

# Public Document Pack

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a meeting of East Hertfordshire District Council will be held in the Council Chamber, Wallfields, Hertford on Wednesday 10th December, 2025 at 7.00 pm, for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the Agenda below, and you are hereby summoned to attend.

Date this 2nd day of December 2025

James Ellis  
Director for Legal, Policy  
and Governance

This meeting will be live streamed on the Council's Youtube page:  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/EastHertsDistrict>

### **AGENDA**

1. Chair's Announcements

To receive any announcements from the Chair.

2. Leader's Announcements

To receive any announcements from the Leader of the Council.

3. Apologies for Absence

To receive any Members' apologies for absence.

4. Minutes - 22 October 2025 and 13 November 2025 (Pages 4 - 35)

To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chair to sign the Minutes of the Council meetings held on 22 October and 13 November 2025.

5. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Members' declarations of interest.

6. Petitions

To receive any petitions.

7. Public Questions

To receive any public questions.

8. Members' Questions

To receive any Members' questions.

9. Executive Report - (Pages 36 - 38)

To receive a report from the Leader of the Council and to consider recommendations on the matters below:

(A) Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy\_(Pages 39 - 418)

(B) Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27\_(Pages 419 - 425)

10. Council Tax Base 2026/27 (Pages 426 - 430)

11. Motions on Notice

No Motions on Notice received.

**Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

A Member, present at a meeting of the Authority, or any committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Authority, with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in any matter to be considered or being considered at a meeting:

- must not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting;
- must not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting;
- must disclose the interest to the meeting, whether registered or not, subject to the provisions of section 32 of the Localism Act 2011;

- if the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days;
- must leave the room while any discussion or voting takes place.

## **Public Attendance**

East Herts Council welcomes public attendance at its meetings and meetings will continue to be live streamed and webcasted. For further information, please email [democratic.services@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@eastherts.gov.uk) or call the Council on 01279 655261 and ask to speak to Democratic Services.

The Council operates a paperless policy in respect of agendas at committee meetings and the Council will no longer be providing spare copies of Agendas for the Public at Committee Meetings. The mod.gov app is available to download for free from app stores for electronic devices. You can use the mod.gov app to access, annotate and keep all committee paperwork on your mobile device.

Visit [Political Structure, Scrutiny and Constitution | East Herts District Council](#) for details.

## **Audio/Visual Recording of meetings**

Everyone is welcome to record meetings of the Council and its Committees using whatever, non-disruptive, methods you think are suitable, which may include social media of any kind, such as tweeting, blogging or Facebook. However, oral reporting or commentary is prohibited. If you have any questions about this please contact Democratic Services (members of the press should contact [Communications@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Communications@eastherts.gov.uk) ). Please note that the Chairman of the meeting has the discretion to halt any recording for a number of reasons, including disruption caused by the filming or the nature of the business being conducted. Anyone filming a meeting should focus only on those actively participating and be sensitive to the rights of minors, vulnerable adults and those members of the public who have not consented to being filmed.

# Agenda Item 4

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON  
WEDNESDAY 22 OCTOBER 2025, AT 7.00  
PM

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PRESENT: Councillor M Adams (Chairman).  
Councillors J Dunlop, D Andrews,  
R Buckmaster, C Brittain, I Devonshire,  
E Buckmaster, S Bull, V Burt, R Carter,  
N Clements, M Connolly, S Copley, N Cox,  
B Crystall, A Daar, B Deering, T Deffley,  
J Dumont, Y Estop, V Glover-Ward,  
M Goldspink, C Hart, G Hill, D Hollebon,  
A Holt, S Hopewell, C Horner, T Hoskin,  
D Jacobs, S Marlow, G McAndrew,  
S Nicholls, A Parsad-Wyatt, C Redfern,  
T Smith, V Smith, T Stowe, M Swainston,  
J Thomas, R Townsend, S Watson,  
D Willcocks, G Williams, C Wilson, J Wyllie  
and D Woollcombe.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| James Ellis       | - Director for Legal,<br>Policy and<br>Governance and<br>Monitoring Officer          |
| Brian Moldon      | - Director for<br>Finance, Risk and<br>Performance                                   |
| Sara Saunders     | - Director for Place   |
| Helen Standen     | - Interim Chief<br>Executive   |
| Stephanie Tarrant | - Assistant Director<br>for Democracy,<br>Elections and<br>Information<br>Governance |

## 203 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded attendees that the meeting was being webcast. The full webcast of the meeting can be viewed here: [Council - 22nd October, 2025](#)

The Chairman acknowledged that at the extraordinary meeting of Council in August 2025, the sad death former Bishop's Stortford Central Ward Councillor, Norma Symonds, was announced, with tributes and a minute's silence to be held at tonight's meeting of Council.

A minute of silence was held and The Chairman invited Members to share words of remembrance. Councillors Deering, Goldspink, Crystall, Jacobs, McAndrew, E Buckmaster, Wilson and Devonshire all paid tribute to Norma.

Members recognised Norma's twelve years (2011– 2023) of service as a District Councillor, highlighting her role as Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Panel and recognising her dedication as a champion for the homeless. Norma was twice Mayor of Bishop's Stortford and worked cross-party on many community projects. Members remembered Norma for her kind, caring and supportive nature.

Members sent their best wishes and condolences to Norma's family.

## 204 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader invited Councillor Hopewell, Executive Member for Wellbeing, to provide an update on BEAM.

Councillor Hopewell said that BEAM had been nominated and had subsequently won the Excellence in Sustainability award at the recent UK Theatre Awards, despite strong competition. Congratulations were extended to all involved. In addition, BEAM had been shortlisted for three further accolades: the Civic Trust

Award, recognising exceptional architecture, urban design and public spaces; the Institution of Structural Engineers Award, celebrating excellence in structural engineering; and the Brick Award, one of the most prestigious awards in the UK construction industry recognising excellence in brickwork. These nominations reflected the growing recognition of BEAM as a distinguished venue and stood as a testament to the efforts of everyone who had contributed to the project.

205 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Boylan, Councillor Butcher and Councillor Williamson.

206 MINUTES - 23 JULY AND 20 AUGUST 2025

Councillor Daar proposed, and Councillor Copley seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2025, be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

Councillor Daar proposed, and Councillor Glover-Ward seconded a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 August 2025, be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman. On being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that the Minutes of the meetings held on 23 July 2025 and 20 August 2025 be approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

207 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Glover-Ward declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item 9b (Review of Resident Permit Zone Policy), on the grounds that she was a resident of

one of the roads being considered for a Resident Permit Zone.

208 PETITIONS

There were no petitions received.

209 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The full responses to the submitted Public Questions can be found in the supplementary document [here](#).

210 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

The full responses to the submitted Members' Questions can be found in the supplementary document [here](#).

211 EXECUTIVE REPORT - 7 OCTOBER 2025

The Leader of the Council presented a report setting out recommendations to the Council made by the Executive at its meeting on 7 October 2025.

212 REVIEW OF RESIDENT PERMIT ZONE POLICY

The Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability presented a report which proposed targeted amendments to both East Herts District Council's (EHDC) Resident Permit Zones (RPZs) Operational Guidance and EHDC's Resident Permit Parking Policy. Two key changes were proposed: reducing the non-resident parking occupancy threshold from 40% to 10% and lowering the requirement for on-street parking capacity from 75% to 50% of households in a proposed zone.

Councillor Hoskin proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Wilson seconded the proposals.

Members broadly welcomed the proposed changes to the Resident Parking Zone (RPZ) policy. It was suggested that the proposed changes were expected to remove

longstanding barriers to progressing zones, although funding remained a concern. Members urged further engagement with Manchester Airport Group and the County Council, given the overlap between parking and road safety responsibilities.

Members thanked officers for incorporating scrutiny feedback and for including the analysis from Citisense. Members hoped resource-limited recommendations, such as use of a digital map, would be revisited in the future.

Concerns were raised in relation to enforcement, noting complaints of illegal parking near schools and insufficient warden resources. Member were assured that enforcement remained active, with sufficient presence to act as a deterrent.

Reservations were expressed with regards to reducing non-resident occupancy to 10%, noting that in some areas non-resident occupancy could consist of local businesses.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – That Council adopts the below changes to East Herts Resident’s Permit Zone (RPZ) Operational Guidance policy:

- That the requirement that non-resident parking must exceed 40% occupancy at peak times, as a condition for implementing an RPZ, be reduced to 10% of occupancy at peak times;
- That requirement for there to be sufficient kerb space to enable 75% of households in a proposed area to park one vehicle on-street as a condition for implementing an RPZ, be reduced to 50% from the guidance.



213 CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT STATEMENT OF LICENSING PRINCIPLES UNDER THE GAMBLING ACT: 2025-28

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The Executive Member for Planning and Growth presented the revised draft Statement of Gambling Principles, following public consultation. The Executive Member for Planning and Growth highlighted that the Council was required to review its gambling policy every three years. It was noted that whilst the district historically held low numbers of gambling licences and received few complaints, it remained important to retain a robust policy

Councillor Glover-Ward proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported. Councillor Thomas seconded the proposal.

Members supported the proposal and expressed desire for the Council to hold wider powers to regulate gambling.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – That, following the public consultation, the draft Statement of Licensing Principles under the Gambling Act, including any amendments be adopted.

214 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2024/25 OUTTURN

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability presented the Treasury Management 2024/25 Outturn. Members heard that the Council was required under the CIPFA Code of Practice to approve treasury management reports twice yearly. The report provided an overview of the external economic environment, highlighting the rise in the 10-year gilt rate from 3.94% to 4.69%, which significantly influenced borrowing costs.

The Executive Member for Financial Sustainability said that over the year, external borrowing increased from

£53.6 million to £64.5 million, while investments rose from £33.7 million to £39.3 million, resulting in a net borrowing increase of £5.3 million to support the capital programme. The report confirmed that the Council had complied with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code by monitoring the required indicators.

Councillor Brittain proposed that the recommendation in the report be supported. Councillor Swainston seconded the proposal.

The motion to support the recommendation having been proposed and seconded was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – That the Treasury Management Outturn and Prudential Indicators for 2024/25 be approved.

## 215 POLITICAL BALANCE AND COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL UPDATE

The Director for Legal, Policy and Governance presented the report, highlighting that in accordance with paragraphs 3.3(i) and (k) of the constitution, the Council was required to approve its political balance and allocation of seats, as the political balance of the Council had changed since May 2025, following a Member of the Green Group becoming an Independent Member.

It was acknowledged that a similar adjustment had occurred in May 202, following a change in political balance. At that time, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was expanded from 14 to 15 members to maintain balance. Due to the latest change, it was recommended to reduce the Committee back to 14, with a one seat reduction for the Green Group. The updated group representation was outlined in paragraph 2.6 of the report.

Councillor Watson proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Thomas seconded the proposal.

The motion to support the recommendations having been proposed and seconded was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that (A) the revised political balance of the Council at paragraph 2.6 be agreed; and

(B) the membership of Scrutiny Committees, Regulatory Committees and Joint Committees be as set out in Appendix A be agreed, with Members being appointed in accordance with the wishes of the political group to whom the seats on these bodies have been allocated.

