£597,055	£55,591
Overstone Park, Market Harborough	600	1,320	0.43	0.85	£284,306	£26,472
East of Blackberry Grange, Market Harborough	350	770	0.25	0.50	£165,854	£15,443
Arnesby Road, Fleckney	130	286	0.09	0.19	£61,609	£5,736
Burnmill Farm, Market Harborough	128	282	0.09	0.19	£60,739	£5,655
Scraptoft North Strategic Development Area	1,200	2,640	0.85	1.71	£568,619	£52,944

TOTALS	3,668	8,070	2.61	5.23	£1,738,182	£171,841
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6.8 Key findings and issues

6.9.1 What are the main characteristics of current supply and demand?

- **Cricket clubs:** There are 21 affiliated clubs in Harborough district, who collectively run 58 men's teams, 15 women's teams, 55 mixed junior teams and seven junior girl's teams. Expressed demand has fallen, with the number of teams playing in the district decreasing from 147 in 2021 to 135 in 2024, an 8.2% decrease. Houghton-on-the-Hill CC and Harborough South CC both folded at the end of the 2023 season. Only women's team numbers have increased.
- **Pitch quality:** The quality of pitches is generally rated as at least 'standard'. No pitches are rated as 'poor' quality. One additional pitch has been made available for community use since 2022 (at Lutterworth College). Use of the pitches at Ullesthorpe Playing Field and Little Bowden Recreation Ground have been discontinued in the same period.

6.9.2 Is there enough accessible and secured community use to meet current demand? **NO**

- **Seasonal pitch capacity:** There is a collective seasonal spare capacity of 20 match equivalent sessions on grass wickets and 449 match equivalent sessions on non-turf wickets, although three sites show a seasonal deficit and peak usage in the district is balanced.
- **Peak time pitch capacity:** Peak time grass pitch capacity is balanced, although the 'poor' quality non-turf pitch at Dunton Bassett Cricket Club is assessed as having no capacity, which creates a peak time deficit for non-turf pitches.

6.9.3 Is the accessible provision of suitable quality and appropriately maintained? **MOSTLY** - The non-turf pitch at Dunton Bassett CC is rated as 'poor' quality,

All pitches are at least 'standard' quality, but the outfield at Gumley CC is 'poor' as are the pavilions at Laughton & Mowsley CC, Swinford Cricket Ground and Tilton and Lowesby CC and the practice nets Bitteswell Cricket Ground and Gilmorton Cricket Club.

6.9.4 What are the main characteristics of future supply and demand?

- **Population growth:** The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 104,839 by 2031, an increase of 6,064 (or 6.1%). Comparison of the projections for 2024 and 2031 shows that the percentage of people aged under 50 falls from 54.2% to 53.2%, with proportionate population increases amongst the over 50s.

- **Changes in demand:** Projecting future need based on current demand patterns, including the estimate of current unmet demand by local clubs is a reasonable basis for forecasting.
- **Changes in supply:** There are no known potential changes to cricket pitch supply.
- **Existing spare capacity:** There is no peak time spare capacity as present.
- **Future needs:** Based upon the above factors, there will be a small net increase in demand for cricket by 2031, equivalent to one team and 10 seasonal match equivalent sessions.

6.9.5 Is there enough accessible and secured provision to meet future demand? **NO**
- There is no effective spare capacity at present.

There is insufficient provision to meet future demand at present, but additional capacity could be created in four ways:

- **New pitch provision:** Securing the provision of additional pitches at part of new housing developments in the district.
- **Reinstating disused pitches:** There are two disused pitches collectively comprising 12 grass wickets and one non-turf wicket, that could add 108 seasonal match equivalent sessions to seasonal capacity.
- **Pitch quality improvements:** If the 'standard' quality pitches at 19 sites were all upgraded to 'good' quality, it would add 144 seasonal match equivalent sessions to seasonal capacity.
- **Using pitches on school sites with no community use:** There are 12 grass wickets and two non-turf wickets on school sites with no community use at present. Gaining access to these would provide 60 seasonal match equivalent sessions on grass pitches and 120 match equivalent sessions on non-turf pitches to the available supply (less any use by the schools themselves), which would be particularly useful for junior cricket.

6.10 Scenario Testing

6.10.1 Introduction

Based upon the key findings and issues identified above, a number of scenarios have been examined, to identify the optimum approach to addressing needs.

6.10.2 Scenario 1: Increasing capacity by improving 'standard' quality pitches at sites where there is a capacity deficit to 'good' quality.

- **Rationale:** The pitches at Broughton Astley CC and North Kilworth CC are both rated as 'standard'. Upgrading the pitches to 'good' quality would enable each

wicket to accommodate up to five matches per season as opposed to four, thereby reducing the deficits.

- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
 - An additional eight match equivalent sessions would be created at Broughton Astley CC, reducing the capacity deficit.
 - An additional four seasonal match equivalent sessions would be created at North Kilworth, eliminating the capacity deficit.
- **Disadvantages:** The only disadvantage of this scenario is that additional investment would be required to improve maintenance standards.
- **Conclusions:** This scenario offers an attractive solution to meeting unmet cricket pitch demand in Harborough district.

6.10.3 Scenario 2: Improvement of the non-turf wicket at Dunton Bassett CC

- **Rationale:** The non-turf wicket at Dunton Bassett Cricket Club is rated as 'poor' quality and so in line with ECG guidance, it is regarded as having no capacity. If the surface is upgraded to 'good' or 'standard' quality, it will accommodate up to 60 seasonal match equivalent sessions.
- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
 - The pitch can be upgraded at relatively low cost (£8,000).
 - Pitch maintenance costs are relatively low compared with natural turf.
- **Disadvantage:** The only disadvantage of this scenario is that non-turf wickets are used primarily for junior matches, so it would have limited impact on addressing capacity issues in relation to adult play.
- **Conclusions:** This scenario should be examined further.

6.10.4 Scenario 3: Installation of additional non-turf wickets

- **Rationale:** Installing non-turf pitches at Broughton Astley Cricket Club and North Kilworth Cricket Club, that are currently used to over capacity would help to expand seasonal carrying capacity for junior play.
- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
 - The pitches can be installed at relatively low cost (£8,000 - £10,000 per pitch).
 - They have the potential to accommodate 60 match equivalent sessions per season.
 - Pitch maintenance costs are relatively low compared with natural turf.

- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are as follows:
 - Non-turf wickets are used primarily for junior matches, so they would have limited impact on addressing capacity issues in relation to adult play.
 - Unless there is space to accommodate non-turf pitches away from the main square, they would not address peak-time deficiencies because they could not be used simultaneously with the grass wickets.
- **Conclusions:** This scenario should be examined further on a site-by-site basis.

6.10.5 Scenario 4: Reinstating recently disused pitches

- **Rationale:** The grass pitches at Little Bowden Recreation Ground and Ullesthorpe Playing Field collectively comprise 12 grass wickets and one artificial grass wicket.. These could be re-instated to meet any surplus demand.
- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
 - An additional 60 seasonal match equivalent sessions would be created if the grass pitches are maintained to a 'good' standard.
 - An additional 60 seasonal match equivalent sessions would be created on the artificial grass wicket.
 - Two additional peak time match equivalent sessions would be created, to cater for additional future demand.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantage of this scenario is that Ullesthorpe Playing Field is used for football so there are problems accommodating both sports in the overlap season.
- **Conclusions:** This scenario is worth further consideration subject to increasing demand.

6.11 Policy recommendations

6.11.1 Introduction

The recommendations in relation to cricket are made in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which stipulates that existing open space including playing pitches, should not be built upon unless:

- An assessment has taken place which has clearly shown the open space to be surplus to requirements, or;
- The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality, in a suitable location, or;

- The development is for alternative sport and recreation provision, the needs for which clearly outweighs the loss.

6.11.2 Protect

Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision: The Harborough PPS comprises a robust and evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for cricket in the district. The PPS identifies a need for all current cricket pitch sites to be retained and protected on the basis of the specific identified roles that each can play in delivering the needs of the sport in Harborough district both now and in the future. It is therefore recommended that planning policies continue to support the retention of all sites based upon the evidence in the PPS. If any pitch sites do become the subject of development proposals, this will only be permissible if they are replaced and meet policy exception E4 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. This states that 'the playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development must be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development'

6.11.3 Enhance

Recommendation 2 - Enhancing existing capacity: The pitches at Broughton Astley CC and Ullesthorpe Playing Field are both rated as 'standard'. Upgrading the pitches to 'good' quality would enable each wicket to accommodate up to five matches per season as opposed to four, thereby reducing the deficits. The non-turf wicket at Dunton Bassett Cricket Club is rated as 'poor' quality and so in line with ECG guidance, it is regarded as having no capacity. If the surface is upgraded to 'good' or 'standard' quality, it will accommodate up to 60 seasonal match equivalent sessions. It is recommended that the site owners should be supported to apply for external funding for facility enhancements, including developer contributions (see below) where the usage capacity would be enhanced.

Recommendation 3 - Developer contributions and external funding (enhancements): Most of the additional demand for cricket arising from the proposed housing development in Harborough to 2031 can be accommodated through enhancements to existing pitches and facilities. It is recommended that the site-specific action plan in the Harborough PPS be used as the basis for determining facility enhancements that demonstrably relate to the scale and location of specific developments and that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under S106 arrangements, on-site provision in larger developments and/or through applications for external funding to cover the capital and revenue implications of the enhancements.

6.11.4 Provide

Recommendation 4 - Developer contributions and external funding (new provision): Some of the extra demand for cricket in particular arising from the proposed housing development in Harborough district to 2031, may need to be accommodated through the provision of new facilities, once options for improving

capacity at existing sites have been explored. The pavilions at Laughton and Mowsley CC, Swinford Cricket Ground and Tilton and Lowesby CC and the practice nets Bitteswell Cricket Ground and Gilmorton Cricket Club are all poor quality. It is recommended that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under S106 arrangements, and/or through applications for external funding to cover the capital and revenue implications of the new provision to expand capacity.

6.12 Action Plan

6.12.1 Introduction

In the context of the high-level recommendations above, the tables below set out the cricket action plan to guide the implementation of the strategy. The abbreviations stand for HDC - Harborough District Council, ECB - England and Wales Cricket Board and LCB - Leicestershire Cricket Board. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England's 'Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2023' (2023).

6.12.2 Key strategic actions

Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Securing developer contributions	Ensure that policy provision is made to secure developer contributions towards new and improved cricket facilities.	HDC	Developers Local clubs	Determined by Sport England's New Development Calculator	High

6.12.3 Site specific actions

Site	Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Billesdon Cricket Club	No current issues.	-	-	-	-	-
Bitteswell Cricket Ground	No current issues.	-	-	-	-	-
Dixon's Field	Grass pitches used to over capacity on a seasonal basis.	Reschedule fixtures to sites with spare capacity	Houghton & Thurnby CC	Fleckney Village CC	-	High
Broughton Astley Recn. Grd.	Grass pitches used to over capacity on a seasonal basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve pitch quality • Install a non-turf wicket 	Broughton Astley CC	-	£8,000 for non-turf pitch	High
Site	Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Dunton Bassett CC	'Poor' quality non-turf pitch	Re-surface non-turf pitch	Dunton Bassett CC	-	£8,000	High
Fleckney Recn. Ground	No current issues.	-	-	-	-	-
Gilmorton Cricket Club	'Poor' quality practice nets.	Provide new nets	Gilmorton CC	-	£20,000	Medium
Great Bowden Recn. Grd.	No current issues.	-	-	-	-	-
Great Glen CC	No current issues.	-	-	-	-	-

Gumley Cricket Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor quality outfield Poor quality changing No secured community access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve outfield Improve changing Negotiate Community Use Agreement.	Gumley Cricket Club	Site owner	£5,000 for outfield works TBC for changing	Medium
Hallaton Recn Ground	No current issues.	-	-	-	-	-
Houghton and Thurnby CC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Poor' quality changing Issues with lease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve changing Conclude new lease arrangements 	Houghton and Thurnby CC	HDC, ECB	TBC	High
Illston Abey CC	Proposed provision of football pitches on the outfield	Assess the impact of football on cricket usage	HDC	FA, ECB	-	High
Kibworth Cricket Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Poor' quality second changing pavilion 'Poor' quality practice nets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refurbish second changing pavilion Provide new practice nets 	Kibworth Cricket Club	-	TBC for changing £20,000 for practice nets	High
Langtons Cricket Club	Proposal to expand changing facilities	Expand changing	Langtons Cricket Club	-	TBC	High
Laughton and Mowsley CC	'Poor' quality changing	Improve changing	Laughton and Mowsley CC	-	TBC	Medium
Little Bowden Recn. Ground	Pitches are currently disused	Retain the pitch for future reinstatement	HDC	-	-	Low
Lutterworth Cricket Club	No current issues.	-	-	-	-	-
Market Harborough CC	No current issues.	-	-	-	-	-
Medbourne Cricket Club	No current issues.	-	-	-	-	-
Neville Holt Cricket Club	No secured community access	Negotiate Community Use Agreement.	Neville Holt Cricket Club	Site owner	-	Medium
North Kilworth CC	Grass pitches used to over capacity on a seasonal basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve pitch quality Install a non-turf wicket 	North Kilworth CC	-	£8,000 for non-turf pitch	High
Oakfield & Rowland CC	'Poor' quality changing	Improve changing	Oakfield and Rowland CC	-	TBC	Medium
Tilton and Lowesby CC	'Poor' quality changing	Improve changing	Tilton and Lowesby CC	-	TBC	Medium
Ullesthorpe Playing Field	Pitches are currently disused	Retain the pitch for future reinstatement	Ullesthorpe PC	-	-	Low

7 RUGBY UNION PITCH NEEDS

7.1 Organisational context

- **Rugby Football Union:** The RFU is the governing body of the sport and supports the development of the game in Harborough district.
- **RFU-affiliated Rugby Clubs:** There are three clubs in the district, which collectively provide nine men's teams, three women's teams and the equivalent of 55 age grade teams.

7.2 Strategic context

7.2.1 National rugby facilities strategy

The RFUs 'England Rugby Strategy' (2021) contains priorities and objectives of relevance to facilities provision:

Enjoyment: The objective underpinning this priority is to 'enable positive player experiences on and off the field'. Sub-objectives include:

- 'Improve accessibility for women and girls across the game'.
- 'Make the game inclusive and attractive for 14 to 18 year olds'.
- 'Redefine playing opportunities, structures and competitions for current and future players, recognising the strategic importance of the adult male game'.
- 'Develop match officials and coaches in the community game to enhance player enjoyment'.

Flourishing rugby communities: The objective underpinning this priority is to 'support clubs to sustain and grow themselves and to reflect society'. Sub-objectives include:

- 'Provide support to club and constituent body volunteers so they can attract new, diverse volunteers and help clubs to be fit for the future and self-sustaining'.
- 'Provide support to help clubs maximise the benefit from their facilities and assets'.
- 'Help clubs manage their risk and liabilities'.

Diversity and inclusion: The objective underpinning this priority is to 'drive rugby union in England to reflect the diversity of society'. The sub-objective is to 'improve the diversity of all facets of our game and continue to create an inclusive environment for all'.

7.2.2 Neighbouring local authorities

Playing pitch strategies in neighbouring local authority areas identify cross-boundary issues:

Rugby

The '*Rugby Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2013) identified sufficient capacity to meet all short and medium term needs.

Blaby

The '*Blaby Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment*' (2020) identifies that 'there is currently a sufficient supply of rugby pitches in the district with the current position being a spare capacity of three match equivalent sessions per week. Future demand reduces all spare capacity and creates a shortfall equating to 5.25 match equivalent sessions per week'.

Oadby and Wigston

The '*Oadby and Wigston Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2016) identifies that 'there is a need for additional facilities, in particular for the mid-week training'.

Leicester

The '*Leicester City Council Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2017) does not identify major cross boundary issues. The strategy proposes that there should be additional pitches at one community club site and for De Montfort University.

Charnwood

The '*Charnwood Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2018) identifies a shortfall of rugby pitches equivalent to 14 match equivalent sessions per week. Much of the capacity limitations relate to poorly maintained pitches.

Melton:

Melton Borough Council is working on an updated Playing Pitch Strategy for the borough in 2022. The '*Melton Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2014) identifies that 'there are sufficient pitches to meet the demand but the available spare capacity is not suitable for Melton RFC's needs'.

Rutland

The '*Rutland Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2022) identifies that 'there is currently spare capacity in Rutland as a whole, but additional provision will be required to meet future needs'.

Corby (now part of North Northamptonshire)

The 'Corby Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan' (2017) identifies a need for three additional pitches by 2031.

Kettering (now part of North Northamptonshire)

The 'Kettering Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy Needs Assessment Report' (2020) identifies that 'no sites currently have peak time spare capacity. This is attributed to unsecure tenure, as well as poor pitch quality. Three pitches in Kettering are currently overplayed, totalling 4.75 match equivalent sessions per week'.

Daventry (now part of West Northamptonshire)

The 'Daventry Playing Pitch Strategy' (2018) identifies that there is sufficient rugby pitch capacity to meet all current and future needs.

7.2.3 Findings of the 2022 Harborough PPS

The key findings of the 'Harborough Playing Pitch Strategy' (2022) in relation to rugby are below:

Expressed demand: There are three local clubs serving Harborough district. Team numbers have increased slightly since 2018.

Pitch supply: There are significant pitch capacity issues at Market Harborough RFC and Lutterworth RFC.

Pitch quality: Four of the pitches at Market Harborough RFC are poorly drained (classified as 'natural inadequate' drainage) which limits their carrying capacity.

Floodlights: Seven of the thirteen pitches in the district are floodlit, but two of these are only partially floodlit (with lighting columns on one side only, so the effective number of floodlit pitches reduces to 4.5). Power supply problems at Market Harborough RFC further compromise the use of floodlit pitches at their site.

Changing facilities: There are issues with changing facilities at all sites, which are particularly acute at Aylestone RFC, although these are in the process of being addressed.

Security of access: All pitches have secured community access.

7.2.4 Implications of the strategic context

The implications of the strategic context for rugby union in Harborough district are:

- **Shortfalls in neighbouring areas:** There are current pitch capacity shortfalls in five neighbouring local authorities, which may lead to some exported demand to Harborough district.

- **Additional demand for pitch capacity:** The RFU's targets for increased participation will create additional demand for pitch capacity, including activity in the summer period when traditionally much pitch maintenance is undertaken.

7.3 Rugby demand

7.3.1 Expressed demand

Current demand for rugby in Harborough district is expressed as follows:

Club	Home Ground	Men's teams	Women's teams	Age grade teams*
Aylestone St. James RFC	Aylestone St. James RFC	2	-	-
Lutterworth RFC	Lutterworth RFC	3	2	33*
Market Harborough RFC	Market Harborough RFC	5	1	22*
TOTALS	-	10	3	55*

* For the purposes of calculating mini-rugby teams, Market Harborough RFC has suggested dividing the average number of players in a mini team (which varies from 4 to 15 across the age grades, but with a mean figure of 12) by the number of age grade players at each club, to arrive at 'team equivalent' numbers. The figures for Lutterworth RFC and Market Harborough RFC therefore reflect this calculation to emphasise the demand for pitch space, but it makes direct comparison with the team figures in the 2018 PPS problematic.

The number of teams by sub-area is as follows:

Sub-area	Men's teams	Women's teams	Age grade teams
West	3	2	22
Middle	5	1	33
East	2	-	-
HARBOROUGH	10	3	55

Team numbers in 2018, as recorded in the 'Harborough Playing Pitch Strategy' (2018) compare with the current figures for teams above the mini age grades are as follows:

Season	Men's teams	Women's teams	Boy's teams	Girl's teams
2021/22	9	3	10	5
2023/24	10	3	10	5
Change	+1	0	0	0

7.3.2 Displaced demand

Local clubs reported the proportion of members drawn from Harborough district and neighbouring areas is as follows. The data shows that there is some imported demand:

Club	Harborough	Elsewhere
Aylestone St. James RFC	-	-
Lutterworth RFC	75%	25%
Market Harborough RFC	85%	15%

7.3.3 Unmet demand

Unmet demand takes a number of forms:

- Teams may have access to a pitch for matches but nowhere to train or vice versa.
- Some pitches may be unavailable to the community.
- The poor quality and consequent limited capacity of pitches in the area and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement.

There is some evidence of unmet demand at present.

- **Waiting list:** Market Harborough RFC has a waiting list for age grade rugby and Lutterworth RFC has a membership waiting list for under 5's.
- **Extra pitch needs:** Market Harborough RFC has unmet demand for match pitches.
- **Extra training needs:** Market Harborough RFC and Lutterworth RFC both need additional pitch capacity to meet midweek training demand.

7.3.4 Latent demand

Whereas unmet demand is known to currently exist latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better provision. Consultation with local clubs indicated that a total of 15 additional teams of all age groups could be accommodated in Harborough district if the quality and quantity of pitch provision was improved, a 22.4% increase on the current team numbers.

Club	Men's teams	Women's teams	Boy's teams	Girl's teams	Mini teams
Aylestone St. James RFC	-	-	-	-	-

Lutterworth RFC	0	0	1	1	1
Market Harbourough RFC	0	0	4	1	7
TOTALS	0	0	5	2	8

7.4 Rugby pitch supply

7.4.1 Quantity

This section summarises the detail of rugby pitch supply in Harborough district. The pitches included are defined as natural turf areas permanently laid out with regulation markings:

- **Available for community use and used:** These are as follows:

Site	Address	Floodlit pitches	Non-floodlit pitches
Aylestone St. James RFC	Covert Lane, Scraftoft LE7 9SP	2	0
Lutterworth RFC	Ashby Lane, Bitteswell, Lutterworth LE17 4LW	1.5	1.5*
Market Harbourough RFC	Northampton Road, Market Harborough LE16 9HF	2.5	4.5*
TOTALS	-	6	7

* Also five separate junior/mini pitches at each site

- **Available for community use and not used:** There are no rugby pitches available for community use that are not used.
- **Not available for community use:** The following pitches are not available for community use. Some are only marked out for one school term each year. None are floodlit:

Site	Address	Pitches
Kibworth Mead Academy	Smeeton Road, Kibworth Beauchamp LE8 0LG	1
Leicester Grammar School	London Road, Great Glen LE8 9FL	2
Lutterworth High School	Woodway Road, Lutterworth LE17 4QH	2
Welland Park Academy	Welland Park Road, Market Harborough LE16 9DR	1
TOTALS	-	6

- **Disused:** The following pitches are no longer in use:

Site	Address	Pitches
Stoneygate RFC	Covert Lane, Scraftoft LE7 9SP	3

- **Provision by sub-area:** Pitches with community use and used by sub-area are as follows:

Sub-area	Population	No. Pitches	Pitches per capita
West	28,963	3	1: 9,654
Middle	35,494	7	1: 5,071
East	28,197	2	1: 14,099
HARBOROUGH	95,537	12	1: 7,961

7.4.2 Quality

The qualitative analysis involved a visit to all rugby pitches in Harborough district with community use and used during the playing season, to undertake the sport-specific non-technical visual inspections produced by the RFU for Sport England's 'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance' (2013). The assessment generated 'scores' for each pitch by evaluating the condition of:

- **Pitch drainage:** Inadequately naturally drained (scores D0), adequately naturally drained (scores D1) pipe drained (scores (D2) and pipe and slit drained pitches (scores D3).
- **Grounds maintenance:** Frequency of aeration, sand-dressing, fertilising, weed killing and chain harrowing. This generates scores of 'Poor' (M0), 'Adequate' (M1) and 'Good' (M2).