#### 216 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL - REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2026/27

The Director for Legal, Policy and Governance presented the report advising that the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel had made recommendations for the adoption of a scheme of allowances to be paid to Members. It was noted that the Panel had met three times to consider Members current allowances and whether it should recommend to Council a reduction, no change or an increase for the 2026/27 civic year. After speaking with several Members, including the leaders of nearly all of the political groups of the Council, the Panel made the recommended changes to the allowance as set out at paragraph 4.0 of the report.

Councillor Crystall proposed that the recommendations in the report be supported. Councillor Daar seconded the proposal.

Councillor Goldspink proposed the following amendment:

Amend recommendation A) as follows:

- Replace: A) To increase the Basic Allowance by £821.21 a year from £5,678.79 to £6,500 for 2026/27.
- With: A) “To increase the Basic Allowance by £500.00 a year from £5,678.79 to £6,178.79 for 2026/27”.

Councillor Brittain seconded the amendment.

Members thanked the Independent Panel for their work on this subject, however noted that the proposed increase would equate to a cost of £41,000 and that the amendment sought to balance the Council’s duty to the taxpayer and existing councillors.

Members recognised disagreement from the joint administration. It was confirmed that the recommendations were from the Independent Panel and not from the administration.

Members debated the amendment, highlighting that financial constraints should not be a barrier to becoming a Councillor. Members recognised that with Local Government Reorganisation, East Herts Council would cease to exist in 2027/28, with new unitary authorities likely to provide higher allowances and therefore the decision mostly affected current councillors.

Members highlighted that the £500 increase would still equate to around 9% rise, which was higher than staff pay increases.

Members further debated the requirement to pay Councillors, to enable people to put themselves forward to be a Councillor. Members acknowledged that the recommendation was put forward by the Independent Remuneration Panel and highlighted that they were best placed to make to the recommendation.

Members recognised that the increase may matter more to some, and it was suggested that those who did not require the increase, could chose to pay it back to the Council.

Members appreciated the differing views shared across the Chamber.

Having been proposed and seconded, the amendment was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

Members further debated recommendation A, as amended, and recommendations B-E.

Members discussed the proposed allowances for caring responsibilities, highlighting that the amount per hour often did not meet fees due to be paid.

Councillors recognised that the additional allowances made a real difference in enabling Members to attend meetings.

Members commented on recommendations B and C, which sought to provide discretion for the Leader to vary the sum of allowances, if demonstrably necessary. The Leader of the Council provided assurance to Members that any variances would be considered in consultation with the Director for Finance, Risk and Performance.

Following consensus, recommendation A, as amended, was voted on separately to recommendations B-E.

Having been proposed and seconded, the amended recommendation A was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that (A) to increase the Basic Allowance by £500.00 a year from £5,678.79 to £6,178.79 for 2026/27.

Having been proposed and seconded, recommendations B-E were put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, were declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that (B) to increase the Dependants' Carers Allowance from £30.00 per hour to up to £35.00 per hour for 2026/27, with discretion for the Leader to vary the sum if demonstrably necessary.

C) to increase the Childcare Allowance from £15.00 per hour to up to £20.00 per hour for 2026/27, with discretion for the Leader to vary the sum if demonstrably necessary.

D) to make no changes to the Members' current allowance scheme or to the civic allowances for 2026/27 other than those listed in the recommendations above.

E) To amend paragraph 20.7.1 of the Council's constitution replacing the current:

20.7 Broadband Allowance

20.7.1 Contribution toward the cost incurred in providing broadband connection is included within the basic allowance.

with:

20.7 Homeworking Allowance

20.7.1 Contribution toward the costs incurred in homeworking is included within the basic allowance

## 217 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

Three motions on notice were submitted.

## 218 MOTION TO PROTECT OUR RIVERS BY TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT OF SEWAGE DISCHARGE

Councillor Cox presented his motion on notice. Councillor Carter seconded the motion.

Councillor Jacobs proposed the following amendment:

Amend the motion as follows:

- Replace: Whilst there are long term commitments, there are no plans in place which will address the immediate unacceptable situation either locally by Thames Water or by national government.
- With: “Whilst there are long term commitments, there are no plans in place which will address the immediate unacceptable situation locally by Thames Water”.

Members heard that the motion footnote referenced a 2020 Defra statement, noting that it was outdated. Members heard that claims that the national government had no plans to address the issue were incorrect, with the government having passed the Water (Special Measures) Act 2025, increasing funding for the Environment Agency, allocating £3.1 billion for storm overflow improvements and launching a consultation on financial penalties for minor and moderate spills.

Councillor Clements seconded the amendment.

Members debated the amendment noting that the evidence relied upon had been uncertain but did not affect the resolutions and it was unknown if there was any national government intervention to address the Thames Water’s crisis in the local area.

An insight was shared from a Gilston community forum, where it was noted sewage was discharged into rivers due to the legality of doing so during heavy rainfall. It was considered that national government had contributed to the problem by failing to legislate against such discharges and by not upgrading the sewer infrastructure.

Having been proposed and seconded, the amendment was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared LOST.

Members further debated the original motion.

Members acknowledged that the motion concluded with a declaration of support for River Action's Charter for Rivers and welcomed East Herts District Council's support.

Councillors expressed support for the motion to protect rivers, particularly the vulnerable chalk streams in East Herts, noting any action taken locally or through national government would be beneficial.

The substantive motion having been proposed and seconded was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that East Herts District Council notes that:

- Local residents are deeply concerned about water quality and the impact of regular wastewater discharge, which includes untreated sewage, into our rivers and the impact on wildlife and on human health.
- Thames Water released sewage into the River Lee and its tributaries 1,060 times in 2023.
- Environment Agency figures reveal wastewater from toilets, sinks and drains spilt out of storm overflows into the waterway for an equivalent 11,501.7 hours last year.
- This figure is almost double the previous year (2022) when the number of spill hours stood at 5,891.3.
- At Cottered in Buntingford, Hertfordshire, sewage spilled into River Beane for 2222.25 hours in 2023. Discharge hours at Cottered have more than doubled on 2022, when the total number of spill hours was 1,010.

Releasing sewage into rivers is no longer an emergency-only situation occurring as a result of



severe storms, but an everyday occurrence even in 'normal' rainfall, and that we are in a situation of cumulative overload on the sewage and wastewater system.

Not one of the rivers in East Herts District is classed as 'Good' for Ecological or Chemical Status under the Water Framework Directive. The UK has the dirtiest rivers in Europe.

Affected local wildlife habitats include the Lee Valley Ramsar Sites, Special Protection Areas, and SSSIs, especially Hunsdon and Eastwick Meads.

Whilst there are long term commitments, there are no plans in place which will address the immediate unacceptable situation either locally by Thames Water or by national government.

Additionally, there is no clear statement of position by the Environment Agency, who has overall responsibility, to clarify the cumulative impact of sewage overload on our wildlife and habitats. In Cambridgeshire it has issued position statements on the separate but related area of water neutrality which have directly led to a pause in development; why not sewage overload?

Both local and national planning policy requires a robust approach to both water quality and pollution and a recent legal opinion from the Environmental Law Firm suggests that cumulative impact should be considered. Thames Water does not currently provide information on cumulative impact to local planning authorities.

East Herts District Council resolves to:

1. Recognise this Council's obligation to protect its rivers in line with its local planning policy, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. Recognise that there is clear evidence of deterioration of water quality due to cumulative impact of multiple sewage discharge events or 'sewage overload'.
3. Ensure the evidence base being compiled for the new District Plan fully assesses the cumulative impact of sewage discharge so that this is factored into decisions made in the new local plan, including the overall level of future development.
4. Seek to better understand the cumulative impact of wastewater discharge including untreated sewage and misconnections on the district's rivers, wildlife and the health of residents
5. Continue to take a lead on addressing this issue, working constructively with other agencies.
6. Write to the Environment Agency asking for a position statement in relation to East Herts District, which sets out its understanding of the cumulative impact of 1,060 + sewage discharges per annum into our rivers, or if it is not willing to so do, the reasons why.
7. Ask Natural England when it plans to update its assessment of the Lee Valley Ramsar Sites, Special Protection Areas, and SSSIs, especially Hunsdon and Eastwick Meads.
8. Ask the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to invite senior representatives from Thames Water, the Environment Agency and Natural England to attend an East Herts District Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting to answer questions on sewage discharge.

9. Declare support for River Action's Charter for Rivers.

219 MOTION ON GAMBLING

Councillor Goldspink presented her motion on notice.  
Councillor Marlow seconded the motion.

At this point in the meeting, as it was approaching 10pm, Councillor Glover-Ward proposed a motion that the meeting took a short break and continue past 10pm. Councillor Deering seconded the motion. Having been proposed and seconded, the motion was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that the meeting took a short break and continued past 10pm.

Members supported the motion but felt it did not go far enough, noting the seriousness of the issue and the use of advertising and celebrity endorsements and football clubs in promotions.

Members recognised the devastating impact of gambling addiction on families, particularly young people and criticised the role of algorithms in targeting vulnerable individuals.

Councillor Watson proposed the following amendment:

Amend point b) of the resolution as follows:

- Replace point b) restricting and reducing the amount of gambling advertising and sponsorship of sporting events and ending all pre-watershed gambling advertising.
- With: b) “ban gambling advertising and sponsorship of sporting events and end all gambling advertising. (The WHO recommends ending this advertising altogether)”

Councillor Glover-Ward seconded the amendment.

Members received a personal account which detailed the effects of gambling and supported the amendment to ban all gambling advertising.

Having been proposed and seconded, the amendment to point b) was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

Seeking to further strengthen the resolution, Councillor Horner proposed the following amendment to the motion:

Amend the resolution as follows:

- Replace East Herts District Council therefore resolves to write to the Westminster Government, calling on it to:

- 1) give District Councils much wider powers to regulate Gambling,  
by:-

- a) mandating financial checks so as to prevent gambling beyond means.

- b) ban gambling advertising and sponsorship of sporting events and end all gambling advertising. (The WHO recommends ending this advertising altogether)

- 2) increase the remote gaming duty from 21% to 42% and to use some of the funds from this to help with treatment for those who suffer from addiction to gambling.

We authorise the Leader of EHDC to write to the Parliamentary Secretary of State for Public Health to convey this message.

- With: East Herts District Council therefore resolves to write to the Westminster Government, calling on it to:

- 1) give District Councils much wider powers to regulate Gambling.

2) mandate financial checks so as to prevent gambling beyond means.

3) ban gambling advertising and sponsorship of sporting events and end all gambling advertising. (The WHO recommends ending this advertising altogether).

4) increase the remote gaming duty from 21% to 42% and to use some of the funds from this to help with treatment for those who suffer from addiction to gambling. We authorise the Leader of EHDC to write to the Parliamentary Secretary of State for Public Health to convey this message.

Councillor Watson seconded the amendment.