The scores for each pitch in Harborough are as follows. 'Good' ratings are highlighted in green, 'standard' in yellow and 'poor' in red. Floodlit pitches are asterisked:

Site	Maintenance	Drainage
Aylestone St. James RFC Pitch One*	M1	D2
Aylestone St. James RFC Pitch Two*	M1	D2
Lutterworth RFC Pitch One*	M2	D3
Lutterworth RFC Pitch Two	M2	D1
Lutterworth RFC Pitch Three*	M2	D3
Market Harborough RFC Pitch One*	M2	D3
Market Harborough RFC Pitch Two*	M2	D3
Market Harborough RFC Pitch Three*	M2	D3
Market Harborough RFC Pitch Four	M2	D0
Market Harborough RFC Pitch Five	M2	D0
Market Harborough RFC Pitch Six	M2	D0
Market Harborough RFC Pitch Seven	M2	D0

7.4.3 Grass pitch carrying capacity

The carrying capacity of grass pitches is related to their quality and is expressed as the number of 'match equivalent sessions' that can be accommodated each week. The 'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance' indicates the following weekly carrying capacities for rugby union pitches:

Drainage	Maintenance		
	Poor	Adequate	Good
Natural inadequate	0.5	1.0	2.0
Natural adequate	1.5	2.0	3.0
Pipe drained	1.75	2.5	3.25
Pipe and slit drained	2.0	3.0	3.5

The weekly collective carrying capacity of the rugby pitch sites with community use and used in Harborough district, expressed as 'match equivalents' is therefore as follows:

Site	Midweek capacity	Weekend capacity	Total capacity
Aylestone St. James RFC	3.0	2.0	5.0
Lutterworth RFC	6.0	3.0	9.0
Market Harborough RFC	7.5	11.5	18.5

7.4.4 Changing quality

The quality of the changing facilities at each of the rugby pitch sites with community use and used in Harborough is as follows:

Site	Rating	Comments
Aylestone St. James RFC	Poor	Clubhouse still requires refurbishment
Lutterworth RFC	Good	Previous problems with age and gender segregation in changing rooms has been resolved with extended facilities.
Market Harborough RFC	Standard	Some expansion to changing facilities required.

7.4.5 Pitch maintenance

Each site owner employs a grounds maintenance contractor to maintain their pitches.

7.4.6 Ownership, management and security of access

The ownership, management and security of community access of rugby pitch sites is detailed below. Security of access refers to the extent to which community use of the

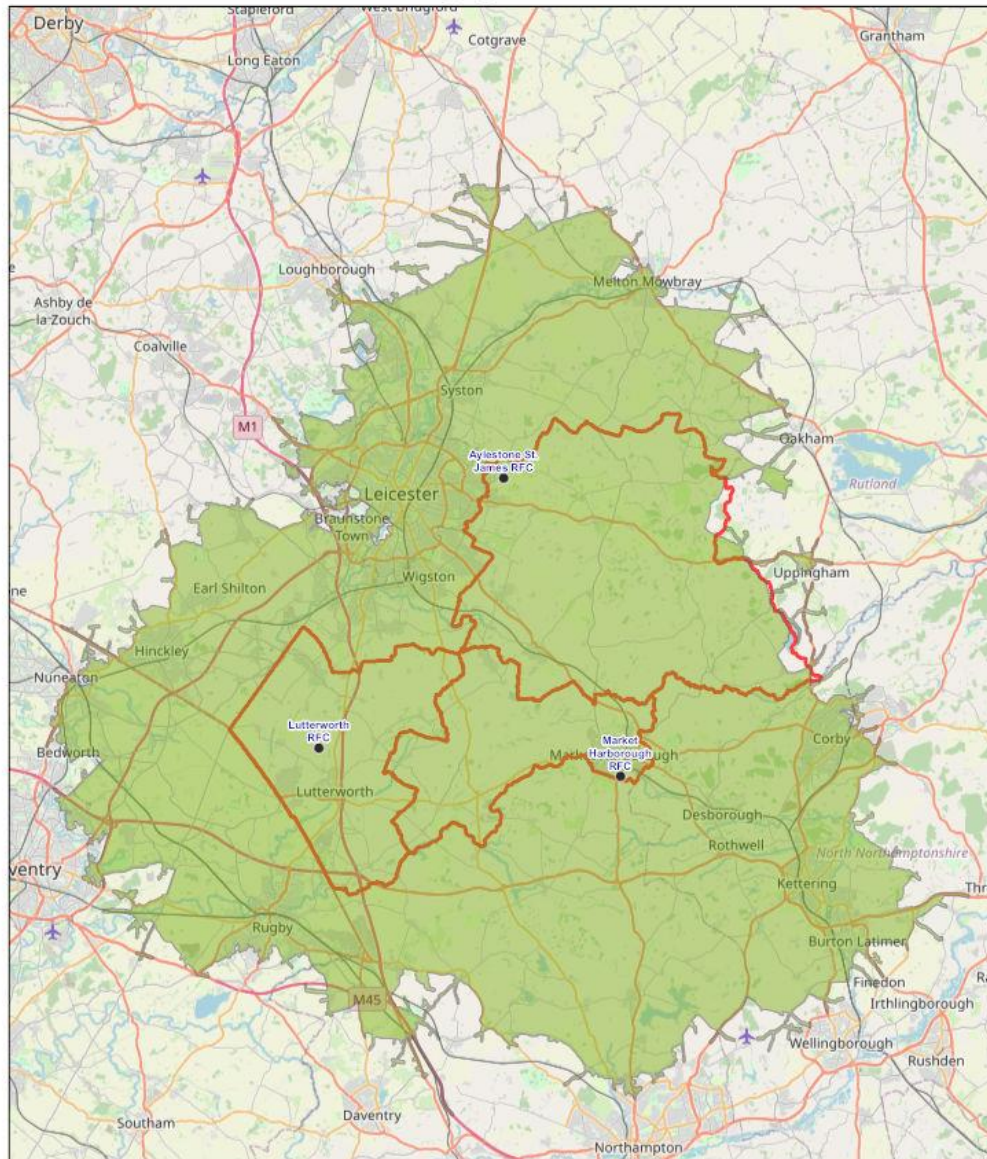
site is protected (through public ownership, planning policy ownership covenants etc.), rather than the security of tenure of specific club users.

Site	Ownership	Management	Access
Aylestone St. James RFC	Aylestone St. James RFC	Aylestone St. James RFC	Secured
Lutterworth RFC	Lutterworth RFC	Lutterworth RFC	Secured
Market Harborough RFC	Market Harborough RFC Harborough DC	Market Harborough RFC	Secured

7.4.7 Geographical distribution

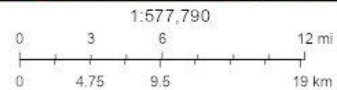
The geographical distribution of rugby pitches in Harborough district has been assessed by identifying catchments to illustrate local level accessibility. This is based on the results of the clubs' survey, which identifies 20-minutes travel time as the typical maximum. Based upon this, the map below shows that with the exception of a small area in the east of the district, the entire local population is within the catchment of at least one pitch.

HARBOROUGH - Rugby Pitches 20 Minutes Drive



2/14/2022

- RUGBY PITCHES
- 20.0 Minutes
- ▭ West Sub Area, Middle Sub Area, East Sub Area
- ▭ Harborough District Boundary



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7.5 The views of local stakeholders

7.5.1 The Rugby Football Union

Consultation with the RFU highlighted that:

- There are three rugby clubs in the district.

- The former Stoneygate RFC site, which is immediately adjacent to the Aylestone St James site, is no longer in use for rugby and the pitches are overgrown.
- Stoneygate RFC has played at Uppingham College since vacating the site. The facilities at the college do not cater for the needs of Stoneygate RFC. Recently the senior men's teams have had to move to another site in Corby to meet their playing and training needs with the age grade members remaining at the college.
- There have been major problems with the clubhouse at Aylestone St James RFC which has meant that there has been a huge fall in its membership with many players relocating to other clubs, including Market Harborough and Lutterworth. The redevelopment of Aylestone St James RFC's changing rooms is paramount to the club being able to cater for and cope with increased playing members and providing segregated changing rooms for age grade and female players.
- There is significant potential for growth at Aylestone St James RFC, driven by local housing growth east of Leicester. Over the next three to five years, this is likely to amount to one new women's team, one new girls' team and three age grade teams. There is sufficient pitch capacity at the club to accommodate this growth, provided it is possible to reinstate for rugby the pitch that is currently used for adult football, although it is acknowledged that this would displace a football club and that there is no spare capacity at present to accommodate Aylestone St. James FC at an alternative site.
- Both Lutterworth RFC and Market Harborough RFC have pitch capacity issues that are limiting their training and match play needs.

7.5.2 Lutterworth RFC

The key comments were as follows:

- 'Over-use of pitches is a problem leading to cancellation of training. Car parking (c100 vehicles) is inadequate. The immediate plans for our changing facilities deal with gender segregation and safeguarding and are due for completion autumn 2022. Future plans will need to deal with anticipated increased demand from Lutterworth East and potential developments to the south of Leicester due over next 10-15 years'.
- 'Since 2016, two of our three pitches have primary and secondary drainage. This has had a huge beneficial effect. No games have been lost to wet weather since. Training is lost to protect for upcoming weekend games'.
- 'The club has appointed a Development Officer to promote the club in the locality particularly in schools'.

7.5.3 Market Harborough RFC

The key comments were as follows:

- 'Our approach is to have an open door to new members ... we don't get full, we just have less grass each ... and we have a strategy of inclusive rugby where players of all abilities get an equal share of game time. This creates a high demand for our grass, particularly on Sunday mornings'.
- 'On a Sunday we are unable to mix genders as most Sunday mornings all of our pitches are being used. This restricts how many home fixtures we can host, causing us to send teams away and prevents our girls teams from playing/training in the morning too'.
- 'We have exhausted the capacity within our current boundary and unless the football club decides to reduce its footprint, our sole option would be to seek to purchase neighbouring farmland for conversion, although we note this land is in Northamptonshire and recently appeared in a housing proposal'.
- 'The provision of parking is insufficient in the area, impacting on local residents. When the ground is dry enough we are able to utilise a section of land behind the in goal area of our first pitch, although vehicles are in the firing line of rugby balls. On a dry day this is useful but if converted to a tarmac car park could be used all year round. It may even be possible to make it multi-purpose such as a netball court'.
- 'There are no other options to convert land to parking within our boundaries, without losing pitches. Longer term, options to expand parking on council-owned land would be welcomed'.
- 'The biggest single restricting factor is the lack of lit pitch-space for training. Once the pitches get wet and badly cut-up, training then gets cancelled as currently no off-pitch area is lit to a safe standard. We see the short-term solution as the lighting of further pitch space to allow the expansion of training areas in order to rest pitches and rotate where we train'.
- 'Medium term would be the conversion of a training pitch to an all-weather surface suitable for rugby'.
- 'Longer term would rely on acquisition of more land as above'.
- 'Drainage remains as universal concern of the club. It is not currently adequate to cater for current rainfall patterns and is less likely to do so in the future with climate change'.
- 'The frequency and severity of water-logging can be significant, leading to cancelled matches and training as the pitches become unsuitable, also taking considerable time to repair following periods of heavy rainfall. This reduces the amount of playing time at our facilities and in recent years this has been up to 10% or more of the scheduled playing season (not insignificant)'.

- 'A full review of drainage and strategy is required to cater for the club's needs. We have recently partnered with Harborough Athletic Club and this will bring further demand issues for available space and potentially for lit space'.
- 'We have started a Walking Rugby section, designed to be used by members who are no longer young enough or mobile enough to play other forms of rugby – but we have recently moved it to use the all-weather surface at Welland Park Academy as it is a safer surface for these less agile members. If we had our own all-weather area this would not be needed'.
- 'The immediate priority is to improve and increase our lit training areas, with the intention to go from 2.5 pitches to 5 pitches (one match, four training)'.
- 'Our other objectives (in no particular order) are:
 - To expand our own hard surface parking options and to look into partnership options with Harborough Athletics Club to develop areas for their use within our boundaries.
 - To install an all-weather playing surface.
 - To improve drainage to enable season-round use of facilities.
 - To further expand the clubhouse and increase/improve changing facilities.
 - To seek to acquire more land to develop new pitches and parking options'.
- 'Currently we are restricted as to which age groups can train given that we only have 1.5 pitches lit. On Tues/Weds/Thurs evenings, the 1.5 pitches are used for 13 sessions. On Sundays the 7 pitches are used for 7 sessions. As such demand is very uneven and an average does not describe the challenges. 1.5 of our pitches are used for about 15 sessions every week, plus matches too. The other pitches are all in simultaneous use on a Sunday but are not in use for evening training as unlit. They may take matches on Saturdays too'.
- 'Our 7 adult pitches are all in use on a Sunday, allowing us the space to cope with demand by running morning and afternoon sessions then. Sometimes this will see two age groups sharing a pitch. (Before we expanded to 7 pitches that was the norm).The 2 training pitches which are lit however face significant overuse and often have no grass left by the latter part of the season. The ground gets compacted by over-use and fails to then drain, rendering it out of bounds for any activity, causing cancellation of training'.
- 'We allow free use of facilities to Welland Park Academy to host matches as we believe in growing the game locally and supporting our schools. The same would apply (within reason) to others who approached us'.
- 'We have 6 changing rooms, sufficient for 3 matches. That is not enough for some Saturdays and Sundays. Some have their own showers and toilets but most do

not, instead relying on a communal shower in the main changing block. We have 2 referees changing rooms’.

- ‘We have 2 changing rooms separate from the other 4, so if the gender demand requirement matches, sometimes we can separate genders in changing areas but not always. The same applies to juniors/adults’.
- ‘Car parking on site and nearby is sufficient on most days except Sundays or occasional Saturday afternoons’.
- ‘Disabled access is fine for P1 as tarmac path spectator area but to get anywhere else is across grass so is weather dependent’.
- ‘Whilst there are all weather football pitches close by, they are very rarely accessible to us so to all intents and purposes we have no solutions. Our own all weather facility would alleviate that and reduce cancelled activity. The main issue we face currently though is lighting and the need to be able to actually use the grass we already have by it being lit when we need access’.
- ‘Our storage needs are currently managed by using some shipping containers and old lorry-back roller shutter containers but are actively seeking more presently. This is to house our grounds maintenance machinery, post protectors, flags etc and also all the training kit used by the volunteer coaches. Aesthetically and for future proofing it would be far better to have a building to house our grounds machinery and then separately all the sporting equipment that currently out of necessity sits in various people's garages at home’.
- ‘The current council-owned leased part of our site has a low wooden fence boundary. The site security would be improved by a metal fence similar to that recently installed at Robert Smyth Academy. Again whilst not our immediate priority, particularly though once we have installed floodlights it would be beneficial to secure the whole site’.

7.6 The implications for rugby in Harborough district

Analysis of local supply of rugby pitches in Harborough district indicates the following:

- **Expressed demand:** There are three local clubs serving Harborough district. Team numbers have increased slightly since 2022.
- **Pitch supply:** There are significant pitch capacity issues at Market Harborough RFC and Lutterworth RFC.
- **Pitch quality:** Four of the pitches at Market Harborough RFC are poorly drained (classified as ‘natural inadequate’ drainage) which limits their carrying capacity.
- **Floodlights:** Seven of the thirteen pitches in the district are floodlit.

- **Changing facilities:** There are issues with changing facilities at all sites, although these are in the process of being addressed.
- **Security of access:** All pitches have secured community access.

7.7 *Developments since the 2018 PPS*

The key developments since the assessment of rugby needs in the 2022 PPS are as follows:

- Based on team numbers, expressed demand has remained broadly constant since 2023/23, although Aylestone St. James RFC has since formed an additional men's team.
- Lutterworth RFC received RFU Impact Funding to improve changing and social facilities for female players. Two new segregated en-suite changing rooms were installed in the autumn of 2022.
- Market Harborough RFC received a grant from the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund to improve two basic quality pitches. The power supply issues relating to the floodlights have been resolved with the help of S106 funding, so all pitches can now be lit simultaneously.

7.8 *Assessment of current needs*

To assess whether the current supply of pitches is adequate to meet existing demand an understanding of the situation at all sites available to the community needs to be developed. This is achieved by providing a brief overview for each site, which comprises:

- A comparison between the carrying capacity of a site and how much demand currently takes place there. The carrying capacity of a site is defined as the amount of play it can regularly accommodate without adversely affecting its quality and use. Demand is defined in terms of the number of 'match equivalent' sessions at each site.
- An indication of the extent to which pitches are being used during their peak periods.

The site overviews identify the extent to which pitches are:

- **Being overplayed:** Where use exceeds the carrying capacity (highlighted in red in the table below).
- **Being played to the level the site can sustain:** Where use matches the carrying capacity.
- **Potentially able to accommodate some additional play:** Where use falls below the carrying capacity.

As per RFU guidance, rugby union pitch capacity, demand and the resultant balance are expressed as 'match equivalent sessions', both weekly and at peak times. Floodlit pitches/training areas are asterisked.

Overall demand is based upon adult and youth teams requiring an average of 1.5 match equivalent sessions per week for training and matches and mini teams requiring 0.25 match equivalent sessions per week.

Site	Pitches	Users	Weekly capacity	Weekly demand	Weekly balance	Peak capacity	Peak demand	Peak balance
Aylestone St. James RFC	1*	Aylestone St. James RFC	2.5	1.5	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	2*	Aylestone St. James RFC	2.5	1.5	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
SITE TOTALS	2	-	5.0	3.0	+2.0	2.0	2.0	Balanced
Lutterworth RFC	1*	Lutterworth RFC	3.0	3.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	2	Lutterworth RFC	3.0	3.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	3*	Lutterworth RFC	3.0	3.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	5 Mini	Lutterworth RFC	5.0	6.75	-1.75	5.0	6.75	-1.75
SITE TOTALS	3 (5)	-	14.0	15.75	-1.75	8.0	9.75	-1.75
Market Harborough RFC	1*	Market Harborough RFC	3.5	4.0	-0.5	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	2*	Market Harborough RFC	3.5	3.0	+0.5	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	3*	Market Harborough RFC	3.5	4.0	-0.5	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	4	Market Harborough RFC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	5	Market Harborough RFC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	6	Market Harborough RFC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	7	Market Harborough RFC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	5 Mini	Market Harborough RFC	5.0	5.0	Balanced	5.0	5.0	Balanced
SITE TOTALS	7 (5)	-	23.5	24.0	-0.5	12.0	12.0	Balanced
TOTAL	12 (10)	-	42.5	40.25	+1.25	22.0	22.75	-0.75

The split between midweek training supply and demand and weekend match supply and demand on match pitches is tabulated below, to highlight the main capacity pinch points.

Site	Pitches	Midweek training capacity	Midweek training demand	Midweek training balance	Weekend match capacity	Weekend match demand	Weekend match balance
Aylestone St. James RFC	1*	1.5	0.5	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	2*	1.5	0.5	+1.0	1.0	2	Balanced
SITE TOTALS	2	3.0	0.5	+2.0	2.0	1.0	Balanced
Lutterworth RFC	1*	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	2	0.0	0.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	3*	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	5 Mini	0.0	0.0	Balanced	5.0	6.75	-1.75
SITE TOTALS	3 (5)	4.0	4.0	Balanced	8.0	9.75	-1.75
Market Harborough RFC	1*	2.5	3.0	-0.5	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	2*	2.5	2.0	+0.5	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	3*	2.5	3.0	-0.5	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	4	0.0	0.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	5	0.0	0.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	6	0.0	0.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
	7	0.0	0.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
5 Mini	0.0	0.0	Balanced	5.0	5.0	Balanced	
SITE TOTALS	7 (5)	7.5	8.0	-0.5	12.0	12.0	Balanced
HARBOROUGH	12 (10)	14.5	12.5	+2.0	22.0	22.75	-0.75

The key findings are that:

- Both Lutterworth RFC and Market Harborough RFC are used to over-capacity.
- The key pinch point for Lutterworth RFC is accommodating age grade play in the peak period.
- The key pinch point for Market Harborough RFC is for floodlit midweek training.

7.9 Assessment of future needs

7.9.1 Population growth

The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 104,839 by 2031, an increase of 6,064 (or 6.1%). Comparison of the projections for 2024 and 2031 shows that the percentage of people aged under 50 falls from 54.2% to 53.2%, with proportionate population increases amongst the over 50s.

7.9.2 Potential changes in demand

Lutterworth RFC and Market Harborough RFC have collectively indicated that there is scope to create an additional 15 teams over the next five years, subject to pitch capacity availability. In addition, it is likely that Aylestone St. James RFC will expand by one women's, one girls' and two age grade teams.

7.9.3 Site-specific pressures

Both Lutterworth RFC and Market Harborough RFC are used to over-capacity. The key pinch point for Lutterworth RFC is accommodating age grade play in the peak period. The key pinch point for Market Harborough RFC is for floodlit midweek training.

7.9.4 Potential changes in supply

Market Harborough RFC has plans to improve and increase its floodlit training areas, with the intention to go from 2.5 pitches to 5 pitches (one match, four training).

7.9.5 Existing spare capacity

Whilst there is spare capacity at Aylestone St. James RFC, there are shortfalls at Lutterworth RFC and Market Harborough RFC so there is no effective spare capacity. There is also spare capacity at the unused Stoneygate/Scraptoft site although it is not in the optimum location to meet rugby needs. Since there is a need for additional playing field capacity elsewhere in the district, the loss of the site should be compensated by at least the same quantity of pitches, of at least the same quality as when it was maintained as an operational rugby site and in a suitable location subject to equivalent or better management arrangements.

7.9.6 Future rugby pitch needs

Future rugby pitch needs are modelled below using 'Team Generation Rates' (TGRs), which identify how many people in a specified age group in the district are required to generate one team. These are then applied to projected changes in population to identify the likely number of future teams.

Team type	Age range	Current population	Current teams	Unmet demand	TGR	Population 2031	Teams 2031	Extra teams
Adult males	19-45	13,668	10	0	1: 1,367	14,394	11	+1
Adult females	19-45	13,271	3	1	1: 3,318	14,717	4	0
Age Grade	7-18	13,869	55	18	1: 190	13,948	73	0

7.9.7 Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator

A supplementary way of modelling future playing pitch needs is Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator. The model applies Team Generation Rates to the projected population increases to estimate the additional pitch needs arising and in addition generates capital and revenue cost estimates for providing the extra pitches. The model needs to be applied alongside an assessment of the various options for meeting unmet demand but provides helpful context for the site-specific supply-demand assessment and the TGR calculations above. The results of applying the Calculator for rugby needs arising from major planned developments in Harborough are set out below.