Having been proposed and seconded, the amendment was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

Members continued to discuss the importance of using the Council's position to make representations to the government regarding gambling, calling for stronger protections and increased taxation on gambling activities.

Additionally, Members affiliated with parties that had accepted donations from gambling interests were urged to use their influence to address the issue within their own political groups.

The motion to support the amended resolution having been proposed and seconded was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that this Council acknowledges its statutory duty to adopt and publish a statement of Licensing Principles under the Gambling Act 2005, and to review it every 3 years. The Council is the local Licensing Authority for non-remote gambling.

This Council notes with concern that there is an estimated one gambling-related suicide every day in the United Kingdom. Gambling is now determined to be one of 6 key risk factors for suicide in the National Suicide Prevention Strategy. Problem gambling is a serious Health issue.

As well as suicide risk, there are other damaging effects of problem gambling, such as loss of money, mounting debt, loss of employment, damaging impact on children, family breakdown and loss of homes. We note that there is a Hertfordshire Gambling Harms Alliance which brings together Public Health, Local Authorities, NHS and Community Organisations. This alliance is developing a strategy to reduce these gambling-related harms, but it lacks any power to enforce any measures, or to control the gambling industry in any way.

East Herts District Council therefore resolves to write to the Westminster Government, calling on it to:

- 1) give District Councils much wider powers to regulate Gambling.
- 2) mandate financial checks so as to prevent gambling beyond means.
- 3) ban gambling advertising and sponsorship of sporting events and end all gambling advertising. (The WHO recommends ending this advertising altogether).
- 4) increase the remote gaming duty from 21% to 42% and to use some of the funds from this to help with treatment for those who suffer from addiction to gambling.

We authorise the Leader of EHDC to write to the Parliamentary Secretary of State for Public Health to convey this message.

220 MOTION ON HOLDING AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING TO DEBATE THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW (LGR) OPTIONS

Ahead of the motion being presented, the Director for Legal, Policy and Governance clarified that having sought King's Counsel's advice, it had been confirmed that the decision in relation to the final Local Government Reorganisation submission was to be an Executive decision and not a Full Council decision. Members heard that the advice from King's Counsel remained privileged and had been obtained on a multi-authority basis.

It was noted that the motion could not change that the final decision would be taken by Executive on 18 November 2025.

Councillor Deering presented his motion on notice.  
Councillor Devonshire seconded the motion.

Members expressed disappointed in the requirement to bring forward a motion for an extraordinary meeting to be considered, when other councils had planned extraordinary meetings.

Councillor Crystall proposed the following amendments:

Amend the motion as follows:

- Replace: Council notes that:

- 1) The current Local Government Review (LGR) process for Hertfordshire represents one of the most significant constitutional developments in the history of local government within our county.

- 2) The outcomes of this review have the potential to reshape the structure, governance, and democratic

accountability of local authorities across Hertfordshire, including East Herts District Council.

3) The Council's position within this process will have lasting implications for our residents, staff, services, and local identity.

4) The decision on East Herts District Council's preferred option within the LGR process is currently due to be made by the Executive without prior consultation or open debate by all Members.

5) As a council that prides itself on being transparent, democratic, and listening to the voices of its Members and residents, it is vital that such a fundamental matter is discussed and determined in a public and inclusive forum where all District Councillors are able to contribute and vote.

Council therefore believes that:

- a) The determination of the Council's preferred position within the Local Government Review should not rest solely with the Executive.
- b) All elected Members, as the democratically chosen representatives of their communities, should have the opportunity to consider, debate and vote on this issue.
- c) Open discussion will strengthen the legitimacy and credibility of the Council's eventual position and ensure that it reflects the collective view of the authority.

Council resolves to:

- 1) Convene an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council at the earliest practicable opportunity to consider and debate the options presented within the Local Government Review for Hertfordshire.
- 2) Ensure that a comprehensive briefing paper outlining each option, along with its potential implications for



East Herts, is circulated to all Members in advance of the meeting.

- 3) Allow a free vote of all Members at that meeting to determine East Herts District Council's formal position and recommendation to be submitted as part of the LGR process.
- 4) Request that the Executive refrains from making any final decision on the Council's position within the LGR process until this extraordinary meeting has taken place and the will of the full Council has been expressed.

• With: "Council notes that:

- 1) The current Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process for Hertfordshire represents the most significant constitutional development within our county since the Local Government Act 1972 reorganised councils.
- 2) This reorganisation proposes reshaping the structure, governance, and democratic accountability of local authorities across Hertfordshire, including East Herts District Council and will have lasting implications for our residents, staff, services, and local identity.
- 3) As part of the process, each council within Hertfordshire, including East Herts District Council, is able to express a preference for which of 3 proposed unitary structures it favours. This preference will be recorded in the Final Proposal document to be submitted to Government by 28 November 2025. The Government will then make the final decision on which unitary option it chooses to put in place.
- 4) The decision on which of the 3 options East Herts District Council favours will be made by the Executive, following unequivocal KC opinion on the correct process for decision-making.

5) As a council that prides itself on being transparent, democratic, and listening to the voices of its Members and residents, the council has already carried out engagement across the District with partners, stakeholders and residents, and has kept group leaders informed of the process through regular briefings, with those group leaders advised to keep their own councillor groups updated in turn. The council has a full briefing planned for all members once the Final Proposal document is available so that it can be discussed in a forum where all District Councillors are able to contribute.

Council therefore believes that:

- a) The determination of the Council's preferred option within the Local Government Reorganisation rests solely with the Executive.
- b) It recognises that elected Members should have the opportunity to consider, debate and take part in an indicative vote on this issue to help inform the Executive's decision on which unitary structure it prefers, prior to the Government making its final choice.
- c) Open discussion will help strengthen the legitimacy and credibility of the Council's eventual position.

Council resolves to:

- 1) Replace the briefing with an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council on Thursday 13 November 2025 at 7pm to consider and debate the options presented within Local Government Reorganisation for Hertfordshire.
- 2) Ensure that a comprehensive briefing paper outlining each option, along with its potential implications for East Herts, is circulated to all Members in advance of the meeting.
- 3) Allow an indicative vote of all Members at that meeting to help inform the Executive prior to it making a final

decision on the Council's preferred unitary option at its meeting on November 18 2025.”

Councillor Goldspink seconded the amendment.

Members debated the amendment. It was noted the Group Leaders had remained briefed throughout the LGR process. Councillors noted that the initial planned briefing did not have the same impact as a Full Council debate.

Members thanked residents for feedback provided during the engagement process.

Having been proposed and seconded, the amendment was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

Members further debated the substantive motion, noting that the process for devolving powers locally, provided minimal opportunity for local input.

The motion to support the amendment having been proposed and seconded was put to the meeting and upon a vote being taken, was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that (1) The current Local Government Review (LGR) process for Hertfordshire represents one of the most significant constitutional developments in the history of local government within our county.

2) The outcomes of this review have the potential to reshape the structure, governance, and democratic accountability of local authorities across Hertfordshire, including East Herts District Council.

3) The Council's position within this process will have lasting implications for our residents, staff, services, and local identity.

4) The decision on East Herts District Council's preferred option within the LGR process is currently due to be made by the Executive without prior consultation or open debate by all Members.

5) As a council that prides itself on being transparent, democratic, and listening to the voices of its Members and residents, it is vital that such a fundamental matter is discussed and determined in a public and inclusive forum where all District Councillors are able to contribute and vote.

Council therefore believes that:

- a) The determination of the Council's preferred position within the Local Government Review should not rest solely with the Executive.
- b) All elected Members, as the democratically chosen representatives of their communities, should have the opportunity to consider, debate and vote on this issue.
- c) Open discussion will strengthen the legitimacy and credibility of the Council's eventual position and ensure that it reflects the collective view of the authority.

Council resolves to:

- 1) Replace the briefing with an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council on Thursday 13 November 2025 at 7pm to consider and debate the options presented within Local Government Reorganisation for Hertfordshire.
- 2) Ensure that a comprehensive briefing paper outlining each option, along with its potential implications for East Herts, is circulated to all Members in advance of the meeting.

- 3) Allow an indicative vote of all Members at that meeting to help inform the Executive prior to it making a final decision on the Council's preferred unitary option at its meeting on 18 November 2025.

The meeting closed at 10.27 pm

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|----------------|
| Chairman ..... |
| Date .....     |

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON  
THURSDAY 13 NOVEMBER 2025, AT 7.00  
PM

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PRESENT: Councillor M Adams (Chairman).  
Councillors J Dunlop, D Andrews,  
R Buckmaster, P Boylan, C Brittain,  
I Devonshire, E Buckmaster, S Bull,  
R Carter, N Clements, M Connolly, S Copley,  
N Cox, B Crystall, A Daar, B Deering,  
J Dumont, Y Estop, V Glover-Ward,  
M Goldspink, C Hart, G Hill, D Hollebon,  
A Holt, S Hopewell, C Horner, T Hoskin,  
S Marlow, G McAndrew, S Nicholls,  
A Parsad-Wyatt, C Redfern, T Smith,  
V Smith, T Stowe, M Swainston, J Thomas,  
S Watson, D Willcocks, G Williamson and  
C Wilson.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| James Ellis       | - Director for Legal,<br>Policy and<br>Governance and<br>Monitoring Officer          |
| Brian Moldon      | - Director for<br>Finance, Risk and<br>Performance                                   |
| Sara Saunders     | - Director for Place   |
| Helen Standen     | - Interim Chief<br>Executive   |
| Stephanie Tarrant | - Assistant Director<br>for Democracy,<br>Elections and<br>Information<br>Governance |

232 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded attendees that the meeting was being webcast. The full webcast of the meeting can be viewed here: [Extraordinary Council - 13 November 2025](#).

The Chairman invited the Director for Legal, Policy and Governance to provide an update following a request for the KC advice on the decision-making process to be made public at the Council meeting held on [22 October 2025](#).

The Director for Legal, Policy and Governance advised that they had asked the KC to prepare a separate note that could be shared with Members without waiving legal privilege. This note had now been shared with all Group Leaders and Independent Members. Members heard that the KC note confirmed that the decision in relation to the final Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) submission was not for Full Council and following debate Members could cast an indicative vote on their preferred option.

In response, the reliance on a separate note was deemed unsatisfactory, with a request that future documents referred to within reports be available for Members to review.

233 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Butcher, Burt, Deffley, Jacobs, Wyllie and Woollcombe.

234 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

235 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN HERTFORDSHIRE

The Leader of the Council presented the Local Government Reorganisation in Hertfordshire –

Submission of final proposals report. Councillor Crystall highlighted that in February 2025, the Government invited all Hertfordshire Councils to propose a single-tier system to replace the County and District Councils.

Councillor Crystall said that, since then, the eleven councils and the Police and Crime Commissioner had worked together to produce three unitary options: two, three, or four councils. Whilst a joint submission had been agreed, most leaders across the county had acknowledged that it was not their preference. Submissions were required to be received by Government before 28 November 2025, with each council only able to express a preference and the final decision to be taken by Government. The final decision was expected to be received from Government by July 2026.

Councillor Crystall proposed the recommendation as set out in the report. Councillor Goldspink seconded the proposal and reserved her right to speak.