Development	Number of dwellings	Population	Number of pitches	Changing rooms	Capital costs (£)	Annual costs (£)
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East of Lutterworth Strategic Development Area	1,260	2,772	0.74	1.48	£372,602	£23,017
Overstone Park, Market Harborough	600	1,320	0.35	0.70	£177,415	£10,960
East of Blackberry Grange, Market Harborough	350	770	0.21	0.41	£103,503	£6,394
Arnesby Road, Fleckney	130	286	0.08	0.15	£38,443	£2,375
Burnmill Farm, Market Harborough	128	282	0.08	0.15	£37,895	£2,341
Scraptoft North Strategic Development Area	1,200	2,640	0.70	1.41	£354,854	£21,920
TOTALS	3,668	8,070	2.61	5.23	£1,084,712	£67,007

7.10 Key findings and issues

7.10.1 What are the main characteristics of current supply and demand?

- **Expressed demand:** There are three local clubs serving Harborough district. Team numbers have increased slightly since 2022.
- **Pitch supply:** There are significant pitch capacity issues at Market Harborough RFC and Lutterworth RFC.
- **Pitch quality:** Four of the pitches at Market Harborough RFC are poorly drained (classified as 'natural inadequate' drainage) which limits their carrying capacity.
- **Floodlights:** Seven of the thirteen pitches in the district are floodlit pitches.
- **Changing facilities:** There are issues with changing facilities at all sites, which are particularly acute at Aylestone RFC, although these are in the process of being addressed.
- **Security of access:** All pitches have secured community access.

7.10.2 Is there enough accessible and secured community use to meet current demand? **NO** - There is a deficit at two sites

Both Lutterworth RFC and Market Harborough RFC are used to over-capacity. The key pinch point for Lutterworth RFC is accommodating age grade play in the peak period. The key pinch point for Market Harborough RFC is for floodlit midweek training.

7.10.3 Is the accessible provision of suitable quality and appropriately maintained? **NO** - There are drainage problems at Market Harborough RFC

Four of the pitches at Market Harborough RFC suffer from poor drainage, with consequent reductions in their carrying capacity.

7.10.4 What are the main characteristics of future supply and demand?

- **Population growth:** The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 104,839 by 2031, an increase of 6,064 (or 6.1%). Comparison of the projections for 2024 and 2031 shows that the percentage of people aged under 50 falls from 54.2% to 53.2%, with proportionate population increases amongst the over 50s.
- **Changes in demand:** Projecting future need based on current demand patterns (including unmet demand identified by the clubs) is the most appropriate basis for forecasting.
- **Changes in supply:** Market Harborough RFC has plans to improve and increase its floodlit training areas, with the intention to go from 2.5 pitches to 5 pitches (one match, four training) and with sufficient power supply to use them all simultaneously.
- **Existing spare capacity:** There is no effective spare capacity at the two main club sites in the district.
- **Future needs:** There will be a small increase in team numbers by 2031, but this will have a negligible effect on demand for pitches.

7.10.5 Is there enough accessible and secured provision to meet future demand? **NO**

There is no effective spare capacity at the two main club sites in the district. Additional capacity could be created in three ways:

- **Pitch quality improvements:** Improvements in drainage at Lutterworth RFC would increase weekly carrying capacity by 1.5 match equivalent sessions per week. Improvements in drainage at Market Harborough RFC would increase weekly carrying capacity by 6.0 match equivalent sessions per week.
- **Installation of floodlights:** The provision of floodlighting to additional pitches at Lutterworth RFC and Market Harborough RFC would improve the potential for additional midweek use but would only be effective with improvements in pitch drainage and maintenance to expand capacity.
- **Artificial grass pitches:** Installation of floodlit World Rugby Regulation 22-compliant artificial grass pitches at Lutterworth RFC and Market Harborough RFC would add capacity for both midweek training and match play.

7.11 Scenario testing

7.11.1 Introduction

Based upon the key findings and issues identified above, some scenarios examining the effect of securing additional pitch capacity have been rehearsed to identify the optimum approach to addressing needs.

7.11.2 Scenario 1: Enhancing grass pitch carrying capacity with maintenance and drainage improvements

- **Rationale:** Improving the drainage and maintenance of the pitches at the sites where the drainage and/or maintenance is sub-optimal at present would add the following capacity (in match equivalent sessions) at each site:

Site	Current capacity	Extra capacity	Total capacity
Aylestone St. James RFC	5.0	2.0	7.0
Lutterworth RFC	9.0	1.5	10.5
Market Harborough RFC	18.5	6.0	24.5
TOTAL	32.5	9.5	42.0

- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
 - The additional capacity would theoretically be sufficient to meet all overall projected extra pitch capacity needs to 2031.
 - The greatest site-specific impact would be at Market Harborough RFC, where the increased capacity would eliminate the midweek capacity deficit.
 - The extra capacity could be achieved at existing sites without the need for additional land acquisition costs.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are that:
 - This scenario would not add additional peak time capacity, so the peak-time deficit at Lutterworth RFC would remain.
 - The cost of grounds maintenance to sustain the enhanced pitch capacity may be problematic for some clubs.
- **Conclusions:** There would be merit in exploring the potential for drainage and maintenance improvements at each site. However, to maximise the benefits of this, the review will also need to consider the issue of floodlighting to maximise the benefits in the midweek evening period (see below).

7.11.3 Scenario 2: Enhancing grass pitch carrying capacity by providing floodlights

- **Rationale:** Whilst improved maintenance and drainage would add overall capacity, to achieve the maximum benefits floodlighting will be required to facilitate use during midweek evenings. The current floodlighting arrangements are tabulated below:

Site	Adult pitches			Age grade pitches		
	Floodlit	Partially floodlit	Non-floodlit	Floodlit	Partially floodlit	Non-floodlit
Aylestone St. James RFC	2	-	-	-	-	-
Lutterworth RFC	1	1	1	-	-	5
Market Harborough RFC	2	1	4	-	-	5
TOTALS	5	2	5	0	0	10

- **Advantages:** The advantage of this scenario is that floodlighting additional pitches will increase their availability on midweek evenings when training sessions take place. This will have the greatest benefits at:
 - Lutterworth RFC, where additional floodlighting would expand training capacity, although the main pinch point is for age grade play at weekends.
 - Market Harborough RFC, which has plans to extend floodlighting to five pitches.
- **Disadvantage:** The disadvantage of this scenario is that its effectiveness is contingent upon the pitch capacity enhancements achievable through the drainage and maintenance improvements, so it needs to be considered in conjunction.
- **Conclusions:** The greatest benefits of floodlighting will be where it is combined with an improvement in pitch maintenance or drainage ratings. Floodlighting additional pitches at Market Harborough RFC and fully floodlighting the partially floodlit pitch at Lutterworth RFC would provide one option for addressing capacity shortfalls.

7.11.4 Scenario 3: Enhancing pitch carrying capacity by providing a rugby-compliant artificial grass pitch at Market Harborough RFC

- **Rationale:** Providing an artificial grass pitch at Market Harborough RFC (or alternative mechanism for enhancing the pitch capacity in addition to drainage e.g. hybrid technology) would increase capacity for midweek training sessions (including the potential for hire to other local clubs) and in the peak match play period for adults (Saturday afternoons) and Juniors/Minis (Sunday mornings). In addition, there is significant unmet demand from football clubs for access to

'3G' pitches, so a rugby-compliant artificial grass pitch would also serve wider needs.

- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
 - Market Harborough RFC has long-term aspirations to install a World Rugby regulation 22-compliant artificial grass pitch.
 - The pitch would add 10.0 midweek match equivalent sessions and 4.0 weekend match equivalent sessions (offset by the loss of the grass pitch upon which it would be sited) which would meet all current and future needs.
 - Subject to any spare rugby capacity, the pitch could additionally contribute to meeting identified deficiencies in '3G' Football Turf Pitches in Harborough district.
- **Disadvantage:** The only disadvantage of this scenario is that to achieve maximum peak-time benefits will involve scheduling matches at non-traditional kick-off times which is a relatively new concept for many teams.
- **Conclusions:** Market Harborough RFC's long-term aspirations for a World Rugby Regulation 22-compliant artificial grass pitch (or alternative mechanism for enhancing the pitch capacity in addition to drainage e.g. hybrid technology) should be supported.

7.12 Policy recommendations

7.12.1 Introduction

The recommendations in relation to rugby union are made in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 103, which stipulates that existing open space including playing pitches, should not be built upon unless:

- An assessment has taken place which has clearly shown the open space to be surplus to requirements, or;
- The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality, in a suitable location, or;
- The development is for alternative sport and recreation provision, the needs for which clearly outweighs the loss.

The following recommendations are arranged under 'protect', 'enhance' and 'provide'.

7.12.2 Protect

Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision: The Harborough PPS comprises a robust and evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for rugby in the district. The PPS has identified a need to increase local rugby pitch capacity and to this extent, it will be important for all current community used rugby

pitch sites to be retained and protected, including the disused pitches at the former Stoneygate RFC site. It is therefore recommended that planning policies continue to support the retention of all sites, based upon the evidence in the PPS. If proposals to redevelop rugby pitches do come forward, this will only be permissible they are replaced and meet policy exception E4 of Sport England’s Playing Fields Policy. This states that ‘the playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development must be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development’.

7.12.3 Enhance

Recommendation 2- Improving existing pitch capacity: Additional pitch capacity would best be developed at existing pitches by improving the quality of pitch drainage and maintenance at Lutterworth RFC and Market Harborough RFC with related floodlighting provision, but other sites would also benefit.

7.12.4 Provide

Recommendation 3- Artificial grass pitches: Market Harborough RFC has aspirations to install a World Rugby regulation 22-compliant artificial grass pitch (or alternative mechanism for enhancing the pitch capacity in addition to drainage e.g. hybrid technology). This should be subjected to a more detailed feasibility study that assesses the impact sequentially of improved maintenance, enhanced drainage, a hybrid solution and an artificial grass pitch, including the option of implementing these on a phased basis.

Recommendation 4 - Developer contributions and external funding: All the additional demand for rugby arising from housing development in Harborough district to 2031, should be accommodated through the recommendations outlined above. It is recommended that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under S106 arrangements, and/or through applications for external funding to cover the capital and revenue implications of the new provision to expand capacity.

7.13 Action Plan

7.13.1 Introduction

In the context of the recommendations above, the rugby union action plan below will guide the implementation of the strategy. The abbreviations stand for HDC - Harborough District Council, RFU - Rugby Football Union, ASJRFC - Aylestone St. James RFC, LRFC - Lutterworth RFC and MHRFC - Market Harborough RFC. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England’s ‘Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2023’ (2023).

7.13.2 Key strategic actions

Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
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Securing developer contributions	Ensure that policy provision is made to secure developer contributions towards new and improved rugby facilities.	HDC	Developers	Determined by Sport England's New Development Calculator	High
Co-operation with the FA and England Hockey	Dialogue between the respective governing bodies on coordinating shared artificial grass pitch needs	RFU	FA England Hockey	-	High

7.13.3 Site specific actions

Site	Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Aylestone St. James RFC	Clubhouse development is incomplete.	Complete the clubhouse project.	ASJRFC	RFU	£100,000	High
Lutterworth RFC	Shortage of capacity for Age Grade rugby in the peak period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve drainage and maintenance. • Provide full floodlighting to partially floodlit pitch. 	LRFC	RFU	£100,000	High
Market Harborough RFC	Shortage of capacity for midweek training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve drainage and maintenance. • Provide floodlighting to two additional pitches. • In the longer term, provide a floodlit rugby-compliant artificial grass pitch. 	MHRFC	RFU	£100,000 for drainage and floodlights £970,000 for artificial grass pitch.	High
Stoneygate RFC (former site)	Site currently disused	Retain playing field to meet local rugby and/or football demand. The loss of the site should be compensated by at least the same quantity of pitches, of at least the same quality as when it was maintained as an operational rugby site and in a suitable location subject to equivalent or better management arrangements	HDC	Landowner	-	High

8 HOCKEY PITCH NEEDS

8.1 Organisational context

- **England Hockey:** England Hockey is the governing body of the sport and supports the development of the game in Harborough district.
- **England Hockey-affiliated club:** There are two affiliated clubs that play in Harborough district who collectively comprise six men's teams, five women's teams, five junior boy's teams and five junior girl's teams, plus three clubs from neighbouring areas that use pitches in the district.

8.2 Strategic context

8.2.1 National hockey strategy

England Hockey's strategic plan 2017 - 2027 '*A Nation Where Hockey Matters*' (2017) contains the following priorities of relevance to Harborough district:

The vision is for England to be a 'Nation Where Hockey Matters'.

Adults: The number playing regularly in the club network will be increased by:

- Working with universities, schools and colleges to deliver quality playing experiences and clear pathways to club hockey.
- Working with regional and local leagues and affiliated clubs, to deliver the highest quality playing experience and appropriate competition frameworks.
- Developing more opportunities for over 40s to play hockey.
- Delivering a quality programme of competitions that meet the needs of players and clubs.

Young people: The number playing hockey in schools and clubs will be increased by:

- Developing more relationships between clubs and primary and secondary schools.
- Working with clubs to increase the number of junior hockey sessions being provided.
- Delivering a quality programme of competitions that meet the needs of players, schools and clubs.
- Developing an ability-based pathway for children aged 5-12 for adoption in clubs, schools and youth organisations.

Informal hockey: The numbers of people playing informal hockey will be increased by:

- Setting up opportunities to play Quicksticks and Hockey Heroes in community sites.
- Increasing the opportunities to play Rush Hockey at schools, colleges, universities, clubs and community sites.
- Increasing the opportunity for women to take part in Back to Hockey sessions at clubs and community sites.

8.2.2 Hockey facilities strategy

England Hockey's 'Facilities Strategy' (2016) contains the following key elements:

Vision: For every hockey club in England to have appropriate and sustainable facilities that provide excellent experiences for players.

Mission: 'More, Better, Happier Players with access to appropriate and sustainable facilities'. The 3 main objectives of the facilities strategy are:

- **Protect - To conserve the existing hockey provision:** There are currently over 800 pitches that are used by hockey clubs (club, school, universities.) The current provision must be retained where appropriate, to ensure that hockey is maintained across the country.
- **Improve - To improve the existing facilities stock (physically and administratively):** The current facilities stock is ageing and there needs to be strategic investment into refurbishing the pitches and ancillary facilities. There needs to more support for clubs to obtain better agreements with facilities providers and education around owning an asset.
- **Develop - To strategically build new hockey facilities where there is an identified need and ability to deliver and maintain:** The research has identified key areas across the country where there is a lack of suitable Hockey provision and there is a need for additional pitches. There is an identified demand for multi pitches in the right places to consolidate hockey and allow clubs to have all of their provision catered for at one site.

England Hockey has identified key areas across the country where there is a lack of suitable hockey provision and there is a need for additional pitches, suitable for hockey. There is an identified demand for multi pitches in the right places to consolidate hockey and allow clubs to have all of their provision catered for at one site.

8.2.3 Neighbouring local authorities

Playing pitch strategies in neighbouring districts identify cross-boundary issues:

Rugby

The 'Rugby Playing Pitch Strategy' (2013) identifies that Rugby is a major centre for hockey and it is likely that the very large Rugby and East Warwickshire HC will be drawing members from the West sub-area of Harborough district.

Blaby

The 'Blaby Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment' (2020) identifies that 'there is no identified demand for formal community hockey in the district'.

Oadby and Wigston:

The 'Oadby and Wigston Playing Pitch Strategy' (2018) identifies that there is limited hockey played in the borough.

Leicester

The 'Leicester City Council Playing Pitch Strategy' (2017) identifies that 'men's women's and junior numbers have increased but we have also seen a drop in the number of registered mixed teams'.

Charnwood

The 'Charnwood Playing Pitch Strategy' (2018) identifies that there is sufficient hockey pitch capacity to meet all current and future needs to 2036.

Melton

Melton Borough Council is working on an updated Playing Pitch Strategy for the borough in 2022. The 'Melton Playing Pitch Strategy' (2014) identifies that 'there is sufficient supply of pitches to meet all future needs'.

Rutland

The 'Rutland Playing Pitch Strategy' (2024) identifies that 'there is no demand for community hockey in Rutland'.

Corby (now part of North Northamptonshire)

The 'Corby Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan' (2017) identifies a 'sufficient supply of full size hockey suitable AGPs for current and future demand'.

Kettering (now part of North Northamptonshire)

The 'Kettering Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy Needs Assessment Report' (2020) identifies that 'there is enough hockey suitable AGPs to accommodate both current and future demand in Kettering. However, the poor quality of Kettering Pitch and Track AGP creates a future shortfall'.

Daventry (now part of West Northamptonshire)

The 'Daventry Playing Pitch Strategy' (2018) identifies that 'there are sufficient pitches to meet the current demand, but only a small number have long term security of use' and that 'almost all of the pitches will require re-carpeting within 5 years'.

8.2.4 Findings of the 2022 Harborough PPS

The key findings of the 'Harborough Playing Pitch Strategy' (2022) in relation to hockey are below:

- **Local clubs:** There are four clubs serving Harborough district, including three that draw the majority of their members from neighbouring areas. Despite the recent

demise of Lutterworth HC, the number of teams at Clubs still playing in the district has increased since 2018 because Leicester HC, who formerly used the pitches at Leicester Grammar School in Great Glen have moved to a new pitch within Leicester.

- **Displaced demand:** There is significant displaced demand for Hockey in Harborough district, with demand from nine teams imported from neighbouring areas and demand from two teams exported to pitches in adjacent local authorities.
- **Pitch supply:** There is limited spare capacity of hockey pitches in the Saturday peak-period, although some spare capacity at other times despite midweek evening football usage. Planning consent restrictions on hours of use of floodlights at Robert Smyth Academy limits capacity, as does the difficulties of getting community access to the Welland Park pitch on Sundays due to staffing issues.
- **Clubhouse provision:** Market Harborough HC is keen to establish a clubhouse base with changing and catering facilities at Robert Smyth Academy and has had preliminary dialogue with the Academy in this regard.

8.2.5 Implications of the strategic context

The implications of the strategic context are as follows:

- **The 2022 PPS:** The 2022 Harborough PPS concluded that ‘there is limited spare capacity of hockey pitches in the Saturday peak-period, although some spare capacity at other times despite midweek evening football usage’.
- **Neighbouring areas:** Of the neighbouring areas, only Daventry has identified a deficiency in hockey pitch provision.

8.3 Hockey demand

8.3.1 Expressed demand

The following clubs affiliate to England Hockey. Clubs with memberships that are drawn primarily from outside the district are shown in italics:

Club	Home Grounds	Men's teams	Women's teams	Mixed teams	Boy's teams	Girl's teams
<i>Leicester HC</i>	Leicester Grammar School	4	3	0	2	2
Market Harborough HC	Robert Smyth Academy	5	2	1	2	0
<i>Welford Mixed HC</i>	Lutterworth College <i>Naseby Playing Field</i>	0	0	2	0	0
TOTALS	-	9	5	3	4	2

8.3.2 Sub-area analysis

Teams are distributed by sub-area as follows:

Sub-area	Men's teams	Women's teams	Mixed teams	Boy's teams	Girl's teams
West	0	0	2	0	0
Middle	5	2	1	2	0
East	4	3	0	2	2
HARBOROUGH	9	5	3	4	2

8.3.3 Sub-area analysis

Team numbers in 2022, as recorded in the 'Harborough Playing Pitch Strategy' (2022) compare with the current numbers playing in the district are as follows:

Season	Men's teams	Women's teams	Boy's teams	Girl's teams
2021/22	15	9	8	8
2023/24	9	5	3	4
Change	-6	-4	-5	-4

8.3.4 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to play by teams from within the study area which takes place outside of the area, or vice versa. There is significant displaced demand for Hockey in Harborough district, with demand from 13 teams imported from neighbouring areas.

8.3.5 Unmet demand

Unmet demand takes a number of forms:

- Teams may have access to a pitch for matches but nowhere to train or vice versa.
- Some pitches may be unavailable to the community.
- The poor quality and consequent limited capacity of pitches in the area and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement.

Consultation with local clubs indicated that there is some unmet demand at present. In particular, Market Harborough HC would like to have more access to the pitch at Robert Smyth Academy.

8.3.6 Latent demand

Whereas unmet demand is known to currently exist latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better provision. There is no evidence of latent demand for hockey in Harborough district.

8.4 Hockey pitch supply in Harborough District

8.4.1 Quantity

This section summarises the detail of the supply of artificial turf pitches suitable for hockey (sand-dressed and sand-filled) in Harborough district.

- Water-based pitches are the preferred surface for elite-level hockey. The sports turf uses a denser pile than other surface types which, combined with the water layer, provides the truest ball roll of any artificial turf system.
- Sand-dressed artificial turf is a higher specification surface designed specifically for fast-paced hockey.
- With sand-filled pitches, the playing surface is only partially filled (usually about two-thirds of the pile height) so the game is played on the sports carpet, not the sand infill.
- Both types of sand-based pitches can also be used for football, but the rubber crumb-filled, long-pile surface of '3G' football turf pitches and/or World Rugby Regulation 22-compliant pitches are not suitable of hockey use. The peak demand period for hockey is Saturday for match play and midweek 6.00pm to 10.00pm for training.
- **Full-sized pitches with community use and used:**

Site	Address	Size	Surface	Floodlit	Built	Resurfaced
Leicester Grammar School	London Road, Great Glen LE8 9FL	110m x 65m 110m x 65m	Water-based Sand-dressed	Yes Yes	2008 2008	2021 2021
Lutterworth College	Bitteswell Road, Lutterworth LE17 4EW	97m x 61m	Sand-filled	Yes	2001	2020
Robert Smyth Academy	Burnmill Road, Market Harborough LE16 7JG	97m x 61m	GEN2 multi-sports	Yes	2021	2023

- **Pitches with community access but not used for hockey:** There is one pitch with community access that is not currently used for hockey by external hirers.

Site	Address	Size	Surface	Floodlit	Built	Resurfaced
Welland Park Academy	Welland Park Road, Market Harborough LE16 9DR	102m x 63m	Sand-filled	Yes	2008	2023

- **Provision by sub-area:** Pitches with community use and used by sub-area are as follows:

Sub-area	Population	No. Pitches	Pitches per capita
West	28,963	1	1: 28,963
Middle	35,494	1	1: 35,494
East	28,197	2	1: 14,099
HARBOROUGH	95,537	4	1: 23,884

8.4.2 Use of hockey pitches for football

The Welland Park Academy and Lutterworth College pitches are used extensively for football training on midweek evenings, which makes them unavailable to cater for hockey.

Site	Hockey use	Hockey use (%)	Football use	Football use (%)	Unused	Unused (%)
Leicester Grammar School	14 hours	26.9%	0 hours	0.0%	38 hours	73.1%
Lutterworth College	4 hours	12.5%	20 hours	62.5%	8 hours	25.0%
Robert Smyth Academy	9 hours	32.1%	12 hours	42.9%	7 hours	25.0%
Welland Park Academy	0 hours	0.0%	14 hours	50.0%	14 hours	50.0%

The split between midweek and weekend hockey use at each pitch is as follows:

Site	Midweek used hours	% capacity	Saturday used hours	% capacity	Sunday used hours	% capacity
Leicester Grammar School	6.0	15.0%	6.0	100.0%	2.0	50.0%
Lutterworth College	2.0	10.0%	2.0	33.3%	0.0	0.0%
Robert Smyth Academy	4.5	75.0%	4.5	75.0%	2.0*	100%
Welland Park Academy	0.0	0.0%	0.0**	0.0%	0.0**	0.0%
TOTALS	12.5	15.6%	12.5	52.0%	4.0	33.3%

* Limited Sunday usage as a condition of planning consent.