Councillor Goldspink requested a recorded vote. This was supported by Councillors Brittain, Carter, Crystall, Daar and Dumont.

Members debated the proposals with Councillors Deering, Dumont, Glover-Ward, Andrews, E Buckmaster, Hart, Hollebon, Parsad-Wyatt, Wilson, Hoskin, Estop, Carter, Cox, Swainston, Daar, Brittain, Holt, Horner, Clements, McAndrew, Copley, Thomas, Hopewell and Marlow contributing to the discussion, ahead of Councillor Goldspink exercising her right to speak as the seconder.

Members across the chamber agreed that they were not in favour of Local Government Reorganisation across Hertfordshire or the process by which the proposal had taken. Members recognised that Hertfordshire County Council provided key services and had an outstanding Ofsted rating for Children's Services and was rated the second highest Adult Care Service in the Country. It was



noted that it remained unclear how the proposed unitary authorities would deliver these services.

Members highlighted opposition to the proposal of an Elected Mayor, which would introduce a new two-tier system, and further discussion focussed on the process and the financial outlooks associated with the proposals.

Concerns were expressed amongst Members with regards to diluting public access to local councils with the implementation of wider unity authorities. In addition, consideration was given to the barriers of becoming a Councillor in a larger unitary authority, where the location of meetings could be held at a significant distance and during the workday.

It was noted that the Council owned a number of assets and there was a request for all assets of the Council to be reviewed and protected ahead of any changes to the local structure.

Members commented on the strengthened role that Town and Parish Councils could play in the future and considered the potential benefits of unitary authorities.

Disappointment was expressed in relation to some Executive Members proposing to abstain from the indicative vote. Members of the Executive highlighted that they would consider the full debate of Council ahead of taking a decision on 18 November 2025.

To conclude the debate, Councillor Crystall acknowledged the consensus across the Chamber with regards to the options being presented for reorganisation. Councillor Crystall summarised the viability of each option for East Herts and thanked officers for the work that had been undertaken.

The motion having been proposed and seconded was put to a recorded vote and the result was as follows:

Option a) Submit proposal and identify the two unitary (2UA) option as preferred:

Councillors Copley, Horner, Swainston (3)

Option b) Submit proposal and identify modified three unitary option (3UA modified) as preferred and request that Secretary of State formally modify the proposal by agreeing boundary changes, as set out in the proposal:

Councillors Carter, Connolly, Crystall, Daar, Dunlop, Hill, Nicholls, Thomas, Watson, Wilson (10)

Option c) Submit proposal and identify the modified four unitary option (4UA modified) as preferred and request that the Secretary of State formally modify the proposal by boundary changes as set out in the proposal:

Councillors E Buckmaster, R Buckmaster, Bull, Clements, Deering, Devonshire, Estop, Hart, Hollebon, Holt, Parsad-Wyatt, Redfern, Stowe, Willcocks, Williamson (15)

Abstained:

Councillors Adams, Andrews, Boylan, Brittain, Cox, Dumont, Glover-Ward, Goldspink, Hopewell, Hoskin, Marlow, McAndrew, T Smith, V Smith (14)

**RESOLVED** – Council noted the outcome of the indicative vote.

The meeting closed at 8.58 pm

|                |
|----------------|
| Chairman ..... |
| Date .....     |



# Agenda Item 9

## COUNCIL

**DATE OF MEETING:** 10 DECEMBER 2025

**Report by:** Councillor Ben Crystall, Leader of the Council

**Report title:** Executive Report – 18 November 2025

**Ward(s) affected:** All

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### Summary

- This report details the recommendations to Council made by the Executive at its meeting on 18 November 2025.

#### **1.0 Item considered and recommended to Council**

1.1 Since the last Council meeting, the Executive met on 18 November 2025. At this meeting the Executive considered and supported a number of recommendations for Council on the following items:

1.1.1 Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27

1.1.2 Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy

1.2 This report sets out the recommendations for the above items. The full report, including the Appendix, may be viewed on the council's website.

1.3 This report excludes items also considered by the Executive where those reports are separate agenda items on the Council agenda.

#### **2.0 Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27**

2.1 The Executive was asked to consider the latest available information around the current local Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme at East Herts and comment on the proposal that there be no change made for 2026/27.

#### **RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:**

- (a) That Council agree that there be no change to the local council tax support scheme for 2026/27.**

### 3.0 Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy

3.1 The Executive was asked to consider that the revised Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS) be used as part of the evidence base for the new District Plan and as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The new strategy would replace the previous playing pitch strategy, published in 2017.

#### **RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:**

**(a) That the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy, attached as Appendix A, B and C be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform the new East Herts District Plan and as a material consideration for Development Management purposes in the determination of planning applications.**

**(b) Future updates of the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Action Plan be delegated to the Director for Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth.**

### 4.0 Executive

4.1 Matters discussed at the Executive meeting held on 18 November 2025 can be viewed here [Executive – 18 November 2025](#).

4.2 In accordance with 5.32.1 of the constitution, the call-in procedure did not apply to the item relating to Local Government Reorganisation in Hertfordshire – Submission of final proposals, due to the submission timetable. This was agreed by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### 5.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

5.1 [Executive – 18 November 2025](#).

#### **Contact Member**

Councillor Ben Crystall – Leader of the Council

[Ben.Crystall@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Ben.Crystall@eastherts.gov.uk)

**Contact Officer**

James Ellis – Director for Legal, Policy and Governance and Monitoring Officer, Tel: 01279 502170.

[James.Ellis@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:James.Ellis@eastherts.gov.uk)

**Report Author**

Stephanie Tarrant – Assistant Director for Democracy, Elections and Information Governance, Tel: 01992 531441.

[Stephanie.Tarrant@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Stephanie.Tarrant@eastherts.gov.uk)

## **EAST HERTS COUNCIL REPORT**

### **EXECUTIVE**

**Date of meeting:** Tuesday 18 November 2025

**Report by:** Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward– Executive Member for Planning and Growth

**Report title:** East Herts New District Plan- Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy

**Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);**

**Summary** – Members have agreed to undertake a review of the District Plan, including an update of the evidence documents needed to support the new District Plan. The Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy 2025 replaces the previous playing pitch strategy, published in 2017. This report summarises the findings and seeks agreement to use the document as part of the new District Plan evidence base, and to inform Development Management decisions. It also seeks to delegate responsibility for future updates to the Action Plan to the Director for Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE to recommend to Council that:**

- a) **The Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy, attached as Appendix A, B and C be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform the new East Herts District Plan and as a material consideration for Development Management purposes in the determination of planning applications.**
  
- b) **Future updates of the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Action Plan be delegated to the Director for Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth.**

### **1.0 Proposal**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to agree that the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS) can be used as part of the

evidence base for the new District Plan and as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It also seeks approval for updates to the Action Plan to be delegated to the Director for Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth.

- 1.2 The role of the PPOSS is to inform future planning policy and planning application decisions in relation to the protection, enhancement and provision of outdoor sport in East Herts, including S106 funding. It may also have wider value for local clubs and facilities as they could use as evidence to help secure funding from National Governing Bodies and Sport England.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Local planning authorities are required to complete a review of their local plans at least once every 5 years from the adoption date to ensure that plans remain relevant. In October 2023, the Council agreed that East Herts District Plan 2018 needs updating and that work should commence in 2023/24 on updating the technical studies and other preparatory work required to provide a robust evidence base to support this Review.

### *New District Plan Evidence Base*

- 2.2 A clear, relevant and proportionate evidence base is essential for efficient and sound plan-making to ensure that all future planning policy and decisions are based on up-to-date information. The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) sets out the requirement for the preparation and review of all policies to be 'underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence' (paragraph 32).
- 2.3 The evidence base consists of supporting documents that will help inform the future policies and site allocations in the new District Plan. It will cover a range of social, economic, and environmental topics and help identify local needs, constraints and opportunities. Some of the evidence will update previous studies prepared to support the current adopted District Plan. Many of these are now around 10 years old and need updating to reflect contextual and policy changes. Equally, additional evidence will be needed to



address new issues and topics that have become more prevalent in recent years.

- 2.4 The evidence base will be developed throughout the preparation of the new District Plan. As revised and updated studies are finalised, the planning policy team will seek agreement from Executive and Council to include them as part of the evidence base.

*Scope and preparation of Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy*

- 2.5 Access to high-quality, well-maintained sports facilities is vital to the health, wellbeing and social cohesion of communities in East Herts. An up-to-date Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS) provides a robust framework to guide the protection, enhancement and future provision of outdoor sports facilities. Sport England advise that assessments should be refreshed every 3-5 years, so the current Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy, published in 2017 to inform the adopted District Plan (2018), is out of date.
- 2.6 Therefore, the Council commissioned consultant Knight, Kavanagh and Page (KKP) jointly with North Herts Council (NHC) and Stevenage Borough Council (SBC), to develop a PPOSS for each individual local authority area. KKP are also currently undertaking an Indoor Built Facilities Strategy and an Open Space Study for the Council. These two documents will be finalised soon and reported to Members in early 2026.
- 2.7 Work on the PPOSS started in June 2024 and has been governed by a steering group made up of representatives from the Council (officers from planning policy and leisure and parks development), Sport England, Herts Sport and Physical Activity Partnership and the National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs).
- 2.8 The PPOSS includes data from a range of sports: football (grass and 3G pitches), rugby, cricket, tennis/ padel, hockey, netball, athletics, lawn bowls, watersports and golf. Padel and golf were not covered by the previous assessment but have now been included on the advice of Sport England. In accordance with Sport

England requirements the development of the PPOSS has followed the stages set out below:

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

2.9 The assessment of supply and demand (Stage B) was undertaken during 2024-2025. A variety of consultation methods have been used to collate information about the facilities, leagues, clubs and national governing bodies including surveys, desktop assessments, site visits, desk-top assessments and face-to-face meetings. The site visits, to assess the quality of provision, were undertaken between August 2024 and March 2025, to ensure both winter and summer sports were assessed.

2.10 To help analyse supply and demand, the district is divided into five sub-areas (named after the largest settlement within the area). This sub-division reflects the approach taken in the previous 2017 study, using Middle Super Output Areas, and is based upon the presence of common characteristics, including the prevailing economic, social, and environmental conditions and the existence of connections to, and the influence of, surrounding areas and centres. However, cross boundary issues have also been explored to determine the level of imported and exported demand, recognising, for example, that people travel to and make use of strategic facilities irrespective of administrative boundaries.

### **3.0 Reasons**

3.1 The Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS) is an in-depth assessment of the district's pitches and outdoor sport sites and delivers a robust and objective justification for future playing

pitch provision and enhancement throughout East Herts. In particular, the PPOSS provides:

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

3.2 The PPOSS has been produced in accordance with Sport England guidance and reflects requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to plan positively for high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation, ensuring policies are based on robust and up to date assessments (paragraphs 98 and 103).

3.3 As part of the evidence base for the new District Plan, the PPOSS will inform planning policy and be a material consideration for planning decisions. It will also help inform S106 developer contributions. In addition, the PPOSS can also support those organisations, including the Council, involved in the delivery, provision and protection of outdoor sport facilities in the district. It is often a requirement that an area has an up-to-date PPOSS to access funding from Sport England, National Governing Bodies and other organisations. As such, the PPOSS can be used to help clubs and providers gain access to funding and investment.

3.4 The PPOSS is divided into three parts. These are:

- An Executive Summary- attached as **Appendix A** to this report.
- The Assessment Report (encompassing Stages A, B and C of the process set out in paragraph 2.8 above)- attached as **Appendix B** to this report.
- The Strategy and Action Plan Report (Stage D of the process set out in paragraph 2.8 above)- attached as **Appendix C** to this report.

### *Key findings*

3.5 The Assessment Report (**Appendix B**) sets out the context to the PPOSS, the supply and demand assessment process and the conclusions by sport. The main findings in the Assessment Report are that:

- There are some shortfalls for sports played on grass pitches (football, rugby and cricket), that further increases when considering future demand to 2043.
- The quality of grass pitches is one of the biggest influences on participation, particularly for football. It is notable that 31% of football pitches, 53% of rugby pitches and 10% of grass wicket cricket pitches with community use are assessed as poor quality.
- There is an insufficient supply of 3G Pitches (mainly for training), so new provision is required. This could also alleviate grass pitch issues.
- Broadly, demand is being met for non-pitch sports (tennis bowls, athletics, golf, netball), although several tennis and bowls clubs are operating over capacity. There is a need for more padel courts, given the growth in demand for this new sport.
- Where spare capacity exists or where demand is being met, this does not equate to a surplus of provision. Rather any spare capacity is instead considered as a solution to overcoming shortfalls.

- 3.6 The assessment uses ONS population projections, so the future demand analysis does not account for housing growth. As the new District Plan emerges and the scale and location of new development is determined, planning officers will need to use Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator to identify the demand and pitch requirements of housing growth scenarios, to ensure future demand is not under-estimated.

### *Strategy and Action Plan*

- 3.7 Building upon the Assessment Report, the PPOSS's Strategy and Action Plan (**Appendix C**) provides a clear, strategic framework for the provision, maintenance and improvement of playing pitches and outdoor sport (including ancillary provision) up to 2043. Part 2 of the report sets out that the PPOSS vision is to work with key local partners to ensure East Herts is serviced by high quality sports facilities to meet the needs of its residents and improve their health and wellbeing. To achieve this vision, three aims are identified in Part 3: to protect existing supply, to enhance existing provision and to provide new facilities where required.
- 3.8 Part 4 develops a series of recommendations for each sport, informed by different demand scenarios, such as club ambition (information gathered during consultation) and participation trend changes. There is a clear need to protect existing playing pitch provision, in line with planning policy, unless replacement provision meets NPPF and Sport England requirements and is agreed upon and provided.
- 3.9 Many of the identified shortfalls can be met by utilising current provision by improving pitch quality, providing additional lighting, improving ancillary facilities, increasing match play on 3G pitches, reinstating unused provision and increasing community use agreements at schools.
- 3.10 Building on the sport specific recommendations, Part 5 of the report identifies strategic recommendations, which have been

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

- **Protect** all existing facilities, including disused/poor sites, until shortfalls are addressed.
- **Enhance** quality through maintenance programmes (e.g., GMA Pitch Advisory Service, PitchPower app) and ancillary upgrades.
- **Provide** new facilities where required, prioritising:
  - Additional 3G pitches, current shortfall of four 11v11 3G pitches for football use.
  - New full-size hockey Artificial Grass Pitch to service East Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire and Stevenage.
  - Padel courts, need to develop 10 new courts to service demand.
  - Secure tenure and access via long-term leases and formal community use agreements, especially at education sites.
- Maximise developer contributions using Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator; prioritise multi-pitch/multi-sport hubs.
- Inclusive and sustainable provision, ensuring accessibility for women, girls, and under-represented groups.

3.11 The site-by-site action plan (Part 6 of the Strategy report) seeks to address key issues identified in the assessment and strategy. It provides actions based on current levels of usage, quality and future demand, as well as the potential of each site for enhancement. It is organised by Analysis Area and includes information on expected timescales, costs, partners and priority. Each action is linked to one or more of the aims (protect, enhance, provide) and provides guidance for how improvements would be

made should the resources become available. It should be noted that in many instances the Council will not be responsible for the delivery of the recommendations and actions in the PPOSS, as clubs, national governing bodies, town/ parish councils, education providers and landowners can also be responsible.

- 3.12 The action plan is considered a 'live' document and should be regularly monitored and reviewed by the steering group, to ensure it is kept up to date. This is identified as Stage E in the Sport England guidance (set out in paragraph 2.8 of this report) As a guide, if no review and subsequent update is carried out within three years, Sport England and the national governing bodies will consider it to be out of date. If kept up to date, its lifespan can be extended. On this basis the action plan will be reviewed annually by the steering group.

#### *Next Steps*

- 3.13 The PPOSS has been signed off by the steering group, including Sport England. It is the view of officers that the PPOSS provides detailed, robust and up-to-date information about playing pitch and outdoor sport provision in East Herts, so it is recommended the study is agreed as part of the new District Plan evidence base and as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 3.14 In order to allow regular updates to the Action Plan, it is recommended that approval for future updates to the PPOSS Action Plan is delegated to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Growth. This report seeks approval for that arrangement.

## **4.0 Options**

- 4.1 The endorsement of the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy ensures there is an up-to-date evidence base for the protection, enhancement and provision of sports facilities, which play a

significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of East Herts residents.

- 4.2 The Council could choose not to agree to the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy, but this would be contrary to Sport England advice and would mean reliance on the previous PPOSS, which is now 8 years old and out of date. This is contrary to the Government policy to have up-to-date evidence base and would undermine the Council's position in terms of successfully bringing forward the new District Plan. It would also mean that the evidence would have less weight in the determination of planning applications.

## **5.0 Risks**

- 5.1 If the PPOSS is not agreed as part of the evidence base, it may be considered as having reduced weight in informing the strategy and the policy in the new District Plan. This would mean that significant information about playing pitch and outdoor sport provision could be undervalued. This would be contrary to Government policy to have robust evidence and could undermine the Council's position in terms of successfully bringing forward the new East Herts District Plan. Equally, without the 2025 PPOSS the Council will not be able to ensure that the development management process takes into account the latest recommendations about outdoor sport requirements in the district.

## **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

- 6.1 Targeted consultation as part of the assessment was undertaken with facility providers, clubs, local leagues, schools, National Governing Bodies, town and parish councils and Sport England. The Strategy will also be subject to a number of statutory public consultations as part of the production of the new District Plan.

### **Community Safety**

There are no community safety implications arising from this report.

### **Data Protection**



There are no data protection implications arising from this report.

### **Equalities**

There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Grass playing pitches are part of the district's green infrastructure, which alongside social benefits, has many environmental benefits, such as climate change mitigation, habitat creation and sustainable drainage.

### **Financial**

By agreeing a robust strategy, the Council will be in a better position to achieve external grant funding, if required, and secure S106 developer contributions to assist in delivery of the action plan.

### **Health and Safety**

There are no health and safety implications arising from this report.

### **Human Resources**

There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

### **Human Rights**

There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

### **Legal**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **Specific Wards**

No

## **7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

### **7.1 Appendix A: Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy - Executive Summary**

- 7.2 **Appendix B:** Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy – Assessment Report
- 7.3 **Appendix C:** Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy – Strategy and Action Plan

**Contact Member** Cllr Vicky Glover-Ward  
Executive Member for Planning and Growth  
[vicky.glover-ward@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:vicky.glover-ward@eastherts.gov.uk)

**Contact Officer** Sara Saunders  
Director for Place  
Contact Tel. No. 01992 531656  
[sara.saunders@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:sara.saunders@eastherts.gov.uk)

**Report Author** Laura Guy  
Principal Planning Policy Officer



**EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL  
PLAYING PITCH & OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
OCTOBER 2025**

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## INTRODUCTION

Knight Kavanagh & Page (KKP) has been jointly commissioned by East Hertfordshire Council (EHC), North Hertfordshire Council (NHC) and Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) to develop a Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS) for each individual local authority area.

The commission also encompasses an Indoor Built Facilities Strategy for all three councils and an Open Space Study for EHC. This document focuses solely on the East Hertfordshire District Council PPOSS.

This is the executive summary for the PPOSS for East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC). Both the Assessment Report and Strategy have been produced in accordance with Sport England guidance and have achieved sign off from national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) and Sport England through a Steering Group.

The PPOSS provides a comprehensive evidence base and strategic framework for outdoor sports provision in East Hertfordshire. It aligns with Sport England's PPS Guidance/Assessing Needs & Opportunities Guide and supports the District Plan (2018–2033). The strategy aims to protect, enhance, and provide facilities to meet current and future demand, ensuring inclusive, high-quality provision for health and wellbeing.

## Scope

The scope of the PPOSS focuses geographically on all local provision, regardless of ownership and management arrangements. Provision included within the project is as follows:

- ◀ Football
- ◀ Football (3G pitches)
- ◀ Rugby union
- ◀ Rugby league
- ◀ Hockey (artificial grass pitches AGPs)
- ◀ Cricket
- ◀ Tennis
- ◀ Athletics
- ◀ Lawn bowls
- ◀ Water sports
- ◀ Golf

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## SPORT BY SPORT SUMMARIES

### Football:

- There are 184 grass pitches of which 178 are open to community use.
- As a breakdown in quality 16% of pitches are good, 53% standard, 31% poor.
- There are 511 teams, including 44 women/girls' teams.
- There are shortfalls in youth 11v11 and 9v9 pitch formats.
- 3G pitches: There is a current shortfall of four 11v11 3G pitches. Future demand based on ONS projections increases the shortfall to 4.75 3G pitches.

### Rugby union:

- There are 53 pitches in the Authority, of which 42 are open to community use.
- There are four clubs in the Authority which generates demand of 63 teams.
- There is a current shortfall of 20.75 match equivalent sessions for rugby union.
- Key issues: improving pitch quality, utilising education sites to reduce shortfalls, increasing the number of sports lit pitches where possible and supporting Bishop's Stortford RFC, Hertford RFC and Datchworth RFC in enhancing ancillary facilities.

### Cricket:

- There are 46 natural turf squares across 30 sites.
- There are 23 clubs which collectively provide 108 teams.
- There is a shortfall in provision for Saturday peak time demand (-29 match equivalent sessions), future shortfall -41 match equivalent sessions.
- Spare capacity midweek/Sunday; five disused squares could be reinstated.

### Hockey:

- There are eight full size AGPs across six sites. Seven of the full size AGPs are open to community use and sports lit. Both Bishop's Stortford College and Simon Balle School need resurfacing.
- Bishop's Stortford HC and Hertford HC are the two clubs in the district which has the combined demand of 28 senior teams and 30 junior teams across all ages.
- The three pitches used for Saturday peak time demand are Herts & Essex Sports Centre, Hockerhill Anglo-European College and Simon Balle School.
- With the combined demand from clubs within East Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire and Stevenage there is the need for a new full size AGP to service all three authorities.