** No weekend community usage for any sports.

8.4.3 Quality

The qualitative analysis of pitches and related facilities in Harborough district involved a visit to all hockey pitches, to undertake the sport-specific non-technical visual inspections produced by England Hockey for Sport England's 'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance' (2013). The assessment generates an overall 'score' for each pitch by evaluating the condition of the playing surface, fencing, floodlighting, disability access and changing provision. The scores are as follows:

Site	Pitch	Changing
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Leicester Grammar School	Good Good	Good
Lutterworth College	Good	Standard
Robert Smyth Academy	Good	None

8.4.4 Pitch maintenance

All hockey pitch maintenance in the district is carried out by the pitch owners, although there is no record of the extent to which this complies in each case with best practice.

8.4.5 Ownership, management and security of access

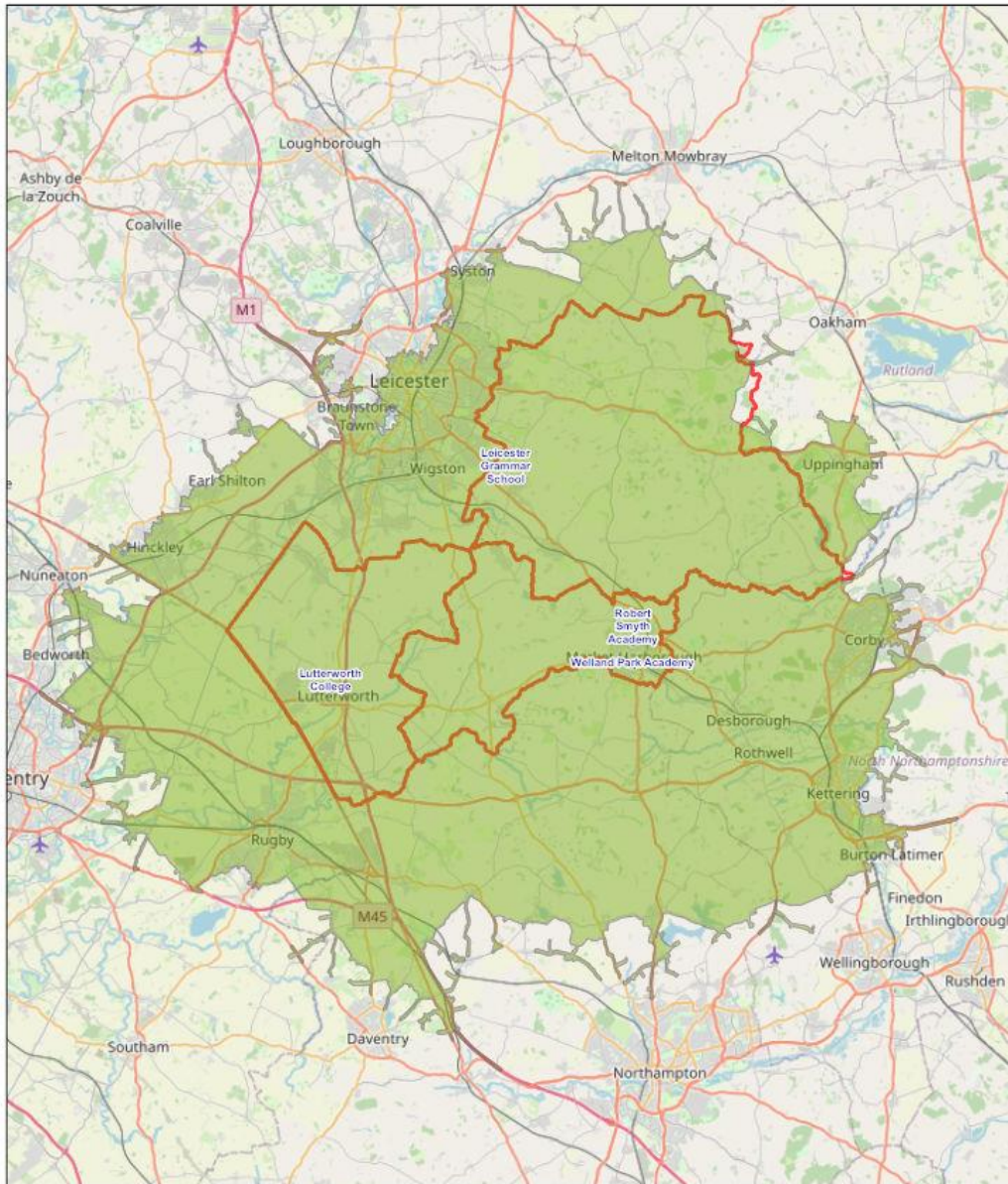
The ownership, management and security of community access of hockey pitch sites is detailed below. Security of access refers to the extent to which community use is protected.

Site	Ownership	Management	Security
Leicester Grammar School	Leicester Grammar School	Leicester Grammar School	Unsecured
Lutterworth College	Lutterworth College	Lutterworth College	Unsecured
Robert Smyth Academy	Robert Smyth Academy	Robert Smyth Academy	Secured
Welland Park Academy	Welland Park Academy	Welland Park Academy	Secured

8.4.6 Geographical distribution

The geographical distribution of artificial grass pitches in Harborough has been assessed by identifying catchments to illustrate local level accessibility. This is based on the results of the clubs' survey, which identifies 20-minutes travel time as the typical maximum. Based upon this, the map shows that the entire local population is within the catchment of at least one pitch.

HARBOROUGH - Artificial Grass Pitches for Hockey 20 Mins Drive



2/14/2022

- ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCHES FOR HOCKEY
- 20.0 Minutes
- ▭ West Sub Area, Middle Sub Area, East Sub Area
- ▭ Harborough District Boundary

1:657,790
0 2.75 5.5 11 mi
0 4.5 9 18 km

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8.5 The views of stakeholders on pitch supply and demand

8.5.1 England Hockey

Consultation with England Hockey raised the following issues:

- Three hockey clubs play in Harborough district. Leicester HC draws its membership from outside of Harborough but is based at the Leicester Grammar School pitches at Great Glen.
- Welford HC draws its membership from outside of Harborough district but plays its matches in Lutterworth.
- Market Harborough HC is based at the pitch at Robert Smyth Academy. There is extensive midweek evening football use which reduces the available time for Hockey. The club has seen steady participation numbers since 2022. The club uses Robert Smyth Academy exclusively but is held back from using it more by the planning restrictions preventing use in the evenings beyond 9pm. Due to these restrictions it is only available on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, Saturdays until 5:30pm and only until 1pm on Sunday. England Hockey would like to see the usage hours extended, particularly on Sundays.
- There are concerns about Robert Smyth Academy are not looking after their pitch (as per the SLA agreement), it has not been properly brushed for at least a year and moss is now growing on the pitch. England Hockey would like clarification on the pitch maintenance regime.
- Market Harborough HC would like to use the Welland Park Academy pitch, but it is not available when it is most needed, on Sundays. Football use dominates on midweek evenings and Saturdays. England Hockey would like to see the facility available on Sundays for hockey use.

8.5.2 Market Harborough Hockey Club

The key comments from the survey in 2022 were as follows:

- 'Membership is increasing and also shifting from a historic high number of occasional players to more players that play 90%+ of games each week. The new facility at Robert Smyth Academy has enabled us to meet existing demand, but in the short term has meant a dip in booking at Welland Park. The next steps are to improve opening hours at Robert Smyth and support the resurfacing of a hockey approved surface at Welland Park'.
- 'For teams, we will continue to increase primarily youngsters, with the hope (and historically demonstrated trend) that they continue into adult sides, allowing those to grow. We also hope to continue working with Welland Park for the pitch to be available more often on Sundays (as we have had to cancel a number of fixtures due to staff being unable to open).
- 'Sundays in particular are a challenge and we desperately need two things. Firstly, for planning rules to be relaxed at Robert Smyth Academy to enable us to use it on Sundays and also an extra hour in the evening mid-week would make a massive difference (we could run two sessions a night, not one - plus it would open the pitch up to other non-hockey users). Secondly, for Welland Park to be willing to open on a Sunday'.

- ‘We currently have no clubhouse, which means asking young players (including under 10s) to go to a local pub after matches. This has two key implications. Firstly, it’s simply not appropriate, but we have no alternate (most of our leagues specify we need to offer refreshments post-match/tournament). Secondly, we have no ability to self-fund (e.g. selling coffees to parents/spectators). As a result, with facilities and other costs rising, so does the cost of participation. We have agreed in principle with Robert Smyth that we could have a permanent base and are keen for this to be included in the strategy update’.
- ‘Space is needed outside of the Robert Smyth Academy pitch for spectators. Currently they stand on grass/mud, then trample this on the pitch’.

8.6 The implications for hockey in Harborough District

Analysis of local supply and demand for hockey pitches in Harborough district indicates the following:

- **Local clubs:** There are three clubs serving Harborough district, including two that draw the majority of their members from neighbouring areas. The number of teams at Clubs still playing in the district has decreased since 2022 because Leicester HC, who formerly used the pitches at Leicester Grammar School in Great Glen have moved to a new pitch within Leicester.
- **Displaced demand:** There is significant displaced demand for Hockey in Harborough district, with demand from 13 teams imported from neighbouring areas.
- **Pitch supply:** There is limited spare capacity of hockey pitches in the Saturday peak-period, although some spare capacity at other times despite midweek evening football usage. Planning consent restrictions on hours of use of floodlights at Robert Smyth Academy limits capacity, as does the difficulties of getting community access to the Welland Park pitch on Sundays due to staffing issues.
- **Clubhouse provision:** Market Harborough HC is keen to establish a clubhouse base with changing and catering facilities at Robert Smyth Academy and has had preliminary dialogue with the Academy in this regard.

8.7 Developments since the 2022 PPS

The key developments since the assessment of hockey needs in the 2022 PPS are as follows:

- Based on team numbers at the clubs still based in Harborough district, expressed demand has fallen since 2021/22, caused in part by Leicester City HC ceasing to use the pitches at Leicester Grammar School.
- Leicester City HC’s now base all their training and matches at the St. Margaret’s Sports Centre pitch within the City of Leicester. This has freed up additional

capacity at the Leicester Grammar School pitches, although the site is not geographically accessible to clubs in other parts of Harborough district and there is substantial education use of the pitches.

- The Robert Smyth Academy pitch has been resurfaced as a GEN2 multi-sport surface suitable for football and hockey.
- There is currently no hockey use of the pitch at Welland Park Academy.

8.8 Assessment of current needs

To assess whether the current supply of pitches is adequate to meet existing demand an understanding of the situation at all sites available to the community needs to be developed. This is achieved by providing a brief overview for each site, which comprises:

- A comparison between the carrying capacity of a site and how much demand currently takes place there. The carrying capacity of a site is defined as the amount of play it can regularly accommodate without adversely affecting its quality and use. Demand is defined in terms of the number of 'match equivalent' sessions at each site.
- An indication of the extent to which pitches are being used during their peak periods.

The site overviews identify the extent to which pitches are:

- ***Being overplayed:*** Where use exceeds the carrying capacity.
- ***Being played to the level the site can sustain:*** Where use matches the carrying capacity.
- ***Potentially able to accommodate some additional play:*** Where use falls below the carrying capacity.

As per England Hockey guidance, pitch capacity is expressed as weekly peak time hours of availability, demand as actual hours of use and the resultant balance is expressed as hours of availability at peak times. The actual used capacity of artificial turf pitches is based upon their hours of use in the peak period supplied by the pitch operators. Clubs drawing the majority of their membership from outside the district are shown in italics:

Site	Users	Saturday capacity	Saturday demand	Saturday balance	Sunday capacity	Sunday demand	Sunday balance
Leicester Grammar School pitch 1	Leicester HC	6.0	2.0	+4.0	3.0	3.0	Balanced
Leicester Grammar School pitch 2	Leicester HC	6.0	4.0	+2.0	3.0	0.0	+3.0
Lutterworth College	Welford HC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	3.0	0.0	+3.0
Robert Smyth Academy	Market Harborough HC	6.0	4.5	+1.5	3.0	0.0	Balanced
Welland Park Academy	Market Harborough HC	6.0	0.0	+6.0	0.0	3.0	-3.0
TOTALS	-	26.0	12.5	+13.5	12.0	6.0	+6.0

The assessment shows that:

- There is some limited spare capacity at all sites, although the Leicester Grammar School pitches are too distant from the south of the district to accommodate additional demand from other clubs.
- In addition to hickey usage, there is 37 hours of pitch use per week by football teams.

8.9 Assessment of future needs

8.9.1 Population growth

The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 104,839 by 2031, an increase of 6,064 (or 6.1%). Comparison of the projections for 2024 and 2031 shows that the percentage of people aged under 50 falls from 54.2% to 53.2%, with proportionate population increases amongst the over 50s.

8.9.2 Potential changes in demand

Market Harborough HC has identified a need for an additional 7 hours of pitch time per week to meet unmet needs.

8.9.3 Site-specific pressures

There is 37 hours of pitch use per week by football teams which displaces some hockey demand.

8.9.4 Potential changes in supply

There are no known changes in pitch supply.

8.9.5 Existing spare capacity

There is a limited effective spare capacity during the Saturday peak period.

8.9.6 Future hockey pitch needs

Future hockey pitch needs are modelled below using 'Team Generation Rates', which identify how many people in a specified age group in the district are required to generate one team. These are then applied to projected changes in population to identify the likely number of future teams.

Team type	Age range	Current population	Current teams	TGR	Population 2031	Teams 2031	Extra teams
Adult male hockey	18-45	14,248	5	1: 2,850	14,996	5	0
Adult female hockey	18-45	14,533	2	1: 7,267	15,278	2	0
Boys junior hockey	8-17	5,996	1	1: 5,996	6,195	1	0
Girls junior hockey	8-17	5,686	0	-	6,290	0	0
Mixed junior hockey	8-17	11,682	2	1: 5,841	12,485	2	0

Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator

A supplementary way of modelling future playing pitch needs is Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator. The model applies Team Generation Rates to the projected population increases to estimate the additional pitch needs arising and in addition generates capital and revenue cost estimates for providing the extra pitches. The model needs to be applied alongside an assessment of the various options for meeting unmet demand but provides helpful context for the site-specific supply-demand assessment and the TGR calculations above. The results of applying the Calculator for hockey needs arising from major planned developments in Harborough are set out below.

Development	Number of dwellings	Population	Number of pitches	Changing rooms	Capital costs (£)	Annual costs (£)
East of Lutterworth Strategic Development Area	1,260	2,772	0.04	0.08	£48,678	£1,066
Overstone Park, Market Harborough	600	1,320	0.02	0.04	£23,179	£508
East of Blackberry Grange, Market Harborough	350	770	0.01	0.02	£13,521	£296
Arnesby Road, Fleckney	130	286	0.00	0.00	£5,021	£110
Burnmill Farm, Market Harborough	128	282	0.00	0.00	£4,952	£108

Scraptoft North Strategic Development Area	1,200	2,640	0.04	0.08	£46,359	£1,015
TOTALS	3,668	8,070	0.11	0.22	£141,440	£3,103

8.10 Key findings and issues

8.10.1 What are the main characteristics of current supply and demand?

- **Local clubs:** There are three clubs serving Harborough district, including two that draw the majority of their members from neighbouring areas. The number of teams at Clubs still playing in the district has decreased since 2022 because Leicester HC, who formerly used the pitches at Leicester Grammar School in Great Glen have moved to a new pitch within Leicester.
- **Displaced demand:** There is significant displaced demand for Hockey in Harborough district, with demand from 13 teams imported from neighbouring areas.
- **Pitch supply:** There is limited spare capacity of hockey pitches in the Saturday peak-period, although some spare capacity at other times despite midweek evening football usage. Planning consent restrictions on hours of use of floodlights at Robert Smyth Academy limits capacity, as does the difficulties of getting community access to the Welland Park pitch on Sundays due to staffing issues.
- **Clubhouse provision:** Market Harborough HC is keen to establish a clubhouse base with changing and catering facilities at Robert Smyth Academy and has had preliminary dialogue with the Academy in this regard.

8.10.2 Is there enough accessible and secured community use to meet current demand? **YES**

There is some limited spare capacity at two sites, although the Leicester Grammar School pitches are too distant from the south of the district to accommodate additional demand from clubs from there. Obtaining hockey usage of the Welland Park Academy pitch on Sundays and extending the hours of use of the Robert Smyth Academy pitch would provide additional capacity.

8.10.3 Is the accessible provision of suitable quality and properly maintained? **YES**

Whilst all pitches are currently rated as 'good' quality, there are some maintenance issues with the Robert Smyth Academy pitch that should continue to be addressed.

8.10.4 What are the main characteristics of future supply and demand?

- **Population growth:** The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 104,839 by 2031, an increase of 6,064 (or 6.1%). Comparison of the projections for 2024 and 2031 shows that the percentage of people aged

under 50 falls from 54.2% to 53.2%, with proportionate population increases amongst the over 50s.

- **Changes in demand:** Market Harborough HC has identified a need for an additional 7 hours of pitch time per week to meet unmet needs.
- **Changes in supply:** There are no known potential changes in supply.
- **Existing spare capacity:** There is a no effective spare capacity during the Saturday peak period.
- **Future needs:** There is no projected increase in team numbers by 2031 which will have no effect on demand for pitches.

8.10.5 Is there enough accessible and secured provision to meet future demand? **NO**

There is insufficient spare capacity at existing pitches to accommodate future demand community and community access is secured at only three sites, so continued access by hockey clubs cannot be assumed. Additional capacity could be created in three ways:

- **Extension of floodlighting:** Extending the operational period of the floodlights at Robert Smyth Academy would expand midweek training capacity and Sunday usage and the permissibility of this in planning terms should be explored.
- **Sunday usage at Welland Park Academy:** Opening the pitch at Welland Park Academy on Sundays would meet additional needs from Market Harborough HC,.
- **Diversion of football demand:** Providing additional '3G' football turf pitch capacity in the district would divert football demand away from hockey pitches in the critical midweek training period and provide sufficient extra capacity for extra hockey development initiatives to be developed.

8.11 Scenario testing

8.11.1 Introduction

Based upon the key findings and issues identified above, some scenarios examining the effect of securing additional pitch capacity have been rehearsed to identify the optimum approach to addressing needs.

8.11.2 Scenario 1: Extending opening at Robert Smyth Academy

- **Rationale:** As a condition of planning consent, the floodlights at the Robert Smyth Academy pitch have to be switched off by 9.00pm, reducing the peak-time capacity of the pitch. If this could be extended during the winter months to 10.00pm it would create an additional midweek 5.0 midweek match equivalent sessions.

- **Advantages:** Extending the peak time capacity at the Robert Smyth Academy pitch would provide an extra 5.0 match equivalent sessions for Market Harborough HC to extend its training sessions.
- **Disadvantages:** There are no obvious disadvantages of this scenario.
- **Conclusions:** There is merit in exploring the possibility to extend the floodlighting period at the pitch during the winter months, to meet demand from Market Harborough HC.

8.11.3 Scenario 2: Sunday opening at Welland Park Academy

- **Rationale:** Extending opening hours to include Sunday mornings would enable Market Harborough HC to hold junior matches there.
- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
 - The pitch already exists and as such this represents a relatively low cost solution to maintaining pitch capacity.
 - Sunday opening would enable additional junior fixtures to be accommodated.
- **Disadvantages:** There are no obvious disadvantages of this scenario.
- **Conclusions:** It is essential that the capacity provided by the pitch is optimised by opening on Sundays.

8.11.4 Scenario 3: Displacing football use to '3G' football turf pitches

- **Rationale:** 37 hours per week of football training usage takes place on artificial grass pitches for hockey. If this use could be displaced to newly-provided specialist '3G' football turf pitches, it would free up significant additional capacity for hockey.
- **Advantages:** The advantage of this scenario is that programming football use to specialist '3G' playing surfaces would create another 37 hours per week of pitch capacity for hockey.
- **Disadvantages:** The disadvantages of this scenario are that:
 - All football use is at midweek evenings, not in the period of peak demand for hockey at the weekends. This means that the capacity in the peak periods would not be increased.
 - Although one additional '3G' football turf pitch was recently provided in the district, this is in Lutterworth rather than Market Harborough where the main hockey demand is concentrated. It is therefore likely that much

football demand for floodlit all-weather pitches will continue to be met by artificial grass pitches for hockey in the immediate future.

- **Conclusions:** Whilst displacing football use of artificial grass pitches for hockey would have benefits for the players of both sports, it would have no effect on capacity in the peak periods at weekends and could under no circumstances be achieved by converting any of the existing hockey pitches to a '3G' surface.

8.12 Policy recommendations

8.12.1 Introduction

The recommendations in relation to hockey are made in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 103, which stipulates that existing open space including playing pitches, should not be built upon unless:

- An assessment has taken place which has clearly shown the open space to be surplus to requirements, or;
- The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality, in a suitable location, or;
- The development is for alternative sport and recreation provision, the needs for which clearly outweighs the loss.

The following recommendations are arranged under the main headings of 'protect', 'enhance' and 'provide'.

8.12.2 Protect

Recommendation 1 - Safeguarding existing provision: The Harborough PPS comprises a robust and evidence-based assessment of current and future needs for hockey in the district. The PPS has identified a need to increase local hockey pitch capacity and to this extent, it will be important for all current community used hockey pitch sites to be retained and protected. It is therefore recommended that planning policies continue to support the retention of all sites, based upon the evidence in the PPS. If proposals to redevelop hockey pitches do come forward, this will only be permissible if they are replaced and meet policy exception E4 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. This states that 'the playing field or playing fields which would be lost as a result of the proposed development must be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development'.

Recommendation 2 - Security of tenure: The Lutterworth College pitch does not have secured community use and it is therefore recommended as a priority that external clubs' use is secured through a formal Community Use Agreement.

Recommendation 3 - Managing the football-hockey demand interface: Football clubs in the district currently use 37 hours per week of midweek artificial grass pitch time for training purposes, displacing some hockey demand. Managing this demand via co-operative working between the FA and England Hockey is key to ensuring that all existing hockey pitches are retained and that additional '3G' pitches provision is made to redeploy demand from football for floodlit training/match facilities. England Hockey will also support schools with hockey pitches with business modelling for hockey-only pitch operation.

8.12.3 Enhance

Recommendation 4 - Maintaining existing pitch capacity: Whilst all pitches are currently rated as 'good' quality, there are some maintenance issues with the Ribert Smyth Academy pitch that should continue to be addressed.

8.12.4 Provide

Recommendation 5 - Developer contributions and external funding: All the additional demand for hockey arising from housing development in Harborough to 2031, should be accommodated through the recommendations outlined above. It is recommended that an appropriate level of financial contributions be sought under S106 arrangements, and/or through applications for external funding to cover the capital and revenue implications of the new provision to expand capacity.

8.13 Action Plan

8.13.1 Introduction

In the context of the high-level recommendations above, the tables below set out the hockey action plan to guide the implementation of the strategy. The abbreviation stands for HDC - Harborough District Council and MHHC - Market Harborough Hockey Club. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England's 'Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2023' (2023).

8.13.2 Key strategic actions

Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Securing developer contributions	Ensure that policy provision is made to secure developer contributions towards additional hockey pitch capacity and ancillary facilities.	HDC	Developers	Determined by Sport England's New Development Calculator	High
Use of hockey pitches for football training.	Investigate the potential for additional '3G' football turf pitch provision.	HDC	FA/EH	-	High
Co-operation with the FA and RFU	Dialogue between the respective governing bodies on coordinating shared artificial grass pitch needs	England Hockey	FA RFU	-	High

8.13.3 Site specific actions

Site	Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Leicester Grammar School	No current issues.	-	-	-	-	-
Lutterworth College	No secured community use.	Negotiate Community Use Agreement	Lutterworth College	Welford HC	-	Medium
Robert Smyth Academy	No use after 9.00pm on midweek evenings	Re-negotiate planning conditions to allow use until 10.00pm	Robert Smyth Academy	HDC MHHC	-	High
Welland Park Academy	No access on Sundays.	Investigate the potential for Sunday opening	Welland Park Academy	HDC MHHC	-	High

9 TENNIS COURT NEEDS

9.1 Organisational context

- **Lawn Tennis Association:** The Lawn Tennis Association is the governing body of the sport and supports the development of the game in Harborough.
- **Affiliated Clubs:** There are 10 LTA-affiliated tennis clubs and three unaffiliated clubs in Harborough.

9.2 Strategic context

9.2.1 National tennis strategy

The LTA's Vision is 'tennis is for everyone. All ages, all backgrounds, all levels of fitness, all abilities. Anyone can pick up a racket, anyone can be part of the tennis family'. Its Strategic Plan 2024 - 2026 '*Tennis for Britain*' (2024) contains the following priorities:

- Embed and grow LTA Youth across all venues and in the hearts and minds of children, parents, and the tennis workforce.
- Engage with and promote different formats of the sport and ways to play and enable a flexible approach to equipment to support positive experiences for adult players.
- Deliver resilient digital services, transformational digital products, and increase nationwide adoption of LTA Play Tennis.
- Implement and support comprehensive parks tennis operating models, particularly through Free Parks Tennis, Local Tennis Leagues and programme delivery in parks.
- Develop and enhance our support and engagement with Local Authorities, Active Partnerships, our Member Organisations, venues and operators to open up tennis.

9.2.2 Neighbouring local authorities

Outdoor sports facilities strategies in neighbouring districts identify cross-boundary issues:

Rugby

The '*Rugby Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2013) identifies a need for an additional 12 tennis courts by 2026, although some of this need could be met by expanding community access to existing courts on school sites.

Blaby

The '*Blaby Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment*' (2020) identifies that 'there is sufficient supply of tennis courts at all club sites in the district to cater for current demand'.

Oadby and Wigston

The '*Oadby and Wigston Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2018) identifies that 'the demand for tennis playing facilities is being met with surplus to spare'.

Leicester

The '*Leicester City Council Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2022) identifies that tennis membership has increased by 5% in the city and that the introduction of gate access systems to courts has boosted usage.

Charnwood

The '*Charnwood Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2018) identifies that 'there is in theory sufficient supply of outdoor courts to meet the current demand for tennis generated within the Borough. However, there is a significant under-supply of courts for casual 'pay-and-play' use'.

Melton

Melton Borough Council is working on an updated Playing Pitch Strategy for the borough in 2022. The current '*Melton Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2014) does not include an assessment of tennis needs.

Rutland

The '*Rutland Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2024) identifies that there is sufficient spare capacity at existing tennis courts to meet all current and future needs.

Corby (now part of North Northamptonshire)

The '*Corby Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan*' (2017) identifies that 'Corby Tennis Centre is operating at capacity, but there is spare capacity at all other sites'.

Kettering (now part of North Northamptonshire)

The '*Kettering Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy Needs Assessment Report*' (2020) identifies that existing courts can accommodate all current and future demand'.

Daventry (now part of North Northamptonshire)

The '*Daventry Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2018) does not include an assessment of tennis court needs.

9.2.3 Implications of the strategic context

Tennis is embarking on an ambitious effort to attract new and lapsed participants and its programmes will be supported by strategic initiatives at county and local level to implement its strategy.

9.3 Stakeholder consultation

9.3.1 Lawn Tennis Association

Consultation with the Lawn Tennis Association highlighted the following issues:

- Tennis is healthy in Harborough district with a number of thriving local clubs, although there is limited provision of public courts in parks.
- The LTA's vision for tennis has recently been introduced following a major consultative process. The vision is 'Tennis Opened Up' and the mission is to grow tennis by making it more relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable. Strategic initiatives at county and national level aim to support this.
- The LTA wants to work with local networks, to promote a joined up, transformational improvement to existing facilities, largely through increasing the number of courts that are floodlit and covered but also courts that can be booked online.
- The LTA has grant funding for Gate Access technology for courts in identified sites that have over 1,000 potential users within a 10min drive time. Harborough district currently has no such sites but this may change with any planned housing developments due to take place.
- The LTA has a partnership with the 'Clubspark' online booking system, which provides a simple and flexible online management system, which includes online booking as well as website and membership management modules.
- Most clubs in Harborough are operating at full capacity, despite a steady decline in tennis participation nationally.
- The LTA Quick Access Loan Scheme provides interest-free loans to help venues deliver projects that will grow the number of people playing tennis and Padel. The scheme is a part of the LTA's mission to grow tennis and Padel by making it accessible, welcoming, and enjoyable to all. To attract new players within local communities it's critical that there's access to quality all year-round facilities and therefore the LTA will be prioritising the installation and construction of covered courts and new-build floodlights and Padel.
- The LTA's vision 'Tennis Opened Up' is about making tennis more accessible. It's about breaking barriers to entry and growing the game of tennis. One of the LTA's key strategies is to find new ways to grow participation and Padel is an innovative format of tennis that's fun, flexible, easy to play and extremely sociable.
 - Padel is a form of tennis that's easy to play, fun and extremely sociable. It's played mainly in a doubles format on an enclosed court about a third of the size of a tennis court and can be played in groups of mixed ages and

abilities, as it's not power dominant. The rules are broadly the same as tennis, although you serve underhand and the walls are used as part of the game with the ball allowed to bounce off them.

- One of the fastest growing sports across continental Europe, Padel has gained increasing popularity over recent years, with over six million people currently playing in Spain. There were 150 Padel courts in Great Britain in 2021, with a target of 400 by 2023. There are currently two Padel Tennis courts in Harborough district at Market Harborough Cricket and Squash Club.

9.3.2 Local tennis clubs

A questionnaire survey was circulated in 2021 to all 11 LTA-affiliated clubs in Harborough district. Seven clubs responded. Collectively, in 2024 the LTA-affiliated clubs in the district have 1,653 members, an increase of 350 members (or 26.9%) since 2021, much of it attributable to a new Padel Club at Market Harborough Squash Club.

9.3.3 Great Glen Tennis Club

The club commented that ‘we have been unable to develop team status due to no clubhouse - this is also the same with coaching due to lack of facilities’.

9.3.4 Houghton Tennis Club

The club made the following comments:

- ‘We have been unable to find a suitable coaching resource for juniors’.
- ‘We are about to go ahead to put artificial grass surfaces on our 3 courts’.

9.3.5 Husband’s Bosworth Tennis Club

The club commented that ‘Harborough has an ample supply of sporting facilities in most sports especially tennis as most villages have access to at least two sets of facilities close by’.

9.3.6 Kibworth Tennis Club

The club made the following comments:

- ‘Ideally we would like one extra court as we are very busy at peak times particularly when team matches are being played, preventing juniors and adults playing’.
- ‘We would like to start changing our floodlights to LED lighting’.
- ‘It would be very useful for Kibworth School to re-open its facilities to the public’.

9.3.7 Lutterworth Tennis Club

The club made the following comments:

- ‘We have 36 Children currently on a waiting list for places in our coaching programme’.
- ‘We want to build an additional court, practice court and hitting wall as well as keep on top of maintaining our current facilities. We wanted a dome to cover two of our courts but failed in funding attempts’.

- ‘We need funding to get another court and indoor facilities’.

9.3.8 Market Harborough Tennis Club

The club made the following comments:

- ‘We are planning to purchase floodlights for our fourth court’.
- ‘MHLTC do not have any indoor tennis facilities and in past years have used the dome at the local leisure centre for coaching. This is a multiple sport dome, so our coach constantly finds himself in competition to book courts’.
- ‘The dome itself is now old and in drastic need of refurbishment for example ineffective lightning, poor surface, poor temperature control. Ideally this would be replaced and a fair and equitable booking system put in place to ensure fair distribution of dome hours allocation. There are several indoor netball facilities locally but the dome is the only location to support tennis. We are fearful if the dome was reallocated to a school, the school would take ownership and our ability to use it as a tennis facility would be compromised. The current location of the dome at the leisure centre is preferable due to the leisure centre facilities’.

9.4 Tennis Court Demand

9.4.1 Introduction

This section summarises the demand for tennis Harborough district and includes:

- National tennis demand patterns.
- Tennis clubs in Harborough.
- Displaced demand.
- Latent and unmet demand.
- Future demand.

9.4.2 National demand patterns

LTA data on national tennis playing demand patterns is instructive for describing activity patterns in Harborough:

Parks courts: The importance of parks courts is emphasised by the following data:

- Over 1.7 million adults play tennis on a park court each year.

- 44% of people who play tennis each year do so in a park, compared with 20% that do so in a club setting.
- 3.4 million children aged 4 - 15 play tennis each year and more than one-third (35%) played on a park court.
- Key barriers to participating are finding, booking and accessing a court and finding someone to play with.

Parks tennis: The majority of participation in the UK takes place in a park environment

- The park environment is the most common place where new participants will start their tennis journey. For those that don't play, the majority of people who have expressed an interest in playing would see the park environment as their first option for play.
- Participation in parks is often less frequent and generally aligns with the seasonal participation peaks in the summer months. This trend is not helped by the lack of floodlit provision that currently exists in the park environment.
- Park players are generally more interested in recreational play and are less reliant on organised activity.
- Park players are most dissatisfied with the condition of the courts, the number of courts available and the journey from booking a court to the actual play. The LTA in partnership with the government are upgrading 4,500 park courts to enable greater levels of participation within park environments.
- The LTA has successfully implemented technology that improves the customer journey to court. This involves the use of an access gate with key-pad entry which is connected to the Clubspark venue management system. When a booking is made an automated code is generated and sent to the customer, thus allowing access to the court during the allocated booking time. Where implemented, the system has been successful in increasing participation rates, whilst also generating income that helps to improve the financial sustainability of a venue.
- The LTA is looking to significantly increase the number of gate access systems that are installed national as part of the Digital Participation Pathway.
- Padel is still very early in development in parks, however the LTA is keen to see this development and see this as a natural offer alongside multi-sport and tennis provision.

Club tennis: The club environment is a very important sector for participation.

- Whilst the level of participation is higher in parks, the regularity of play generally increases in the club market.

- The club market has a higher focus on organised activity both via coaching and competition.
- There has been an increase in the number of clubs that are looking to implement online booking systems and the gate access technology. This not only offers the ability to increase the amount of court usage at a venue but acts as a key marketing tool locally in the quest to attract more users to a venue initially and create a higher level of exposure locally.
- A clear environment for the further development of padel, working alongside existing tennis provision.

9.4.3 Harborough Tennis Clubs

Tennis clubs in Harborough district, the outdoor courts where they play and their membership trends between 2021 and 2024 are as follows. LTA Affiliated clubs are asterisked.

Club	Home courts	No. members 2021	No. members 2024	Change
Foxton Tennis Club*	Foxton Tennis Club	56	36	-20
Gilmorton TC	Gilmorton Recreation Ground	25	-	+1
Great Glen TC*	Great Glen Recreation Ground	122	129	+7
Houghton TC*	Houghton TC	89	94	+5
Husband's Bosworth TC*	Husband's Bosworth TC	30	30	0
Kibworth Tennis Club*	Kibworth Tennis Club	127	127	0
Lutterworth TC*	Lutterworth TC	221	280	+59
Market Harborough TC*	Market Harborough TC	340	319	-21
Market Padel Club	Market Harborough Squash Club	0	340	+340
Medbourne TC*	Medbourne Sports and Social Club	199	181	-18
North Kilworth TC	North Kilworth Sports Association	-	-	-
Thurnby & Bushby TC	Wadkins Recreation Ground	-	-	-13
Tilton & District SC*	Tilton and District Sports Club	57	78	+21
Welland Park TC*	Welland Park	36	38	+2
TOTAL	-	1,303	1,653	+350

9.4.4 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to play by teams from within the study area which takes place outside of the area, or vice versa. Based upon the results of the clubs' survey, there is no evidence of any displaced demand for tennis.

9.4.5 Unmet demand

Unmet demand takes a number of forms:

- Players may have access to a court for matches but nowhere to train or vice versa.
- Some facilities may be unavailable to the community.
- The poor quality and limited capacity of facilities and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement.

There is some evidence of unmet demand for outdoor tennis courts in Harborough district at present, with Lutterworth TC operating a waiting list for junior coaching and Great Glen TC requiring changing facilities to develop further.

9.4.6 Latent demand

Whereas unmet demand is known to currently exist latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better provision. There is no evidence of latent demand for tennis in Harborough district at present.

9.4.7 Future demand

This has been assessed as follows:

- **Participation rates:** Sport England’s ‘Active Lives’ survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for tennis at national level since 2015:

Nov '15	May '16	Nov '16	May '17	Nov '17	May '18	Nov '18	May '19	Nov '19	May '20	Nov '20	May '21	Nov '21	% Change
6.8%	7.0%	6.9%	6.6%	6.2%	6.0%	5.9%	6.0%	6.1%	5.8%	5.1%	6.0%	6.0%	-0.8%

- **LTA national adult tennis participation rates:** The LTA’s most recent participation data for 2024 shows and upward trend in participation rates for adult tennis (people aged 16 and over):
 - The number of adults reporting that they had played tennis during the year increased 43% compared to the previous year, rising from 3.3 million to 4.7 million from January through to December. This is the highest total recorded since 2017 and has continued the growth seen in 2018-19 which was interrupted during the pandemic.
 - In addition, more than two million adults play monthly, and this is the highest level recorded since the LTA started tracking this measure seven years ago.

- This means that the LTA has achieved the targets set out in its five-year 2018-23 strategy for adult annual and monthly participation one year ahead of schedule.
- Finally, children’s weekly participation in tennis has seen positive growth in the past year with over three and a half million children playing tennis with an extra 328,000 children playing tennis in schools.

Frequency of play	Feb-Apr 2018	Feb-Apr 2019	Feb-Apr 2020	Feb-Apr 2021	Feb-Apr 2022	% Change
Past year	7.29%	6.91%	7.77%	5.20%	8.11%	+0.81%
Past month	2.07%	2.23%	2.09%	1.18%	3.24%	+1.17%

- **LTA junior tennis participation rates:** The LTA’s participation data shows and upward trend in participation rates for junior tennis (people aged between 4 and 15):

Apr 2020	Apr 2021	Apr 2022	% Change
9%	11%	15%	+4%

- **Population growth:** The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 104,839 by 2031, an increase of 6,064 (or 6.1%). Comparison of the projections for 2024 and 2031 shows that the percentage of people aged under 50 falls from 54.2% to 53.2%, with proportionate population increases amongst the over 50s.

9.4.8 Key findings on demand

The key findings on demand are as follows:

- There are 13 local clubs serving Harborough district, 10 of whom are affiliated to the LTA.
- Collectively, in 2024 the LTA-affiliated clubs in the district have 1,653 members, an increase of 350 members (or 26.9%) since 2021, much of it attributable to a new Padel Club at Market Harborough Squash Club.
- There is some evidence of unmet demand for outdoor tennis courts with Lutterworth TC operating a waiting list for junior coaching and Great Glen TC requiring changing facilities to develop further.
- Future demand patterns are likely to be similar to current levels, based on participation trends but the higher population projections will create a requirement for 6.1% additional capacity by 2031. This is equivalent to three extra courts.

9.5 Tennis Court Supply

9.5.1 Introduction

This section summarises the detail of outdoor tennis court supply in Harborough district. The courts included are defined as hard courts permanently laid out with regulation markings for tennis.

9.5.2 Tennis courts with community use and used

Site	Address	Floodlit courts	Non-floodlit courts	Sub-area
Coplow Centre	Uppingham Road, Billesdon LE7 9FL	1 Artificial Grass	-	East
Foxton Tennis Club	Middle Street, Foxton LE16 7RE	-	2 Tarmac	Middle
Gilmorton TC	Lutterworth Road Gilmorton LE17 5PW	-	2 Tarmac	West
Great Glen Recreation Ground	Bridgewater Drive, Great Glen LE8 9FA	3 Tarmac	-	East
Hallaton Recreation Ground	East Norton Road, Hallaton LE16 8UP	-	2 Tarmac	East
Houghton Tennis Club	Weir Lane, Houghton-on-the-Hill LE7 9GS	3 Tarmac	-	East
Hungarton Sports Club	Barley Leas, Hungarton LE7 9JF	-	1 Tarmac	East
Husband's Bosworth TC	Kilworth Road, Husband's Bosworth LE17 6JW	1 Tarmac	1 Tarmac	Middle
Kibworth Tennis Club	Smeeton Road, Kibworth Beauchamp LE8 0LF	5 Tarmac	-	East

Site	Address	Floodlit courts	Non-floodlit courts	Sub-area
Lutterworth Tennis Club	Hall Lane, Lutterworth LE17 4LN	5 Tarmac	-	West
Market Harborough TC	Station Road, Great Bowden LE16 7HL	3 Tarmac	1 Tarmac	Middle
Medbourne TC	Hallaton Road, Medbourne LE16 8DR	3 Tarmac	-	East
North Kilworth Sports Association	South Kilworth Road, North Kilworth LE17 6HF	2 Artificial Grass	-	Middle
Robert Smyth Academy	Burnmill Road, Market Harborough LE16 7JG	4 Tarmac		Middle
Tilton Sports Club	Oakham Road, Tilton-on-the-Hill LE7 9DB	1 Tarmac	-	East
Wadkins Recreation Ground	Wadkins Way, Bushby LE7 9NA	-	2 Tarmac	East
Welland Park	Welland Park Road, Market Harborough LE16 9DN	3 Tarmac	2 Tarmac	Middle
TOTALS	-	34	13	-

9.5.3 Tennis courts by sub-area

Courts with community use and used by sub-area are as follows. It shows that levels of provision are poorest in the West sub-area:

Sub-area	Population	No. Courts	Courts per capita
West	28,963	7	1: 4,138
Middle	35,494	19	1: 1,868
East	28,197	21	1: 1,343
HARBOROUGH	95,537	47	1: 2,033

9.5.4 Tennis courts with no community use

The following courts are not available for community use:

Site	Address	Courts
Kibworth Mead Academy	Smeeton Road, Kibworth Beauchamp LE8 0LG	2 Tarmac
Lutterworth High School	Woodway Road, Lutterworth LE17 4QH	5 Tarmac
Thomas Estley Community College	Station Road, Broughton Astley LE9 6PT	4 Tarmac
TOTALS	-	11 courts

9.5.5 Padel courts

The following courts are available for community use:

Site	Address	Courts
Market Harborough Padel Club	Fairfield Road, Market Harborough LE16 9QH	2
TOTALS	-	2

9.6 Quality

9.6.1 The criteria assessed for tennis courts

The quality of tennis courts was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were assessed were as follows:

- **The court:** Court surface, line markings and fitness for purpose.
- **Fencing:** Condition and appearance.
- **Disability access:** Provision for disabled access to the courts.
- **Changing:** The quality and capacity of changing and ancillary facilities.
- **Lighting:** The quality, illumination levels and evenness of floodlights.

9.6.2 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to 'very good', 4 to 'good', 3 to 'average', 2 to 'poor' and 1 to 'very poor'.

9.6.3 Tennis court assessment

The ratings for tennis courts in Harborough district are shown in the table below.

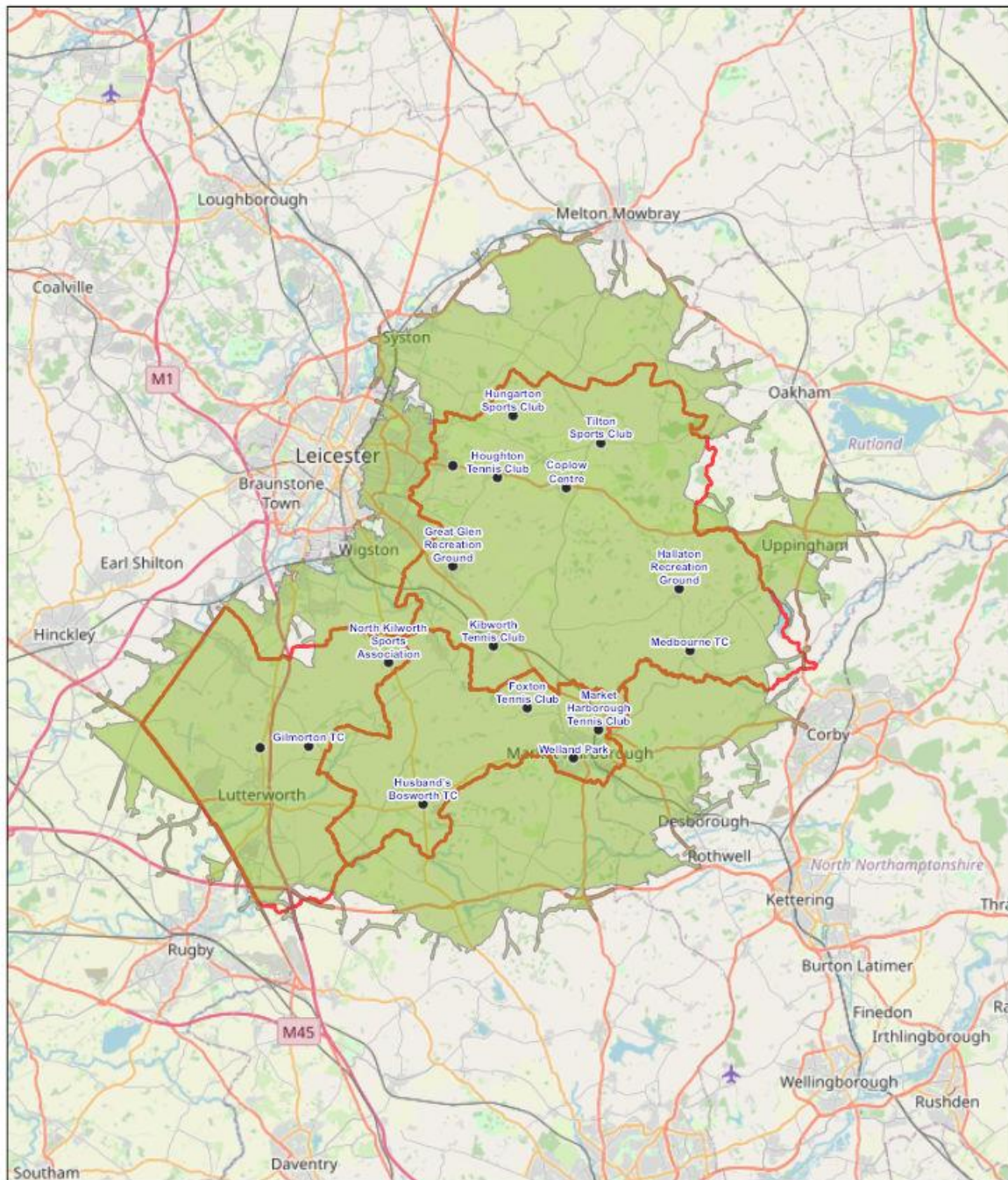
Facility	Courts	Fencing	Disabled	Changing	Lighting
Coplow Centre	5	5	5	5	5
Foxton Tennis Club	4	3	3	3	-
Gilmorton Tennis Club	3	4	2	-	-
Great Glen Recreation Ground	5	5	4	4	5
Hallaton Recreation Ground	3	4	4	4	-
Houghton Tennis Club	5	5	4	5	5
Hungarton Sports Club	3	4	3	-	-
Husband's Bosworth TC	3	3	2	2	4
Kibworth Tennis Club	5	4	4	4	4
Lutterworth Tennis Club	4	4	3	4	5
Market Harborough TC	4	4	4	5	5
Medbourne Tennis Club	4	4	4	4	4
North Kilworth Sports Assoc.	5	5	4	-	4
Tilton Sports Club	3	4	3	-	3

Wadkins Recreation Ground	4	4	3	-	-
Welland Park	5	5	4	-	5

9.7 Accessibility

The LTA applies a 10 minute drivetime catchment to define accessibility. The map shows that the whole of Harborough district is effectively within 10-minutes' drivetime of a court.