### Tennis/padel:

- There are 135 courts of which 116 are open to community use.
- There are 13 clubs in the Authority. Total known membership figures equates to 1,432 senior members and 820 junior members giving a total figure of 2,252 members.
- The LTA Padel calculator indicates there is demand for 12 Padel courts in East Hertfordshire. There are currently two courts at Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust, meaning new provision is needed to meet the needs of the Authority.

### Netball:

- There are 81 courts of which 55 are open to community use. Only 31 of the courts are open to community use and sports lit.
- The Bishop's Stortford District Netball League and Hertford and District Netball League have 30 clubs identified as competing within both leagues.
- This is a good level of supply for the district and seems to service the demand well.

### Athletics:

- The Wodson Park Sports Centre track adequately meets the needs of the Authority. The track was last resurfaced in 2005 and has a TrackMark accreditation until March

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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2026. At this point the track will likely need respraying in order to retain its certification.

### Lawn bowls:

- ◀ There are 13 greens across 13 sites.
- ◀ There are 14 clubs in the Authority. Where membership figures are known there are 560 members across 11 clubs, giving an average membership of 56 individuals.
- ◀ Buntingford BC, Datchworth BC, Hertford Castle BC and Shire Park BC are all operating above Bowls England capacity guidelines.

### Golf:

- ◀ There is a good variety of golf courses within the Authority. The existing facilities are clearly servicing demand as evidenced by high membership figures cross each site.

### Water sports:

- ◀ The Authority is well serviced with facilities such as River Stort, Abbots Lake and Ware Priority Lido.

### Rugby league:

- ◀ There are no pitches within the Authority.
- ◀ There are no clubs in the Authority and demand is exported to North Herts Crusaders RLFC or St Albans Centurions RLFC.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## SPORT BY SPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of relevant scenarios have been tested against key issues for each sport, resulting the following recommendations.

### Football – grass pitches

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

### 3G pitches

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

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## Cricket

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

## Rugby union

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

## Hockey

- ◀ Protect the sand based AGPs at Herts & Essex Sports Centre, Simon Balle School and Hockerill Anglo-European College for continued hockey use.
- ◀ Work with partners to provide replacement surfaces to the AGPs at Simon Balle School and Bishop's Stortford College.
- ◀ Ensure all hockey suitable AGPs have a sinking fund in place for its eventual refurbishment.
- ◀ Consider an additional hockey suitable AGP in East Hertfordshire as the current stock is at capacity for peak time usage and is inhibiting hockey growth in the District.



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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- ◀ Explore a community use agreement at St Edmunds College & Prep School which is only eight miles away from Simon Balle School and could provide a good option to increase affiliated hockey participation in East Hertfordshire. If the school has spare capacity at peak time on Saturday's it could be more feasible than a new pitch.
- ◀ The steering group will explore a feasibility study comparing options for a new sports lit hockey suitable AGP.
- ◀ Enhance the changing rooms at Hockerill Anglo-European College which are of a poor quality and highlighted as in need of improving. This will support both Bishop's Stortford Hockey Club and curricular use.

## Rugby league

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

## Tennis/padel

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

## Lawn bowls

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

## Athletics

- ◀ Ensure the track and supporting facilities at the Wodson Park Sports Centre are retained with a priority placed on resurfacing the track to maintain UKA TrackMark accreditation.
- ◀ The compact track at Hockerill Anglo-European College is retained and remains in good condition for as long as possible.
- ◀ Support clubs, running groups, events and England Athletics initiatives such as Park Run and pursue increased participation, where possible.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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- ◀ Continue to increase participation both within affiliated clubs and the wider running market, signposting potential club members from the likes of Parkrun events and other health initiatives.
- ◀ Consider the need to include 'Active Tracks' within strategic housing allocations to provide a health and wellbeing offer on site.

### Netball

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

### Golf

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

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. **Protect** all existing facilities, including disused/poor sites, until shortfalls are addressed.
2. **Enhance** quality through maintenance programmes (e.g., GMA Pitch Advisory Service, PitchPower app) and ancillary upgrades.
3. **Provide** new facilities where required, prioritising:
  - ◀ Additional 3G pitches, current shortfall of four 11v11 3G pitches.
  - ◀ New full-size hockey AGP to service East Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire and Stevenage.
  - ◀ Padel courts, need to develop 10 new courts to service demand.
4. **Secure tenure and access** via long-term leases and formal community use agreements, especially at education sites.
5. **Maximise developer contributions** using Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator; prioritise multi-pitch/multi-sport hubs.
6. **Inclusive and sustainable provision**, ensuring accessibility for women, girls, and under-represented groups.

## Delivering the Strategy

The Strategy Report has presented a thorough Action Plan with recommendations for every site. This covers all playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities covered within the scope.

The PPOSS seeks to provide the necessary robustness and direction to ensure that the Council has a framework for the prioritisation, provision and development of sports facilities across the public, private and independent sectors. It covers all formal playing pitch and outdoor sport facilities across the authority area to assist it to strategically plan for the future.

It is important that the steering group undertakes regular monitoring of the PPOSS and reviews how the position has changed since the adoption of the report. This monitoring should be led by the local authority and supported by all members of the steering group. If no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years, Sport England and the NGBs will consider the PPS and the information on which it is based to be out of date.



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

## ASSESSMENT REPORT JULY 2025

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

**Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd**

Company No: 9145032 (England)

MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

Registered Office: 1 -2 Frecheville Court, off Knowsley Street, Bury BL9 0UF

T: 0161 764 7040 E: [mail@kcp.co.uk](mailto:mail@kcp.co.uk) [www.kcp.co.uk](http://www.kcp.co.uk)



Cert Num: 6543-QMS-001

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## CONTENTS

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| ABBREVIATIONS .....  | 1   |
| PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY .....   | 2   |
| 1.1: Introduction .....  | 2   |
| 1.2: Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach .....                                      | 2   |
| 1.3: Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision.... | 9   |
| 1.4: Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views.....                    | 12  |
| PART 2: FOOTBALL PITCHES .....   | 14  |
| 2.1: Introduction .....  | 14  |
| 2.2: Supply.....   | 15  |
| 2.3: Demand .....  | 29  |
| 2.4: Capacity analysis .....   | 34  |
| 2.5: Supply and demand analysis.....   | 51  |
| 2.6: Conclusion .....  | 55  |
| PART 3: THIRD GENERATION TURF (3G) PITCHES .....   | 57  |
| 3.1: Introduction .....  | 57  |
| 3.2: Current provision.....  | 58  |
| 3.3: Demand .....  | 64  |
| 3.4: Conclusion .....  | 69  |
| PART 4: RUGBY UNION PITCHES .....  | 70  |
| 4.1: Introduction .....  | 70  |
| 4.2: Supply.....   | 70  |
| 4.3: Demand .....  | 78  |
| 4.4: Capacity analysis .....   | 78  |
| 4.5: Supply and demand analysis.....   | 87  |
| 4.6: Conclusion .....  | 88  |
| PART 5: ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCHES (HOCKEY) .....  | 89  |
| 5.1: Introduction .....  | 89  |
| 5.2: Supply.....   | 90  |
| 5.3: Demand .....  | 95  |
| 5.4: Supply and demand analysis.....   | 97  |
| 5.5: Conclusion .....  | 99  |
| PART 6: CRICKET PITCHES .....  | 101 |
| 6.1: Introduction .....  | 101 |
| 6.2: Supply.....   | 102 |
| 6.3: Demand .....  | 118 |
| 6.4: Capacity analysis .....   | 124 |
| 6.5: Supply and demand analysis.....   | 131 |
| 6.6: Conclusion .....  | 133 |

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

---

|                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| PART 7: TENNIS COURTS .....           | 135 |
| 7.1: Introduction .....               | 135 |
| 7.2: Supply .....                     | 135 |
| 7.3: Demand .....                     | 147 |
| 7.4: Supply and demand analysis.....  | 151 |
| 7.5: Conclusion .....                 | 153 |
| PART 8: NETBALL COURTS.....           | 155 |
| 8.1: Introduction .....               | 155 |
| 8.2: Supply .....                     | 155 |
| 8.3: Demand .....                     | 161 |
| 8.4: Supply and demand analysis.....  | 163 |
| 8.5: Conclusion .....                 | 164 |
| PART 9: ATHLETICS.....                | 165 |
| 9.1: Introduction .....               | 165 |
| 9.2: Supply .....                     | 165 |
| 9.3: Demand .....                     | 168 |
| 9.4: Supply and demand analysis.....  | 171 |
| 9.5: Conclusion .....                 | 171 |
| PART 10: LAWN BOWLS .....             | 173 |
| 10.1: Introduction .....              | 173 |
| 10.2: Supply .....                    | 173 |
| 10.3: Demand .....                    | 179 |
| 10.4: Supply and demand analysis..... | 181 |
| 10.5: Conclusion .....                | 184 |
| PART 11: RUGBY LEAGUE .....           | 185 |
| 11.1: Introduction .....              | 185 |
| 11.2: Supply .....                    | 185 |
| 11.3: Demand .....                    | 185 |
| 11.4: Supply and demand analysis..... | 185 |
| 11.5: Conclusion .....                | 185 |
| PART 12: GOLF.....                    | 187 |
| 12.1: Introduction .....              | 187 |
| 12.2: Supply .....                    | 187 |
| 12.3: Demand .....                    | 193 |
| 12.4: Supply and demand analysis..... | 196 |
| 12.5: Conclusion .....                | 196 |
| PART 13: OUTDOOR WATER SPORTS .....   | 198 |
| 13.1: Introduction .....              | 198 |
| 13.2: Supply .....                    | 198 |
| 13.3: Demand .....                    | 198 |
| 13.4: Conclusion .....                | 199 |
| APPENDIX 1: SPORTING CONTEXT .....    | 200 |

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## ABBREVIATIONS

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

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

### 1.1: Introduction

Knight Kavanagh & Page (KKP) has been jointly commissioned by East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC), Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) and North Hertfordshire Council (NHC) to develop a Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS) for each individual local authority area. The commission also encompasses an Indoor Built Facilities Strategy for each of the three councils.

This is the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS) Assessment Report for East Hertfordshire. It presents a supply and demand assessment of playing pitch and outdoor sports facilities in accordance with Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) Guidance (for playing pitch sports) and Sport England's Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (ANOG) for "non-pitch" sports. The PPS Guidance details a 13-stepped approach, separated into 5 distinct sections:

- ◀ Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach (1, 2 & 3).
- ◀ Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision (4 & 5).
- ◀ Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views (6, 7 & 8).
- ◀ Stage D: Develop the strategy (9 & 10).
- ◀ Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date (11, 12 & 13).

ANOG guidance follows a similar process to the Sport England PPS guidance, and this is split into three formal stages which are:

- ◀ Stage A – Prepare and tailor the approach.
- ◀ Stage B – Gather information on supply and demand.
- ◀ Stage C – Assessment – Bringing the information together.

Stages A to C are covered in this report with Stage D covered in the subsequent strategy document.