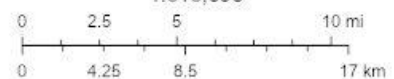
HARBOROUGH - Outdoor Tennis Courts 10 Minutes Drive



2/15/2022

1:515,098

- OUTDOOR TENNIS
- 10.0 Minutes
- ▭ West Sub Area, Middle Sub Area, East Sub Area
- ▭ Harborough District Boundary



© OpenStreetMap (and) contributors, CC-BY-SA

9.8 Availability

The table below identifies the basis of use and cost of tennis court usage in Harborough district:

Facility	Basis of use
Coplow Centre	Bookable and casual use. £5 per hour
Foxton Tennis Club	Members only. Adult £50 annually, Junior £20 per annum.
Gilmorton Tennis Club	Members only. Adult £50 annually, Junior £25 per annum.
Great Glen Recreation Ground	Members and pay-and-play. Adult membership £60 annually, Junior £25 per annum. Pay-and-play £10 per hour.
Hallaton Recreation Ground	Open access, no usage charges.
Houghton Tennis Club	Members only. Adult £100 annually, Junior £20 per annum.
Hungarton Sports Club	Members only. Adult £40 annually, Junior £20 per annum.
Husband's Bosworth TC	Members only. Adult £50 annually, Junior £25 per annum.
Kibworth Tennis Club	Members only. Adult £162 annually, Junior £57 per annum.
Lutterworth Tennis Club	Members only. Adult £158 annually, Junior £37 per annum.
Market Harborough TC	Members only. Adult £45 annually, Junior £15 per annum. Pay-and-play users £5.
Medbourne Tennis Club	Members only. Adult £95 annually, Junior £30 per annum.
Robert Smyth Academy	Pay-and-play users £10 per hour.
North Kilworth Sports Assoc.	Members Adult £25 annually, Junior £15 per annum. Pay-and-play users Adult £2, Junior £1.
Tilton Sports Club	Members only. Adult £20 annually, Junior £10 per annum.
Wadkins Recreation Ground	Members only. Adult £50 annually, Junior £25 per annum.
Welland Park	Club members £15 annually - exclusive use at specified times. Casual use free at other times. £1 tokens for floodlights.

9.9 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are 47 tennis courts with community access in Harborough district, 34 of which are floodlit. Per capita levels of provision are much lower than the district average in the West sub-area. There are also two Padel courts.

- The quality of club-owned tennis courts is generally good, but there are issues with disabled access and changing facilities at two and one sites respectively.
- Accessibility of courts is good, with the entire population within 10 minutes driving time of the nearest facility, although per capita levels of provision are much lower than the district average in the West sub-area.
- 21 courts are available for casual use. All other courts are for club members only.

9.10 *Developments since the 2022 PPS*

The key developments since the assessment of tennis needs in the 2022 PPS are as follows:

- Collectively, in 2024 the LTA-affiliated clubs in the district have 1,653 members, an increase of 350 members (or 26.9%) since 2021, much of it attributable to a new Padel Club at Market Harborough Squash Club.
- Two key sites (Lutterworth TC and Market Harborough TC are operating at well over capacity respectively, which is the same position as in 2018).

9.11 *The balance between tennis court supply and demand*

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between tennis court supply and demand in Harborough district:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough courts with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the courts fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the courts in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the courts available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

9.12 *Quantity*

9.12.1 *Current needs*

The LTA calculates the capacity of tennis courts in relation to 'Estimated Membership Capacity'. This is applied to club courts, on the basis that:

- A floodlit outdoor court has a capacity of 60 members.
- A non-floodlit outdoor court has a capacity of 40 members.

The results of applying this to courts in Harborough is tabulated below. Capacity shortfalls are shown in brackets and the analysis shows that:

- Market Harborough TC is operating at and well over capacity and two other sites (Medbourne TC and Tilton and District Sports Club) are also over capacity.
- When aggregated for the district as a whole, there significant spare capacity, equivalent to 22.4 floodlit courts.

Facility	No. courts	Capacity	No. members	Balance
Foxton Tennis Club	2	80	36	24
Gilmorton TC	2	80	25	55
Great Glen TC	3	180	129	51
Houghton TC	3	180	94	86
Husband's Bosworth TC	2	100	30	70
Kibworth Tennis Club	5	300	127	173
Lutterworth TC	5	300	280	20
Facility	No. courts	Capacity	No. members	Balance
Market Harborough TC	4	220	319	(120)
Medbourne TC	3	180	181	(1)
North Kilworth TC	2	120	-	-
Thurnby and Bushby TC	2	80	-	-
Tilton & District Sports Club	1	40	78	(38)
Welland Park TC	5	260	38	222
TOTALS	38	2,660	1,313	1,344

9.12.2 Future needs

Future demand patterns are likely to be similar to current levels, based on participation trends but the population growth projections will create a requirement for 6.1% additional capacity by 2031. This is equivalent to three extra courts, which can be accommodated via the spare capacity at existing facilities.

9.13 Quality

9.13.1 Current quality

The quality of club-owned tennis courts is generally good, but many of the local authority-owned parks courts have 'poor' quality playing surfaces and there are issues with disabled access and changing facilities at two and one sites respectively.

9.13.2 Future quality

All court providers will need to continue to invest in maintaining and improving their facilities, so if this process can be assisted with funding from developer contributions in the future, it seems reasonable to assume that local provision will continue to be upgraded regularly.

9.14 Accessibility

9.14.1 Current accessibility

All of the population is within 10-minutes' drive of the nearest tennis court.

9.14.2 Future accessibility

Providing locally accessible outdoor tennis courts as part of the housing developments would be consistent with meeting health and well-being objectives in the new developments.

9.15 Availability

9.15.1 Current availability

21 courts are available for casual use. All other courts are for club members only.

9.15.2 Future availability

Provision should be made for 'pay and play' access to all new courts.

9.16 The options for securing additional tennis court capacity

The options for securing existing and additional tennis court capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

9.16.1 Protect

Protecting existing tennis courts through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

9.16.2 Provide

There is no need to provide additional tennis courts to meet future needs, because there is sufficient existing spare capacity. However, the site-specific capacity deficits at Market Harborough TC Medbourne TC and Tilton and District Sports Club should be addressed. Demand for Padel courts is evolving rapidly and provision of additional courts should be supported so long as it does not involve the redevelopment of tennis courts.

9.16.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing tennis court capacity by:

- Addressing the disabled access issues at the two sites where this is rated as 'poor'.
- Ensuring that the courts and ancillary facilities receive regular maintenance and improvements, funded by developer contributions where appropriate.

- Considering the addition of floodlights at appropriate sites, particularly in conjunction with netball developments at shared use sites.

9.17 Action Plan

9.17.1 Introduction

The tables below set out the action plan for tennis courts to guide the implementation of the strategy. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England's 'Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2023' (2023).

9.17.2 Key strategic actions

Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Protection of existing tennis courts.	Include a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing tennis courts.	HDC	-	-	High
Improving the use of parks courts	Investigate gate access technology and Clubspark court booking system.	HDC	LTA	TBC	Medium

Site	Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Coplow Centre	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Foxton Tennis Club	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Gilmorton Tennis Club	Poor disabled access	Provide a tarmac path from the access point	Gilmorton Tennis Club	-	£1,500	Medium
Great Glen Recreation Ground	No changing facilities	Provide a clubhouse	Great Glen TC	LTA	£120,000	High
Hallaton Recreation Ground	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Houghton Tennis Club	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Hungarton Sports Club	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Husband's Bosworth TC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor changing • Poor disability access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a tarmac path from the access point • Upgrade the changing shelter 	Husband's Bosworth TC	-	£1,500 for path £20,000 for changing	High
Kibworth Tennis Club	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Lutterworth Tennis Club	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Market Harborough TC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courts used to over capacity • One court and surrounds undersized. 	Provide floodlights to the fourth court	Market Harborough TC	LTA	£10,000	High
Medbourne Tennis Club	Courts used to over capacity	No action	-	-	-	-
Robert Smyth Academy	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
North Kilworth Sports Assoc.	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Tilton Sports Club	Courts used to over capacity	No action	-	-	-	-
Wadkins Recreation Ground	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Welland Park	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-

10 BOWLS GREEN NEEDS

10.1 Organisational context

- **Bowls England:** Bowls England is the governing body of the sport and along with Bowls Leicestershire it supports the development of the game in Harborough.
- **Affiliated Clubs:** There are eight Bowls England-affiliated clubs in Harborough and two unaffiliated clubs.

10.2 Strategic context

10.2.1 Bowls England Strategic Plan

Bowls England's strategic plan '*Fit for the Future: Bowls England Strategy 2021 - 2026*' (2021) contains the following material of relevance:

Target: The target is to create a million more 'bowls experiences' by 2026.

Mission: The mission is 'to promote and develop the sport of bowls across England so it enriches the lives of its participants, connects communities and is in good health for future generations'.

Making bowls accessible: The actions include:

- 'Developing and marketing new, introductory forms of the game to service identified target markets of new bowlers'.
- 'Modernising our digital platforms and experiences so new bowlers can easily locate opportunities to get involved in our sport'.
- 'Working with clubs and facility owners to break down barriers and ensure every new bowler's first time is uncomplicated and compelling'.
- 'Developing and implementing a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to ensure our sport is more representative of society'.
- 'Building new partnerships with like-minded organisations to engage groups of people from outside our sport'.

Support our communities: The actions include:

- 'Delivering and expanding our range of club services to support club management teams, increase their capability and empower them to thrive'.
- 'Working at a local and national level to arrest the decline in facilities to ensure places to play bowls are accessible, inclusive and sustainable'.

10.2.2 Neighbouring local authorities

Outdoor sports facilities strategies in neighbouring districts identify cross-boundary issues:

Rugby

The '*Rugby Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2013) does not include an assessment of outdoor bowls needs.

Blaby

The '*Blaby Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment*' (2020) identifies that 'there is a sufficient supply of bowling greens to accommodate current and future demand in the Blaby District'.

Oadby and Wigston:

The '*Oadby and Wigston Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2018) does not include an assessment of outdoor bowls needs.

Leicester

The '*Leicester City Council Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2022) identifies a 'significant loss in bowls participation rates, which has unfortunately resulted in a loss of 4 clubs and highlighted a need to consider consolidation of sites should participation rates not rise'.

Charnwood

The '*Charnwood Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2018) identifies that 'most of the outdoor bowls greens in Charnwood are operating under capacity, and most with good reserves of capacity to accommodate new members'.

Melton

Melton Borough Council is working on an updated Playing Pitch Strategy for the borough in 2022. The current '*Melton Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2014) does not include an assessment of outdoor bowls needs.

Rutland

The '*Rutland Sports and Recreation Strategy*' (2024) identifies that '5 of the 7 greens have some spare capacity. Any future growth in demand can be satisfied with the current green stock and is likely to have little impact on the supply and demand balance in the study area'.

Corby (now part of North Northamptonshire)

The '*Corby Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan*' (2017) identifies that 'current demand is being met and future demand can also be met'.

Kettering (now part of North Northamptonshire)

The '*Kettering Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy Needs Assessment Report*' (2020) identifies that 'overall, there is sufficient supply to meet current and future demand'.

Daventry (now part of West Northamptonshire)

The '*Daventry Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2018) does not include an assessment of outdoor bowls needs.

10.3 Stakeholder consultation

10.3.1 Bowls Leicestershire

Consultation with Bowls Leicestershire highlighted the following issues:

- There are eight affiliated outdoor bowls clubs in the district and two non-affiliated clubs.
- The key issue for clubs is the recruitment of participants, volunteers and women. Bowls England is encouraging clubs to provide 'pay-and-play' opportunities with rinks made available at specific times, to attract non-members. It is also promoting a short game format for beginners.
- The average age of bowls participants in Leicestershire is approximately 65.

10.3.2 Local bowls clubs

A questionnaire survey was circulated to all affiliated clubs in Harborough district in 2022. Nine of the clubs responded.

- Collectively the bowls clubs in the district have 495 members.
- Demand for bowls locally shows a slight decrease over the past three years, with Welland Park BC closing in 2021 due to declining membership. No clubs have a waiting list.
- Wycliffe BC was not prepared to participate in the survey. The club had been waiting for a grant from the council for a petanque terrain for some two years but was told this money was now being channelled into football.

10.3.3 Houghton Bowls Club

The club made the following comments:

- 'We did receive grants for the extending and relaying of our green over the past two years, but we receive no regular external funding to help with green maintenance which is our main expense'.
- 'We have difficulty recruiting new members. We get little or no response to leaflets posted through doors of the entire village. An annual open day occasionally brings in new members. We also have had stands at a number of village fetes'.

10.3.4 Kibworth Bowls Club

The club commented that 'the Indoor Bowling Club at the Leisure Centre in Harborough is a great asset to some of our Members during the Winter months'.

10.3.5 Lutterworth Town Bowls Club

The club made the following comments:

- 'We're generally good at retaining members but not always. Recruiting new members is the most challenging problem'.
- 'We carry out work on our facilities as needed but the lack of finance prevents us from making longer term plans'.
- 'We don't have separate male/female changing rooms, but we have a reasonably sized changing room for the number of players involved in each match'.
- 'We have a 10 year lease with Lutterworth Town council, expiring March 2022. We pay £500 per annum, maintain the Green and currently receive a £3,000 contribution towards the cost from the Town Council'.

10.3.6 Medbourne Bowls Club

The club made the following comments:

- 'Our main problem is recruiting new members. Bowls has a worldwide image problem and needs to attract younger players not just the more mature/retired'.
- 'We plan to increase our membership with more local advertising, arranging visits from local schools and offering free use of equipment and the green with free coaching'.
- 'We have a small green in centre of village, with no land to expand, owned by the Parish Council which has the final say on alterations/upgrades to the pavilion and green'.

10.3.7 North Kilworth Bowls Club

The club commented that 'we would like to provide better disabled access if funding is available'.

10.3.6 South Kilworth Bowls Club

The club made the following comments:

- 'We do not have separate changing rooms for male and female members'.
- 'We have benefited with money from the Community Grant Scheme and would welcome the continuation of this potential source of external funds'.

10.4 **Bowls Green Demand**

10.4.1 Introduction

This section summarises the demand for bowls in Harborough district and includes:

- Expressed demand.
- Displaced demand.
- Latent and unmet demand.
- Future demand.

10.4.2 Expressed demand

Bowls clubs in Harborough district, their playing membership and the greens where they play are as follows.

Club	Home green	No. members
Hart of Fleckney BC	Fleckney Sports Centre	79
Houghton BC	Houghton BC	28
Kibworth BC	Kibworth BC	57
Little Bowden BC	Little Bowden BC	91
Lutterworth Town BC	Lutterworth Recreation Ground	44
Market Harborough CBC*	Market Harborough CBC	57
Medbourne BC*	Medbourne BC	27
North Kilworth BC	North Kilworth BC	26
South Kilworth BC	South Kilworth BC	37
Wycliffe BC	Hall Lane, Lutterworth	49
TOTAL	-	495

* Not affiliated to Bowls England.

10.4.3 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to play by teams from within the study area which takes place outside of the area, or vice versa. Based upon the results of the clubs' survey, there is no evidence of any displaced demand for bowls.

10.4.4 Unmet demand

Unmet demand takes a number of forms:

- Clubs may have access to a facility for matches but nowhere to train or vice versa.
- Some facilities may be unavailable to the community.

- The poor quality and limited capacity of facilities and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement.

There is no evidence of unmet demand for outdoor bowls greens in Harborough district at present, with all clubs reporting spare capacity to accommodate additional members. In addition to coaching and matches for members, all clubs allow prospective members to have a number of free introductory sessions and Hart of Fleckney BC keeps two rinks available for public hire at all times.

10.4.5 Latent demand

Whereas unmet demand is known to currently exist latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better provision. There is no evidence of latent demand for bowls in Harborough district at present with no clubs operating waiting lists. A Bowls England report in 2016 identified that a club aiming to remain sustainable over the medium to long term should aim for a minimum membership of 15-20 members per rink. On this basis Little Bowden BC is the only club in the area in that meets this criterion, having recently gained members from Welland Park BC, Kibworth BC and Market Harborough BC.

10.4.6 Future demand

This has been assessed as follows:

- **Participation rates:** Sport England’s ‘Active Lives’ survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for bowls at national level since 2015:

Nov '15 - Nov '16	May '16 - May '17	Nov '16- Nov '17	May '17- May '18	Nov '17- Nov '18	May '18- May '19	Nov '18-Nov '19	May '19- May '20	Nov '19-Nov '20	May '20- May '21	Nov '20-Nov '21	Nov '21-Nov '22	% Chang e
0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.2%	0.4%	0.6%	-0.2%

- **Population growth:** The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 104,839 by 2031, an increase of 6,064 (or 6.1%). Comparison of the projections for 2024 and 2031 shows that the percentage of people aged under 50 falls from 54.2% to 53.2%, with proportionate population increases amongst the over 50s.

10.4.7 Key findings on demand

The key findings on demand are as follows:

- There are ten local clubs serving Harborough district.
- There is no evidence of any displaced or unmet demand, other than some bowlers moving between clubs to access better facilities and a higher standard of bowling.
- Future demand patterns are likely to be similar to current levels, based on participation trends and population projections.

10.5 Bowls Green Supply

10.5.1 Introduction

This section summarises the detail of bowls green supply in Harborough district. The greens included in the analysis are defined as grassed permanently laid out greens.

10.5.2 Greens with community use and used

Site	Address	No. rinks
Hart of Fleckney BC	Leicester Road, Fleckney LE8 8BG	6
Houghton BC	Main Street, Houghton-on-the-Hill LE7 9GE	4*
Kibworth BC	Smeeton Road, Kibworth Beauchamp LE8 0LF	6
Little Bowden BC	Kettering Road, Market Harborough LE16 8AN	6/7
Lutterworth Town BC	Coventry Road, Lutterworth LE17 4RB	6
Market Harborough CBC	Fairfield Road, Market Harborough LE16 9QQ	6
Medbourne BC	Main Street, Medbourne LE16 8EB	4*
North Kilworth BC	Back Street, North Kilworth LE17 6HG	6*
South Kilworth BC	North Road, South Kilworth LE17 6DS	6
Wycliffe BC	Hall Lane, Lutterworth LE17 4LN	6

* These greens are played in a single direction only which impacts on capacity and surface quality.

10.5.3 Greens by sub-area

The number of greens by sub-area are as follows. It shows that there is a geographically equitable distribution of provision across the district:

Sub-area	Population	No. Greens	Greens per capita
West	28,963	4	1: 7,241
Middle	35,494	3	1: 11,831
East	28,197	3	1: 9,399
HARBOROUGH	95,537	10	1: 9,554

10.5.4 Greens where use was recently discontinued

These are as follows:

Site	Address	Sub-area	Use discontinued
Welland Park	Welland Park Road, Market Harborough LE16 9DN	Middle	2021

10.6 Quality

10.6.1 The criteria assessed for bowls greens

The quality of bowls greens was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities during the playing season. The criteria that were assessed were as follows:

- **The green:** The quality of the grass, flatness and regulation ditches.
- **Changing facilities:** The capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- **Disability access:** The extent of full disabled access to the facility, including the provision of access ramps, dedicated changing, toilets and car parking.
- **General access:** Parking, signage and proximity to public transport.

10.6.2 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to 'very good' (highlighted in green below), 4 to 'good' (also highlighted in green below), 3 to 'average' (highlighted in yellow below), 2 to 'poor' (highlighted in red below) and 1 to 'very poor' (also highlighted in red below).

10.6.3 Bowls greens assessment

The ratings for bowls in Harborough are shown in the table below.

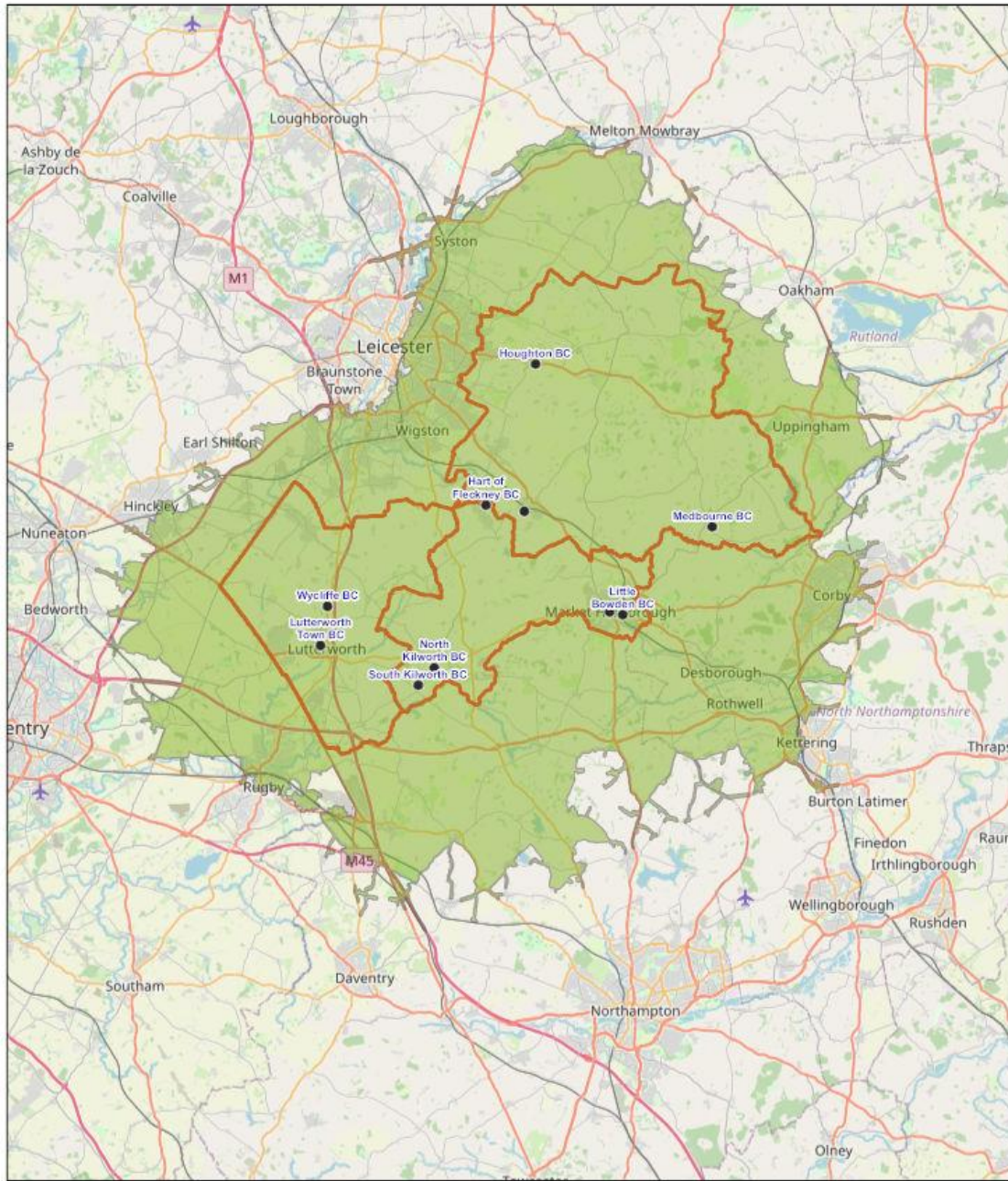
Facility	Green	Changing	Disability Access	General access
Hart of Fleckney BC	5	5	5	5
Houghton BC	4	3	4	3
Kibworth BC	5	5	4	5
Little Bowden BC	5	5	5	5
Lutterworth Town BC	3	4	5	5
Market Harborough Cons. BC	4	3	2	3
Medbourne BC	2*	1	3	3
North Kilworth BC	3	3	2	3
South Kilworth BC	4	5	3	5
Wycliffe BC	5	5	4	5

* The green is a non-regulation rhomboid shape but can fit in four rinks at an angle.

10.7 Accessibility

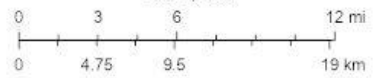
Bowls England applies a 15 minute drivetime catchment to define accessibility. The map overleaf shows that the whole of Harborough district is within 15-minutes' drivetime of a green.

HARBOROUGH - Outdoor Bowls 15 Minutes Drive



2/14/2022

1:577,790



- OUTDOOR BOWLS
- 15.0 Minutes
- ▭ West Sub Area, Middle Sub Area, East Sub Area
- ▭ Harborough District Boundary

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10.8 Availability

The table below identifies the basis of use of bowls greens in Harborough:

Club	Basis of use
Hart of Fleckney BC	Membership and 'pay-and-play' Adult membership £115 per annum New member £55 in year one Associate member £25 per annum plus rink fee (£3 per session) Junior member £7.50 per annum 'Pay-and-play' £3 for two hours
Houghton BC	Membership only Adult membership £60 per annum
Kibworth BC	Membership only Adult membership £90 per annum New members 50% discount in year one Associate Member £35 per annum Social Member £20 per annum
Little Bowden BC	Membership only Adult membership £85 per annum Junior membership £10 per annum
Lutterworth Town BC	Membership only Adult membership £72 per annum New members 50% discount in year one
Market Harborough Conservative BC	Membership only Over 65's £30 per annum Under 65's £43 per annum
Medbourne BC	Membership only Adult Membership £50 per annum Senior Membership £45 per annum Junior Membership £20 per annum
North Kilworth BC	Membership only Adult membership £70 per annum Junior membership £20 per annum New adult members £20 in year one New junior members Free in year one
South Kilworth BC	Membership only Adult membership £50 per annum
Wycliffe BC	Membership only Adult membership £75 per annum New members £30 per annum Junior membership £20 per annum

10.9 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are ten bowls greens in Harborough district.
- The quality of greens is generally good with one or two exceptions and changing and disability access is 'poor' at several sites.
- Accessibility of greens is good, with the entire population within 15 minutes driving time of the nearest facility.
- There is significant spare capacity at most greens, although Little Bowden is close to capacity.

10.10 Developments since the 2022 PPS

The key developments since the assessment of bowls needs in the 2022 PPS are as follows:

- Collectively bowls club membership in the district have recovered following the covid pandemic.
- No additional clubs have folded since the last assessment.

10.11 The balance between bowls green supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between bowls green supply and demand in Harborough:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough greens with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the greens fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the greens in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the greens available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

10.12 Quantity

10.12.1 Current needs

There is no evidence of a shortfall in current provision for outdoor bowls, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used capacity:** Local clubs have indicated that there is significant spare capacity.

- **Satisfied demand:** There is no evidence of unmet demand in the district.
- **Changes in supply:** There are no known current planned changes to bowls green supply.

10.12.2 Future needs

Future demand patterns are likely to be similar to current levels, based on participation trends but the higher population projections will create a requirement for 6.1% additional capacity by 2031. Spare capacity at the existing bowls facilities will be able to accommodate all additional future demand, based upon falling participation rates and limited population growth.

10.13 Quality

10.13.1 Current quality

The quality of greens is generally good with one or two exceptions and changing and disability access is 'poor' at several sites. Substantial work was carried out on the green at Houghton BC making it wider (to add an extra rink) but work was setback by covid due to restrictions which had a detrimental impact on the quality of the playing surface.

10.13.2 Future quality

All bowls facility providers will need to continue to invest in maintaining and improving their facilities, so if this process can be assisted with funding from developer contributions in the future, it seems reasonable to assume that local provision will continue to be upgraded regularly.

10.14 Accessibility

10.14.1 Current accessibility

All of the population is within 15-minutes' drive of the nearest bowls green.

10.14.2 Future accessibility

It is reasonable to assume that the current geographical coverage will be maintained in the future.

10.15 Availability

10.15.1 Current availability

Most greens are available to non-members for free introductory sessions.

10.15.2 Future availability

It is reasonable to assume that similar access arrangements will be offered in the future.

10.16 The options for securing bowls green capacity

The options for securing existing bowls green capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

10.16.1 Protect

Protecting existing bowls greens through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

10.16.2 Provide

There is no need to provide additional facilities based on current and projected future demand patterns.

10.16.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing bowls green capacity by:

- Addressing the issues at the four sites where features are rated as ‘poor’.
- Ensuring that the greens and ancillary facilities receive regular maintenance and improvements.

10.17 Action Plan

10.17.1 Introduction

The tables below set out the action plan for bowls greens to guide the implementation of the strategy. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England’s ‘Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2023’ (2023).

10.17.2 Key strategic actions

Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Protection of existing bowls greens	Include a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing bowls greens.	HDC	-	-	High

10.17.3 Site-specific actions

Site	Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Hart of Fleckney BC	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-

Houghton BC	Poor quality green	Improve maintenance	Houghton BC	-	£2,000 p.a.	Medium
Kibworth BC	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Little Bowden BC	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Lutterworth Town BC	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Market Harborough Conservative BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor quality changing • Poor disabled access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade changing • Improve disabled access 	MHCBC	-	£50,000 for changing £3,000 for disabled access	Medium
Medbourne BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor quality green • Poor quality changing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve maintenance • Upgrade changing 	Medbourne BC	-	£2,000 p.a. maintenance £50,000 for changing	-
North Kilworth BC	Poor disabled access	Improve disabled access	North Kilworth BC	-	£3,000	-
South Kilworth BC	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Wycliffe BC	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-

11 NETBALL COURT NEEDS

11.1 Organisational context

- **England Netball:** England Netball is the governing body of the sport and supports the development of the game in Harborough district.
- **Affiliated Clubs:** There are 12 England Netball-affiliated clubs in Harborough district, collectively providing 19 adult and 12 junior teams.

11.2 Strategic context

11.2.1 England Netball's strategy

England Netball's 'Adventure Strategy 2021 - 2031' (2021) contains the following relevant material:

A Game for Life: This 'destination' has the following targets:

- A 50% increase in the number of women playing netball across all life stages.
- A year-on-year increase in the diversity of the netball playing population, with an ambition to reflect the diversity of the nation.
- A countrywide accessible offer for men and boys.
- 90% of all schools delivering a quality netball experience.
- A clear and connected offer of choice for every community, with world class experiences in clubs and leagues at the heart of community netball.
- A place to play within easy travel of every household.

11.2.2 Neighbouring local authorities

Outdoor sports facilities strategies in neighbouring districts identify cross-boundary issues:

Rugby

The '*Rugby Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2013) does not include an assessment of outdoor netball court needs.

Blaby

The '*Blaby Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment*' (2020) identifies that 'there is enough netball provision in the district to meet current and future demand therefore a priority should be placed on retaining the supply of courts and improving quality when possible'.

Oadby and Wigston

The '*Oadby and Wigston Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2018) does not include an assessment of outdoor netball court needs.

Leicester

The '*Leicester City Council Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2022) does not include an assessment of outdoor netball court needs.

Charnwood

The '*Charnwood Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2018) identifies that 'there is no recorded community demand for outdoor provision in the Borough with all current demand met by indoor facilities. No club has expressed demand for use of outdoor facilities to supplement training or match demand'.

Melton

Melton Borough Council is working on an updated Playing Pitch Strategy for the borough in 2022. The current '*Melton Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2014) does not include an assessment of netball needs.

Rutland

The '*Rutland Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2024) concludes that 'there is spare capacity on outdoor courts in the study area, with many sites being floodlit and there is spare capacity to meet future needs if demand grows'.

Corby (now part of North Northamptonshire)

The '*Corby Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan*' (2017) identifies that activity is expected to stay predominately indoors. There is unlikely to be demand from

the community for access to outdoor netball courts; however, retention is required for school activity’.

Kettering (now part of North Northamptonshire)

The ‘*Kettering Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy Needs Assessment Report*’ (2020) identifies that ‘although there is enough outdoor netball provision in the Borough to meet current and future demand, not all the courts are fully accessed’.

Daventry (now part of West Northamptonshire)

The ‘*Daventry Playing Pitch Strategy*’ (2018) does not include an assessment of outdoor netball court needs.

11.3 Stakeholder consultation

Consultation with England Netball highlighted the following issues:

- Harborough district has a number of active clubs, all of which play in the Harborough Netball League which is based at the indoor courts at Harborough Leisure Centre. The key issue for netball in Market Harborough is the future of the indoor dome at Market Harborough Leisure Centre, which is currently being replaced with a new covered facility that is due to be completed in September 2024.
- There has been a big rise in junior participation over the last five years.
- Club netball has seen a big growth in the 25-40 age group.
- Walking netball (over 60s) is also proving to be popular.
- Market Harborough Netball League now has 15 teams entered for the winter season, a 25% increase since the last update.
- Market Harborough Youth Netball now has 236 members, which is an 18% increase from last the last update. The club has recently started a new ‘Back 2 Netball’ session which encourages women to get back in to sport and keep active in a less competitive environment than the league. This will however drive league participation once these players are ready.

11.3 Netball Court Demand

11.4.1 Introduction

This section summarises the demand for netball in Harborough district and includes:

- Expressed demand.
- Displaced demand.

- Latent and unmet demand.
- Future demand.

11.4.2 Expressed demand

- **Clubs and teams:** Netball clubs and teams in Harborough district and the outdoor courts where they train and play are as follows. Indoor courts are shown in italics:

Club	Courts	Teams
Aircare Thunder Netball Club	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	2 adult
APlan Emeralds Netball Team	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	1 adult
Club Correze Netball Team	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	1 adult
Foxton Mavericks Netball Club	Robert Smyth Academy	2 adult
Harborough Harriers Netball Team	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	1 adult
Lutterworth Robins Netball Club	Lutterworth College	7 adult 2 junior
Market Harborough Youth Netball Club	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	10 junior
PE Active Netball Team	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	1 adult
Phoenix 58 Netball Team	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	1 adult
Siamo Sirens Netball Team	Meadow Vale Primary School	1 adult
Snowfinders Netball Team	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	1 adult
Turner's Tornados Netball Team	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	1 adult
Vanelli Vixens Netball Team	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	1 adult
Welland Valley Blinders Netball Team	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	1 adult

- **Development programmes:** In addition to formal competitive play, a number of netball development programmes operate in the district, in particular ‘Back to Netball’ and ‘Netball Now’. These are currently accommodated at the outdoor courts at Robert Smyth Academy and the indoor courts at Market Harborough Leisure Centre.
- **Bee Netball:** Bee Netball Registered Schools (who provide a version of the game for under 11s) in the district are as follows:

School	Address
Farndon Fields Primary School	Argyle Park, Market Harborough LE16 9JH
Fleckney Primary School	Batchelor Road, Fleckney LE8 8BE
Foxton Primary School	Gallow Field Road, Foxton LE16 7QZ
Leicester Grammar School	London Road, Great Glen LE8 9FL
Little Bowden Primary School	Scotland Rd, Market Harborough LE16 8AY
North Kilworth Primary School	Dag Lane, North Kilworth LE17 6HD
Ridgeway Primary Academy	The Ridgeway, Market Harborough LE16 7HQ
St. Joseph’s Catholic Academy	Coventry Rd, Market Harborough LE16 9BZ
Stoneygate School	London Rd, Great Glen LE8 9DJ

- **Netball Camp Harborough:** Netball Camp Harborough runs a school holiday netball programme at the outdoor courts at Stoneygate School and the indoor courts at Market Harborough Leisure Centre for 100 junior players, 70% of whom are from Harborough.

11.4.3 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to play by teams from within the study area which takes place outside of the area, or vice versa. Based upon the results of the clubs’ survey:

- There is some exported demand for junior matches to facilities hosting central venue leagues in neighbouring areas (Benham Sports Arena in Northampton and Soar Valley Leisure Centre in Loughborough).
- Lutterworth Robins NC play matches in the Rugby Netball League, based at Rugby School.

11.4.4 Unmet demand

Unmet demand takes a number of forms:

- Clubs may have access to a facility for matches but nowhere to train or vice versa.
- Some facilities may be unavailable to the community.

- The poor quality and limited capacity of facilities and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement.

There is no evidence of unmet demand for outdoor netball courts in Harborough district at present, although there are waiting lists for junior teams at Market Harborough Youth Netball Club but it uses the indoor courts at Harborough Leisure Centre.

11.4.5 Latent demand

Whereas unmet demand is known to currently exist latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better provision. There is no evidence of latent demand for netball in Harborough at present.

11.4.6 Future demand

This has been assessed as follows:

- **Participation rates:** Sport England’s ‘Active Lives’ survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for netball at national level since 2015:

Nov '15 - Nov '16	May '16 - May '17	Nov '16 - Nov '17	May '17 - May '18	Nov '17 - Nov '18	May '18 - May '19	Nov '18 - Nov '19	May '19 - May '20	Nov '19 - Nov '20	May '20 - May '21	Nov '20 - Nov '21	Nov '21 - Nov '22	% Change
2.0%	2.1%	2.2%	2.1%	2.2%	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%	2.0%	1.6%	1.3%	1.7%	-0.3%

- **Population growth:** The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 104,839 by 2031, an increase of 6,064 (or 6.1%). Comparison of the projections for 2024 and 2031 shows that the percentage of people aged under 50 falls from 54.2% to 53.2%, with proportionate population increases amongst the over 50s.

11.4.7 Key findings on demand

The key findings on demand are as follows:

- There are 14 local clubs serving Harborough district.
- Contrary to the ‘Active Lives’ survey trends, most local clubs have experienced increased memberships in the past three years.
- There is no evidence of unmet demand for outdoor netball courts in Harborough district at present, although the indoor courts at Harborough Leisure Centre cannot accommodate all demand for junior teams.
- Future demand patterns are likely to increase, based on local participation trends and population projections.

11.5 Netball Court Supply

11.5.1 Introduction

This section summarises the detail of netball court supply in Harborough district. The courts included in the analysis are defined as hard courts permanently laid out with regulation markings for netball. This includes multi-use games areas also marked for other sports, in particular tennis, that are therefore not exclusively used for netball. The categories assessed are as follows:

11.5.2 Courts with community use and used

Site	Address	Floodlit courts	Non-floodlit courts	Sub-area
Lutterworth College	Bittesworth Road, Lutterworth LE17 4EX	4	0	West
Robert Smyth Academy	Burnmill Road, Market Harborough LE16 7JG	2	0	Middle
Stoneygate School	London Rd, Great Glen LE8 9DJ	0	2	East
TOTALS	-	6	2	-

11.5.3 Courts by sub-area

Courts with community use and used by sub-area are as follows:

Sub-area	Population	No. Courts	Courts per capita
West	28,963	4	1: 7,241
Middle	35,494	2	1: 17,247
East	28,197	2	1: 14,099
HARBOROUGH	95,537	8	1: 11,942

11.5.4 Courts with no community use

The following courts are not available for community use. Floodlit courts are asterisked:

Site	Address	Courts
Farndon Fields Primary School	Argyle Park, Market Harborough LE16 9JH	1
Fleckney Primary School	Batchelor Road, Fleckney LE8 8BE	2
Foxton Primary School	Gallow Field Road, Foxton LE16 7QZ	1
Kibworth Mead Academy	Smeeton Road, Kibworth Beauchamp LE8 0LG	1
Leicester Grammar School	London Road, Great Glen LE8 9FL	6*
Little Bowden Primary School	Scotland Rd, Market Harborough LE16 8AY	1
North Kilworth Primary School	Dag Lane, North Kilworth LE17 6HD	1
Thomas Estley Community College	Station Road, Broughton Astley LE9 6PT	4

Welland Park Academy	Welland Park Road, Market Harborough LE16 9DR	2
TOTALS	-	19

11.6 Quality

11.6.1 The criteria assessed for netball courts

The quality of outdoor netball courts was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were assessed were as follows:

- **The court:** Court surface, line markings and fitness for purpose.
- **Fencing:** Condition and appearance.
- **Disability access:** Provision for disabled access to the courts.
- **General access:** Parking, signage and proximity to public transport.
- **Lighting:** The quality, illumination levels and evenness of floodlights.

11.6.2 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to 'very good', 4 to 'good', 3 to 'average', 2 to 'poor' and 1 to 'very poor'.

11.6.3 Netball court assessment

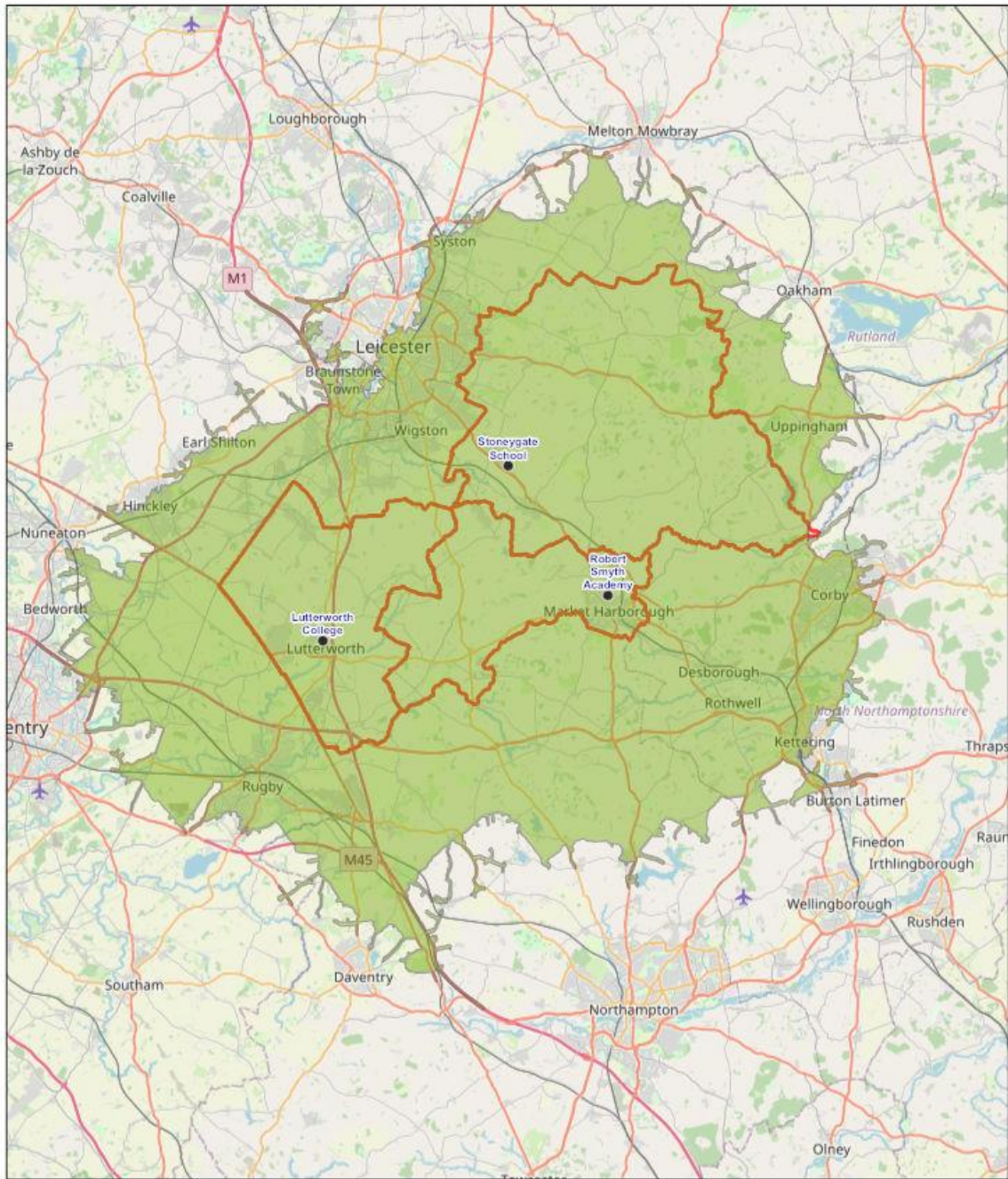
The ratings for netball courts in Harborough are shown in the table below.

Facility	Court	Fencing	Disability Access	General access	Lighting
Lutterworth College	3	3	4	3	4
Robert Smyth Academy	5	5	4	3	5
Stoneygate School	5	5	4	3	-

11.7 Accessibility

England Netball applies a 20 minute drivetime catchment to define accessibility. The whole of Harborough is within 20-minutes' drivetime of a court.