### 1.2: Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach

The primary purpose of the PPOSS is to provide a strategic framework which ensures that the provision of outdoor playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities meets the local and community needs of both existing and future residents across East Hertfordshire. The Strategy will be produced in accordance with national planning guidance and will provide a robust and objective justification for future sporting provision.

One of the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs. Paragraph 103 discusses the importance of access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity that can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

For the full national context, including for each of the sports covered please refer to Appendix 1.



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## Why the PPOSS is being developed

The PPOSS will form part of the evidence base for the new District Plan. It will provide a strategic framework to ensure that the provision of outdoor playing pitches meets the needs of residents (both existing and future) and visitors to the East Hertfordshire District Council area. It will also support those organisations, including the Council, involved in the delivery, provision and protection of outdoor sports facilities in the District. The Strategy will be produced in accordance with Sport England guidance and provide robust and objective justification for future playing pitch provision and enhancement throughout East Hertfordshire.

In addition to this, the other key drivers for a new strategy are to:

- ◀ Improve our resident's health and wellbeing and increasing participation in sport.
- ◀ Provide a clear strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities.
- ◀ Inform assessments of planning applications, ensuring there is sufficient outdoor sports facilities and playing pitches provided on and off site as deemed appropriate.
- ◀ Monitor potential changes to the supply and demand due to capital programmes e.g., for educational sites.
- ◀ Providing evidence of need for capital funding. As well as proving the need for developer contributions towards pitch and facilities.
- ◀ Identify any cross-boundary issues specific to each authority and its neighbouring local authorities.
- ◀ Ensure that all clubs have access to facilities of appropriate quality to meet current needs and longer-term aspirations.
- ◀ Provide evidence to help secure internal and external funding.

## Local context

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

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

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

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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

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

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

## **New District Plan**

In October 2023 East Herts Council agreed to update the adopted District Plan (2018). The Council will commence formal work on the District Plan Review in late 2025 once the Government has published secondary legislation to implement the plan-making reforms.

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

## **Open Space, Sport and Recreation Supplementary Planning Document**

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

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

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

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

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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

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

## Vision and Corporate Priorities

On 28th February 2024, the Council approved its "LEAF" corporate priorities. These set out the strategic priorities of the Council and are grouped under the following four headings:

- ◀ Listening, Open and Transparent.
- ◀ Environmentally Focused.
- ◀ Acting with the Community.
- ◀ Fair and Inclusive.

Under each heading are a series of sub objectives and actions which officers are tasked with delivering. These LEAF priorities are kept under review and in July 2025, the Council approved some updates to priorities.

## Housing Strategy 2022-2027

Homelessness, poor condition homes or low levels of energy efficiency and an insufficient supply of affordable homes are all challenges in East Herts. The Housing Strategy 2022-2027 looks to address these issues by delivering more affordable homes, enabling a wider range of high-quality accommodation for vulnerable residents and improving the sustainability of existing properties.

## Thriving Together Health and Wellbeing Plan 2024-2027

The plan promotes an integrated approach to tackling health and wellbeing, working alongside national and regional health agencies, the Herts and Essex Integrated Care Partnership (ICP), the Integrated Care System (ICS) and the Integrated care Board (ICB), as well as Hertfordshire County Council and Parish Councils and the voluntary sector. Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Public Health has a key role to play in supporting good health and wellbeing and is tasked with the overall responsibility for achieving this across Hertfordshire. The main priorities are to:

- ◀ Ensure that every child has the best start to life.
- ◀ Support communities to be healthy and sustainable.
- ◀ Support residents to maintain healthy lifestyles.
- ◀ Support people living with dementia.
- ◀ Improve support for people living with life-long conditions, long term health conditions, physical disabilities and their families.
- ◀ Improve residents' mental health.
- ◀ Supporting individuals to improve their health and wellbeing
- ◀ Enabling groups in the community to support themselves and each other
- ◀ Using partnership co-operation and clear actions to improve community health and wellbeing.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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An action plan has been developed to address these aims, with a range of actions including supporting and engaging with the voluntary sector and tackling inactivity and improving physical wellbeing by supporting residents to access sport, leisure and recreation opportunities.

## East Herts Cultural Strategy 2021-2025

The East Herts Cultural Strategy 2021-2025 outlines how strategic partners can contribute to highlighting the great physical and human assets of the District. The vision is that: “East Herts will lead the way in demonstrating that when residents, community organisations and the creative industries come together extraordinary, surprising and delightful things can happen that enrich and enhance everyone’s health, wellbeing and sense of inclusion”.

For the purposes of this Strategy, which places inclusion at its heart, arts and culture is considered to include the performing and visual arts, festivals, tourism and leisure, heritage and historical buildings, sports and physical activity, parks and open spaces, children’s play and common interest voluntary groups. The Strategy recognises that culture can be a key drive for prosperity in East Herts.

Population projections estimate that the number of people in all age groups are growing in the District. Housing developments in new neighbourhoods and garden villages will bring new cultural opportunities to East Herts through unlocking developer contributions. Ensuring that all residents have access to activities is a challenge, particularly those living in more deprived areas. Providing cultural activities is also seen to tackle wider societal issues such as crime and loneliness and improve educational attainment in young people. Residents need to be able to access these events in sustainable ways.

## Management arrangements

A project team from the Council has worked with KKP to ensure that all relevant information is readily available and to support the consultants as necessary to ensure that project stages and milestones are delivered on time, and to the required quality standard to meet Sport England guidance.

Further to this, a Steering Group is and will continue to be responsible for the direction of the PPS from a strategic perspective and for supporting, checking and challenging the work of the project team. The Steering Group is made up of representatives from East Herts District Council, Sport England, Herts Sport and Physical Activity Partnership and National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs). The responsibilities of the Steering Group have been:

- ◀ Setting a strategic framework.
- ◀ Ensuring that the process is robust and meets the methodology requirements of the PPS guidance as currently available.
- ◀ Preparing and signing off project management documents e.g., the project plan and project brief.
- ◀ Establishing the context and tailoring the approach.
- ◀ Setting club survey response targets.
- ◀ Assisting in the identification and engagement of those who should be consulted to gather the supply and demand of information.
- ◀ Check and challenge key finding, issues, solutions, recommendations and actions.
- ◀ Reviewing draft documents.

It will be important for the Steering Group to continue once the PPOSS has been finalised to contribute to Stage E and help keep it up to date.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## Scope

The following are the key outdoor sports in East Hertfordshire and as such are included within the scope:

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

## Extent of the study area

The study area is the East Hertfordshire District Council administrative area. Due to the size of the District, the array of influences acting upon it and the diverse and dispersed nature of its settlements there are a great variety of issues facing its communities. In order to establish a policy approach, appropriate to meeting these differing needs it is necessary to sub-divide the District. This sub-division is based upon the presence of common characteristics, including the prevailing economic, social, and environmental conditions and the existence of connections to, and the influence of, surrounding areas and centres.

As a result of this process five distinct and internally cohesive areas within the District have been identified as follows:

- ◀ Bishop's Stortford.
- ◀ Buntingford.
- ◀ Hertford, Ware.
- ◀ Sawbridgeworth.
- ◀ Watton-at-Stone.

Cross boundary issues have been explored to determine the level of imported and exported demand, recognising, for example, that people travel to and make use of strategic facilities irrespective of administrative boundaries. As can be seen the Buntingford Analysis Area as an example is much larger than the town of Buntingford itself. This is because the agreed analysis areas have been named after prominent settlements within each area.

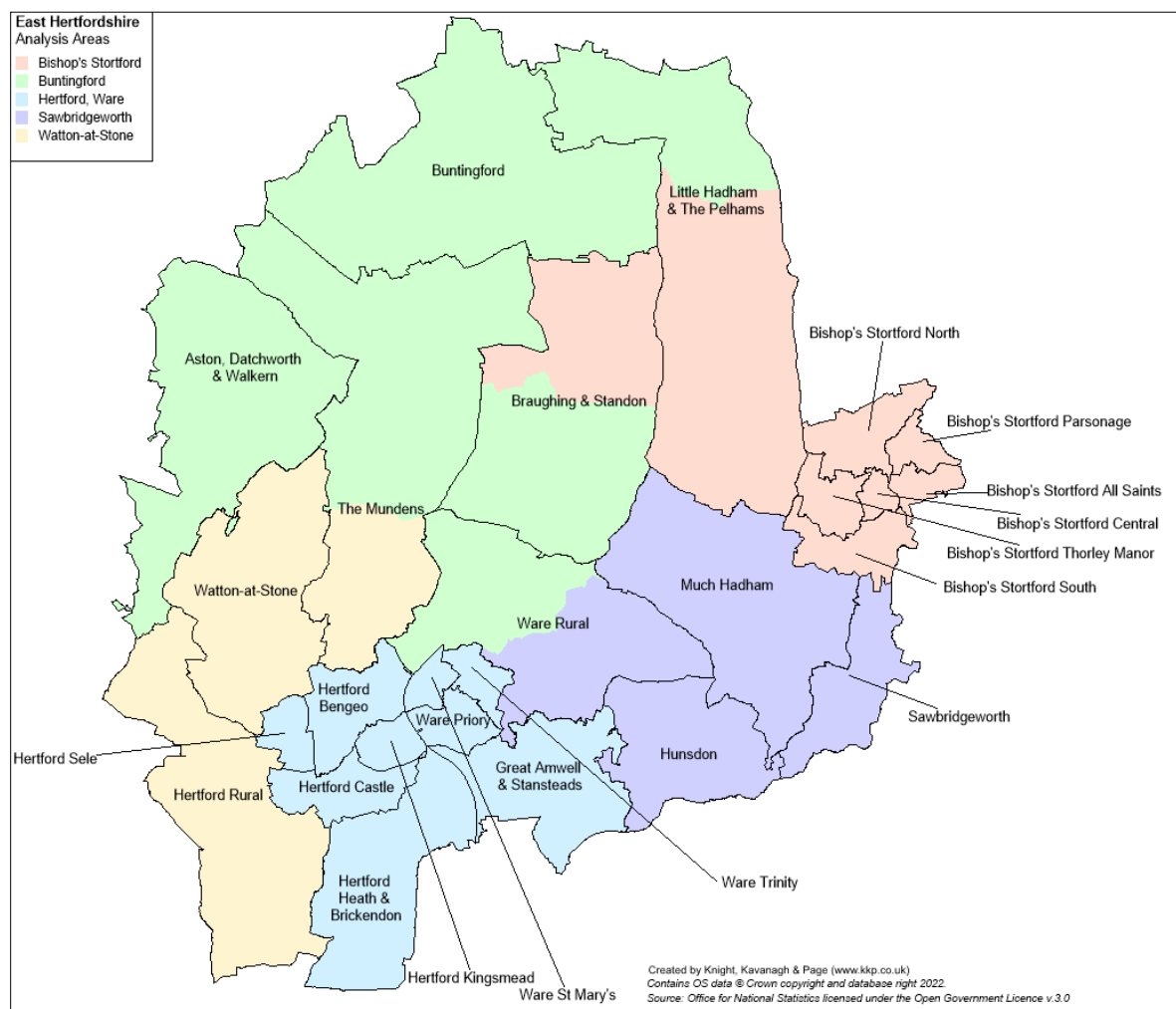
# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Figure 1.1: Map showing analysis areas



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Figure 1.2: Map showing analysis areas and wards



## 1.3: Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision

A clear picture of supply and demand for outdoor sports facilities in East Hertfordshire needs to be provided to include an accurate assessment of quantity and quality. This is achieved through consultation with key stakeholders to ensure that they inform the subsequent strategy. It informs current demand, adequacy, usage, future demand and strategies for maintenance and investment for outdoor sports facilities.