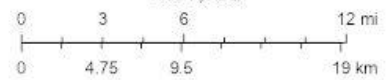
HARBOROUGH - Outdoor Netball Courts 20 Minutes Drive



2/14/2022

1:577,790

- OUTDOOR NETBALL
- 20.0 Minutes
- ▭ West Sub Area, Middle Sub Area, East Sub Area
- ▭ Harborough District Boundary



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11.8 Availability

The table below identifies the basis of use of outdoor netball courts in Harborough:

Facility	Basis of use
Lutterworth College	Block booked courts. £15.50 per hour.
Robert Smyth Academy	Block booked courts. £15 per hour.
Stoneygate School	Block booked courts. £10 per hour.

11.9 Ownership, management and security of access

The ownership, management and security of community access of outdoor netball court sites is detailed below. Security of access refers to the extent to which community use is protected (through public ownership, community use agreements etc.), rather than the security of tenure of specific club users.

Site	Ownership	Management	Access
Lutterworth College	Lutterworth College	Lutterworth College	Unsecured
Robert Smyth Academy	Robert Smyth Academy	Robert Smyth Academy	Secured
Stoneygate School	Leicester Grammar School Trust	Leicester Grammar School Trust	Unsecured

11.10 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- Netball in Harborough district is played almost exclusively on indoor courts, mostly in the dome at Harborough Leisure Centre.
- The only outdoor courts with community use are at Lutterworth College, Robert Smyth Academy and Stoneygate School, although there are a further 19 courts on other education sites. Bee Netball uses many of the schools netball courts at present, which suggests that additional community use could be accessed at some or all sites if demand is sufficient.
- Many courts are also marked for tennis, which reduces their capacity to accommodate netball demand.
- The quality of the outdoor courts at Lutterworth College is 'standard', but the Robert Smyth Academy and Stoneygate School courts are 'very good'.
- Accessibility of courts is reasonable, with publicly accessible outdoor netball courts in all three sub-areas.

- Courts at two sites have unsecured community use, which means that netball clubs have limited control over access to, or maintenance of, courts

11.11 Developments since the 2022 PPS

The key developments since the assessment of netball needs in the 2022 PPS are as follows:

- Market Harborough Netball League now has 15 teams entered for the winter season, a 25% increase since the last update.
- Market Harborough Youth Netball now has 236 members, which is an 18% increase from last the last update. The club has recently started a new 'Back 2 Netball' session which encourages women to get back in to sport and keep active in a less competitive environment than the league. This will however drive league participation once these players are ready.
- Harborough Leisure Centre is being upgraded on its existing site and the indoor provision for netball is being preserved.

11.12 The balance between netball court supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between netball court supply and demand in Harborough:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough courts with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the courts fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the courts in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the courts available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

11.13 Quantity

11.13.1 Current needs

There is no evidence of unmet demand for outdoor netball courts in Harborough district, with spare capacity at the Lutterworth College courts.

11.13.2 Future needs

Future demand patterns are likely to be similar to current levels, based on participation trends but the population growth projections will create a requirement for 6.1% additional capacity by 2031. This can be accommodated via spare capacity at existing outdoor courts.

11.14 Quality

11.14.1 Current quality

The quality of netball courts is generally at least 'standard'.

11.14.2 Future quality

All netball court providers will need to continue to invest in maintaining and improving their facilities, so if this process can be assisted with funding from developer contributions in the future, it seems reasonable to assume that local provision will continue to be upgraded regularly.

11.15 Accessibility

11.15.1 Current accessibility

All of the population is within 20-minutes' drive of the nearest netball court.

11.15.2 Future accessibility

It is reasonable to assume that the current geographical coverage will be maintained in the future.

11.16 Availability

11.16.1 Current availability

Courts at two sites have unsecured community use. There is also no control by netball clubs over court maintenance.

11.16.2 Future availability

To secure netball court availability in the future, formal Community Use Agreements should be pursued.

11.17 The options for securing netball court capacity

The options for securing existing netball court capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

11.17.1 Protect

Protecting existing netball courts through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

11.17.2 Provide

There is no need to provide additional outdoor courts to meet demand arising from the population growth projections, provided that access to the existing unsecured court sites is maintained.

11.17.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing netball court capacity by ensuring that netball court markings are provided on all Multi-use Games Areas would help to supplement capacity.

11.18 Action Plan

11.18.1 Introduction

The tables below set out the action plan for netball courts to guide the implementation of the strategy.

11.18.2 Key strategic actions

Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Protection of existing netball courts.	Include a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing netball courts.	HDC	-	-	High
Netball court markings on MUGAs	Ensure that netball courts are marked on all MUGAs to promote the expansion of the game.	HDC	MUGA providers	£1,000 per MUGA	High

11.18.3 Site-specific actions

Site	Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Lutterworth College	Unsecured community access	Negotiate a Community Use Agreement	HDC	Lutterworth College	-	Medium
Robert Smyth Academy	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Stoneygate School	Unsecured community access	Negotiate a Community Use Agreement	HDC	St. Bede's School	-	Medium

12 ROUNDERS PITCH NEEDS

12.1 Organisational context

- **Rounders England:** Rounders England is the governing body of the sport and supports the development of the game in Harborough district.
- **Affiliated Clubs:** There are ten Rounders England-affiliated clubs in Harborough district.

12.2 Strategic context

12.2.1 Rounders England strategy

Rounders England's *'Rounders Reconnected: Strategic Vision 2022 - 2032 (2021)* contains priorities and objectives of relevance to facilities provision:

Purpose: 'Over the next decade we will grow and develop the nation's much-loved game into a thriving, modern, inclusive sport that can be enjoyed by everyone'.

Objectives: The 'four posts of focus' are as follows:

- **Create:** 'Creating opportunities for more people to play rounders for fun, to get active or start their rounders journey with the aim of 1 million people playing by 2032. A particular focus will be placed on tackling some of the inequalities that exist within sport and physical activity'.
- **Engage:** 'Evolve our membership offer in order to support and service our players, volunteers and our workforce resulting in a happy and engaged community of 100,000 members by 2032'.
- **Compete:** 'Expand and develop a fit for purpose competition structure and pathway culminating in a commercially viable national league structure.'
- **Champion:** 'Promote our sport and raise its profile with stakeholders, partners and the media at a national and international level in order to be commonwealth games ready by 2032'.

12.2.2 Neighbouring local authorities

None of the outdoor sports facilities strategies in neighbouring districts includes an assessment of rounders needs.

12.3 Rounders Pitch Demand

12.3.1 Introduction

This section summarises the demand for rounders in Harborough district and includes:

- Expressed demand.
- Displaced demand.

- Latent and unmet demand.
- Future demand.

12.3.2 Expressed demand

- **League:** The Market Harborough Ladies Rounders League is a fun and friendly Rounders league, set to include as many women as possible into competitive sport. The league has two divisions and matches are played during the summer months on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, played both ‘home’ and ‘away’. Cup matches and re-arranged matches are on a Thursday.
- **Teams:** The following teams play in the Market Harborough District Ladies Rounders League. Most are based in Harborough district, those which are not are shown in italics, as are any facilities used outside the district:

Club	Courts
<i>Arthingworth Rounders Team</i>	Market Harborough Leisure Centre
Blackjacks Rounders Team	Market Harborough Leisure Centre
Bowden Blacks Rounders Team	Market Harborough Leisure Centre
Bowden Rounders Team	Market Harborough Leisure Centre
Green Arrows Rounders Team	Market Harborough Leisure Centre
Harborough Bellas Rounders Team	Market Harborough Leisure Centre
Harborough Peaches Rounders Team	Market Harborough Leisure Centre
Husband’s Bosworth Rounders Team	Husband’s Bosworth Playing Field
Kibworth Cosmopolitans Rounders Team	Kibworth Town FC
Kibworth Coyotes Rounders Team	Kibworth Town FC
Lyn’s Misfits Rounders Team	Market Harborough Leisure Centre
MH Ladies Rounders Team	Market Harborough Leisure Centre
<i>Naseby Rounders Team</i>	<i>Naseby Recreation Ground</i>
<i>Pam’s People Rounders Team</i>	<i>Welford Sports Ground</i>

12.3.3 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to play by teams from within the study area which takes place outside of the area, or vice versa. Three teams from outside the district play in

the Market Harborough Ladies Rounders League, two of which play 'home' matches at facilities outside the district. There is therefore a net position of one imported team.

12.3.4 Unmet demand

Unmet demand takes a number of forms:

- Clubs may have access to a facility for matches but nowhere to train or vice versa.
- Some facilities may be unavailable to the community.
- The poor quality and limited capacity of facilities and/or a lack of provision and ancillary facilities which meet a certain standard of play/league requirement.

There is no evidence of unmet demand for rounders in Harborough district at present.

12.3.5 Latent demand

Whereas unmet demand is known to currently exist latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better provision. There is no evidence of latent demand for rounders in Harborough at present.

12.3.6 Future demand

The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 104,839 by 2031, an increase of 6,064 (or 6.1%). Comparison of the projections for 2024 and 2031 shows that the percentage of people aged under 50.

12.3.7 Key findings on demand

The key findings on demand are as follows:

- There are 11 local clubs serving Harborough district and increase of one since 2022.
- Three teams from outside the district play in the Market Harborough Ladies Rounders League, two of which play 'home' matches at facilities outside the district. There is therefore a net position of one imported team.

12.4 Rounders Pitch Supply

12.4.1 Introduction

This section summarises the detail of rounders pitch supply in Harborough. In all cases the pitches used for rounders are not dedicated as such but are shared with either cricket or football.

12.4.2 Pitches with community use and used

Site	Address	Primary use	Sub-area
Husband's Bosworth Playing Field	Kilworth Road, Husband's Bosworth LE17 6JW	Football	West
Kibworth Town FC	Bird's Barn, Fleckney Road, Fleckney LE8 0HJ	Football	Middle
Market Harborough Leisure Centre (x2)	Northampton Road, Market Harborough LE16 9HF	Football	East

12.4.3 Pitches by sub-area

Pitches with community use and used by sub-area are as follows:

Sub-area	Population	No. Pitches	Pitches per capita
West	28,963	1	1: 28,963
Middle	35,494	2	1: 17,747
East	28,197	1	1: 28,197
HARBOROUGH	95,537	4	1: 23,884

12.5 Quality

12.5.1 The criteria assessed for rounders pitches

The qualitative analysis involved a visit to all pitches used for rounders in Harborough district, to undertake the non-technical visual inspections produced by the governing bodies of the primary sports users of the pitches (football). The assessment generated 'scores' for each pitch by evaluating the elements relevant to rounders. This includes grass cover, pitch dimensions, gradient, evenness, length of grass, drainage and evidence of any unauthorised use.

12.5.2 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to 'very good', 4 to 'good', 3 to 'average', 2 to 'poor' and 1 to 'very poor'.

12.5.3 Rounders pitch assessment

The ratings for rounders pitches in Harborough are shown in the table below.

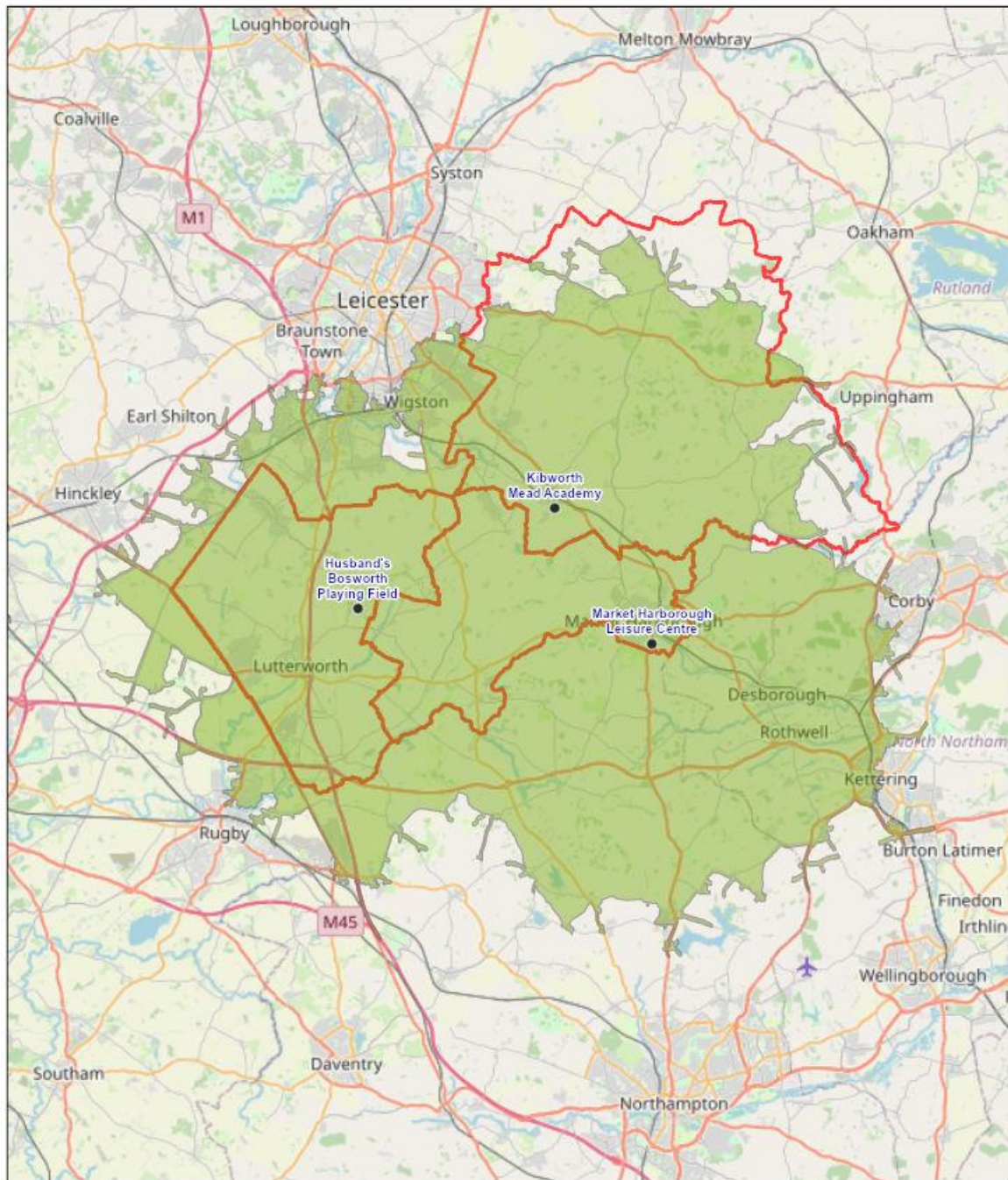
Site	Pitches	Changing	Comments
Husband's Bosworth Playing Field	Good	Good	Pitches towards the lower end of 'good' quality. 'Good' quality changing.
Kibworth Town FC	Good	Poor	'Standard' quality pitches. 'Poor' quality changing facilities.

Market Harborough Leisure Centre	Standard	Good	'Standard' quality pitches with 'good' quality changing. Car parking is inadequate at peak periods.
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12.6 Accessibility

Rounders England applies a 15-minute drivetime catchment to define accessibility. The map overleaf shows that the whole of Harborough is within 15-minutes' drivetime of a rounders pitch, with the exception of small areas in the north and east of the district.

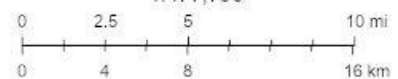
HARBOROUGH - Rounders 15 Minutes Drive



2/14/2022

1:477,790

- ROUNDERS
- 15.0 Minutes
- ▭ West Sub Area, Middle Sub Area, East Sub Area
- ▭ Harborough District Boundary



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12.7 Availability

The table below identifies the basis of use of rounders in Harborough:

Facility			Basis of use	
Husband's Field	Bosworth	Playing	Seasonal booking	block
Kibworth Town FC			Seasonal booking	block
Market Centre	Harborough	Leisure	Seasonal booking	block

12.8 Ownership, management and security of access

The ownership, management and security of community access of rounders pitches is detailed below. Security of access refers to the extent to which community use is protected (through public ownership, community use agreements etc.), rather than the security of tenure of specific club users.

Site	Ownership	Management	Access
Husband's Bosworth Playing Field	Husband's Bosworth Playing Field	Husband's Bosworth Parish Council	Secured
Kibworth Town FC	Private landowner	Kibworth Town FC	Secured
Market Harborough Leisure Centre	Harborough District Council	Harborough Town Community Trust	Secured

12.9 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- **Pitch supply:** All teams are subservient to the primary sports users (football) at their respective sites, so have to fit usage around the needs of other sports, although since the rounders playing season is during the summer months, there are no current problems with this.
- **Pitch quality:** All the pitches used are at least 'standard' quality, although changing facilities are 'poor' at Kibworth Town FC.
- **Security of access:** All the rounders clubs are based on sites with secured community access.

12.10 Developments since the 2022 PPS

The number of teams in the Market Harborough District Ladies Rounders League increased from ten in 2022 to eleven in 2024, a 10% increase.

12.11 The balance between rounders pitch supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between rounders pitch supply and demand in Harborough district:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough pitches with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the pitches fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the pitches in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the pitches available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

12.12 Quantity

12.12.1 Current needs

There is no evidence of unmet demand for rounders pitches in Harborough district.

12.12.2 Future needs

Future demand patterns are likely to be similar to current levels, based on participation trends but the population growth projections will create a requirement for 9.7% additional capacity by 2031. This can be accommodated via spare capacity at existing pitches.

12.13 Quality

12.13.1 Current quality

The quality of rounders pitches is generally at least 'standard'.

12.13.2 Future quality

All rounders pitches will need to continue to invest in maintaining and improving their facilities.

12.14 Accessibility

12.14.1 Current accessibility

The whole of Harborough is within 15-minutes' drivetime of a rounders pitch, with the exception of small areas in the north and east of the district.

12.14.2 Future accessibility

It is reasonable to assume that the current geographical coverage will be maintained in the future.

12.15 Availability

12.15.1 Current availability

All sites have secured community access.

12.15.2 Future availability

It is reasonable to assume that secured access will remain.

12.16 The options for securing rounders pitch capacity

The options for securing existing rounders pitch capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

12.16.1 Protect

Protecting existing rounders pitches through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

12.16.2 Provide

There is no need to provide additional pitches to meet demand arising from the population growth projections, provided that access to the existing pitch sites is maintained.

12.16.3 Enhance

There is no need to enhance any of the rounders pitch sites to increase capacity.

12.17 Action Plan

12.17.1 Introduction

The table below sets out the action plan for rounders pitches to guide the implementation of the strategy.

12.17.2 Key strategic actions

Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Protection of existing rounders pitches.	Include a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing rounders pitches.	HDC	-	-	High

13 APPLYING AND REVIEWING THE STRATEGY

13.1 Introduction

This section identifies the applications of the Harborough PPS and the mechanisms for reviewing it to ensure that it remains robust and up-to-date.

13.2 Strategy applications

The success of the PPS will be determined by how it is used. While the use of the PPS should be led by Harborough District Council, its application and delivery should be the responsibility of the project steering group involving other key local stakeholders including Sport England and the governing bodies of the pitch sports. The PPS has a number of applications:

13.2.1 Sports development planning

The PPS can be applied to help:

- Highlight, justify and make the case for sports development activities with particular sports, groups and clubs and in particular areas.
- Identify current and future trends and changes in the demand for individual sports and how they are played.
- Inform the work, strategies and plans of sporting organisations active in the area.
- Advocate the need to work with specific educational establishments to secure community use of their site(s).
- Develop and/or enhance school club links by making the best use of school sites where they have spare capacity and are well located to meet demand.

13.2.2 Planning policy

The PPS can be applied to help:

- Develop new, and review the effectiveness of existing, local planning policy (e.g. Local and Neighbourhood Plans) in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- The implementation of local planning policy to meet the needs of the community in line with the NPPF.

13.2.3 Planning applications

The PPS can be applied to help:

- Inform the development of planning applications which affect existing and/or proposed new sports facilities provision.
- Inform pre-application discussions to ensure any subsequent planning applications maximise their benefit to sport and are developed in line with national and local planning policy.
- Sports clubs and other organisations provide the strategic need for development proposals thereby potentially adding support to their application(s) and saving them resources in developing such evidence.
- The Council to assess planning applications affecting existing and/or proposed new playing pitch provision in line with national and local planning policy.
- Sport England and other parties respond to relevant planning application consultations.

The PPS can also be applied to help the Council to meet other relevant requirements of the NPPF including:

- Taking account of and supporting local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.
- Delivering the social, recreational, cultural facilities and services the community needs.
- Planning positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives, principles and policies of the framework.
- Working with public health leads and health organisations to understand and take account of the health status and needs of the local population, including expected future changes, and any information about relevant barriers to improving health and well-being).

13.2.4 Funding bids

The PPS can be applied to help:

- Provide the evidence base and strategic need to support funding bids by a range of parties to a variety of potential funding sources.
- Inform potential bidders of the likely strategic need for their project.

13.2.5 Facility and asset management

The PPS can be applied to help:

- Ensure a strategic approach is taken to the provision and management of playing pitches.
- Inform the current management, strategies and plans of playing pitch providers e.g. the Council, leisure trusts and educational establishments.
- Share knowledge of how sites are managed and maintained, the lessons learnt and good practice.
- Highlight the potential of asset transfers and ensure any proposed are beneficial to all parties.
- Provide additional protection for particular sites over and above planning policy, for example through deeds of dedication.
- Resolve issues around security of tenure.

13.2.6 Public health

The PPS can be applied to help:

- Understand how the community currently participates in sport, the need for playing pitches and how this may evolve.
- Raise awareness of and tackle any barriers to people maintaining and increasing their participation.
- Highlight and address any inequalities of access to provision within the study area.
- Provide evidence to help support wider health and well-being initiatives.

13.2.7 Co-ordinating resources and investment

The PPS can be applied to help:

- Raise awareness of the current resources and investment (revenue and capital) going into the management, maintenance and improvement of playing pitch provision.
- Co-ordinate the current and any future resources and investment to ensure the maximum benefit to sport and that value for money is secured.
- Ensure the current and any future resources and investment are complimentary and do not result in their inefficient use.

13.2.8 Capital programmes

The PPS can be applied to help:

- Provide the evidence base to justify the protection and investment in playing pitch provision.

- Influence the development and implementation of relevant capital programmes (e.g. school refurbishment and new build programmes).

13.3 Monitoring delivery

A process should be put in place to ensure regular monitoring of how the recommendations and action plan are being delivered. This monitoring should be led by Harborough District Council and supported by all members of, and reported back to, the steering group. Understanding and learning lessons from how the PPS has been applied should also form a key component of monitoring its delivery.

13.4 Keeping the strategy robust and up-to-date

Along with ensuring that the PPS is used and applied, a process should be put in place to keep it robust and up to date. This will expand the life of the PPS, providing people with the confidence to continue to both use it and attach significant value and weight to its key findings and issues, along with its recommendations and actions.

Sport England advocates that the PPS should be reviewed on a regular basis from the date it is formally signed off by the steering group. This will help to maintain the momentum and commitment built up when developing the PPS. Taking into account the time to develop the PPS this should also help to ensure that the original supply and demand information is no more than two years old without being reviewed.

The reviews 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 PPS has been applied and the lessons learnt.
- Any changes to particularly important facilities and/or sites 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.