### Gather supply information and views – an audit of playing pitches

Sport England's PPS guidance uses the following definitions of a playing pitch and playing field. These definitions are set out by the Government in the 2015 'Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order'.<sup>1</sup>

- ◀ **Playing pitch** – a delineated area which together with any run off area, is of 0.2ha or more, and is used for association football, rugby, cricket, hockey, lacrosse, rounders, baseball, softball, American football, Australian football, Gaelic football, shinty, hurling, polo or cycle polo.
- ◀ **Playing field** – the whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch.

1. [www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)>Facilities and Planning> Planning Applications

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Although the statutory definition of a pitch is one that meets a minimum size of 0.2ha, this PPS takes into account smaller size pitches that contribute to the supply side, for example, a site containing a mini 5v5 football pitch. This PPS counts individual grass pitches (as a delineated area) as the basic unit of supply. The definition of a playing pitch also includes artificial grass pitches (AGPs).

As far as possible the assessment report aims to capture all of the outdoor sports facilities within East Hertfordshire; however, there may be instances, for example, on school sites or private sites where access was not possible and has led to omissions within the report. Where pitches have not been recorded within the report, including those which are disused or lapsed, they remain as pitches and for planning purposes continue to be so. Furthermore, exclusions of a pitch does not mean that it is not required from a supply and demand point of view.

## Quantity

Where known, all outdoor sports facilities are included irrespective of ownership, management and use. Sites were initially identified using Sport England's Active Places web based database, with the Council and NGBs supporting the process by checking and updating this initial data. This was also verified against club information supplied by local leagues.

For each site, the following details were recorded in the project database (which will be supplied upon completion of the project as an electronic file):

- ◀ Site name, address (including postcode) and location.
- ◀ Ownership and management type.
- ◀ Security of tenure.
- ◀ Total number, type and quality of outdoor sports facilities.

## Accessibility

Not all outdoor sports facilities offer the same level of access to the community. The ownership and accessibility of provision also influences actual availability for community use. Each site is assigned a level of community use as follows:

- ◀ **Community use** - facilities in public, voluntary, private or commercial ownership or management (including education sites) recorded as being available for hire and currently in use by teams playing in community leagues.
- ◀ **Available but unused** - facilities that are available for hire but are not currently used by teams which play in community leagues; this most often applies to school sites but can also apply to sites which are expensive to hire.
- ◀ **No community use** - facilities which as a matter of policy or practice are not available for hire or used by teams playing in community leagues. This should include professional club pitches along with some semi-professional club pitches, where play is restricted to the first or second team.
- ◀ **Disused** – provision that is not being used at all by any users and is not available for community hire either.

## Quality

The capacity of provision to regularly provide for competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by their quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of provision affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment of a sport. In extreme circumstances it can result in a facility being unable to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off-peak times.



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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It is not just the quality itself which has an effect on its capacity but also the quality, standard and range of ancillary facilities. The quality of both the outdoor sports facility and ancillary facilities will determine whether provision is able to contribute to meeting demand from various groups and for different levels and types of play.

The quality of all outdoor sports facilities identified in the audit and the ancillary facilities supporting them are assessed regardless of ownership, management or availability. Along with capturing any details specific to the individual facilities and sites, a quality rating is also recorded within the audit for each. These ratings are used to help estimate the capacity to accommodate competitive and other play within the supply and demand assessment.

In addition to undertaking non-technical assessments (using the templates provided within the guidance and as determined by NGBs), users and providers were also consulted on the quality and in some instances the quality rating was adjusted to reflect this.

## **Gather demand information and views**

Presenting an accurate picture of current demand for outdoor sports facilities (i.e. recording how and when provision is used) is important when undertaking a supply and demand assessment.

Demand for outdoor sports facilities in the District tends to fall within the following categories:

- ◀ Organised competitive play.
- ◀ Organised training.
- ◀ Informal play.

Current and future demand for outdoor sports facilities is presented on a sport-by-sport basis within the relevant sections of this report.

In addition, unmet, latent, imported and exported demand for provision is also identified within each section. Unmet demand is known to currently exist but is unable to access sports facilities; latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better quality provision. Exported and imported demand refers to those sports users who are playing outside of their local authority of choice.

A variety of consultation methods were used to collate such demand information. Firstly, face to face consultation was carried out with key clubs from each sport, thus allowing for the collection of detailed demand information and an exploration of key issues to be interrogated and more accurately assessed. For all remaining clubs, an online survey (converted to postal if required) was utilised.

Local sports development officers, county associations and regional governing body officers advised which of the clubs to include in the face-to-face consultation and Sport England was also included within the consultation process prior to the project commencing. Issues identified by clubs returning questionnaires were followed up by telephone or face to face interviews.

As key providers and users of outdoor sports facilities, educational establishments were also consulted. This involved face to face meetings with secondary schools and colleges and an online survey being sent to primary schools.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Future demand/population growth

It has been agreed to project future demand to 2043 in East Hertfordshire as the Council is currently updating its adopted District Plan (2018-2033), so the revised housing targets will be set for beyond 2033.

The current resident population in East Hertfordshire is 150,158 (ONS 2021 Census). By 2043 (the period to which this assessment projects population based future demand) the East Hertfordshire's population is projected to increase 8% according to ONS data.

Alongside current demand, it is important for the PPOSS to assess whether the future demand for playing pitches can be met. Using ONS population projections, as well as likely participation growth informed through consultation, an estimate can be made of the likely future demand for playing pitches.

Team generation rates are used to provide an indication of how many people it may take to generate a team (by gender and age group) in order to help estimate the change in demand for pitch sports that may arise from any population change.

Future demand for pitches is calculated by adding the percentage increases to the population increases in each analysis area. This figure is then applied to the team generation rates and is presented on a sport-by-sport basis.

Other information sources that were used to help identify future demand, especially for non-pitch sports (where team generation rates are not applicable) include:

- ◀ Recent trends in the participation.
- ◀ The nature of the current and likely future population and their propensity to participate.
- ◀ Feedback from clubs on their plans to develop additional teams/attract additional members.
- ◀ Any local and NGB specific sports development targets (e.g. increase in participation).

## 1.4: Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views

Supply and demand information gathered is used to assess the adequacy of playing pitch provision in East Hertfordshire. It focuses on how much use each site could potentially accommodate (on an area-by-area basis) compared to how much use is currently taking place.

### Understand the situation at individual sites

Qualitative pitch ratings are linked to a pitch capacity rating derived from NGB guidance and tailored to suit a local area. The quality and use of each pitch is assessed against the recommended pitch capacity to indicate how many match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket) a pitch could accommodate.

This is compared to the number of matches actually taking place and categorised as follows, to identify:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Potential spare capacity: Play is below the level the site could sustain. |  |
| At capacity: Play is at a level the site can sustain.                     |  |
| Overused: Play exceeds the level the site can sustain.                    |  |

As a guide, the FA, RFU, EH and the ECB have set a standard number of matches that each pitch type should be able to accommodate without adversely affecting its quality.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 1.1: Capacity of playing pitches

| Sport       | Pitch type                 | Good              | Standard          | Poor              |
|-------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Football    | Adult pitches              | 3 per week        | 2 per week        | 1 per week        |
| Football    | Youth pitches              | 4 per week        | 2 per week        | 1 per week        |
| Football    | Mini pitches               | 6 per week        | 4 per week        | 2 per week        |
| Rugby union | Natural Inadequate (D0)    | 2 per week        | 1.5 per week      | 0.5 per week      |
| Rugby union | Natural Adequate (D1)      | 3 per week        | 2 per week        | 1.5 per week      |
| Rugby union | Pipe Drained (D2)          | 3.25 per week     | 2.5 per week      | 1.75 per week     |
| Rugby union | Pipe and Slit Drained (D3) | 3.5 per week      | 3 per week        | 2 per week        |
| Cricket     | One grass wicket           | 5 per season      | 4 per season      | 0 per season      |
| Cricket     | One synthetic wicket       | 60 per season     | 60 per season     | 0 per season      |
| Hockey AGPs | One AGP                    | 4 matches per day | 4 matches per day | 0 matches per day |

For non-pitch sports, capacity is not linked to the number of matches taking place but rather the number of members (and other users) attracted to a site. For example, for tennis, a hard court with sports lighting is said to have capacity for 60 members, whereas a hard court without sports lighting has capacity for 40 members (this varies for grass courts). For bowls, the capacity of a green is thought to be 60 members, although this can vary depending on how active the membership is and how many teams are fielded.

## Develop the current picture of provision

Once capacity is determined on a site-by-site basis, actual spare capacity is calculated on an area-by-area basis via further interrogation of temporal demand. Although this may have been identified, it does not necessarily mean that there is surplus provision. For example, spare capacity may not be available when it is needed, or the site may be retained as a 'strategic reserve' to enable pitch rotation to reduce wear and tear.

Capacity ratings assist in the identification of sites for improvement/development, rationalisation, decommissioning and disposal.

## Identify the key findings and issues

By completing Steps 1-5 it is possible to identify several findings and issues relating to the supply, demand and adequacy of outdoor sports provision in East Hertfordshire. This report seeks to identify and present the key findings and issues prior to development of the Strategy and Action Plan for East Hertfordshire.

## Develop the future picture of provision (scenario testing)

Modelling scenarios to assess whether existing provision can cater for unmet, latent, exported and future demand is made after the capacity analysis. This will also include, for example, removing sites with unsecured community use to demonstrate the impact this would have if these sites were to be decommissioned in the future. The scenario testing generally occurs in the Strategy report that follows on from this document and therefore does not form part of the Assessment Report.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## PART 2: FOOTBALL PITCHES

### 2.1: Introduction

The organisation primarily responsible for the development of football in East Hertfordshire is Hertfordshire FA. It is also responsible for the administration, in terms of discipline, rules and regulations, cup competitions and representative matches, development of clubs and facilities, volunteers, referees, coaching courses and delivering national football schemes.

This section of the report focuses on the supply and demand for grass football pitches. Part 3 captures supply and demand for third generation pitches (3G pitches) which are the preferred AGP (artificial grass pitch) surface type for football. In future, it is anticipated that there will be a growing demand for the use of 3G pitches for competitive football fixtures, especially to accommodate mini and youth football.

To support in delivery of both the current and superseding FA National Game Strategy (NGS), the FA commissioned a nationwide consultancy project. A Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) has now been produced for every local authority across England.

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

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

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

It is important to recognise that an LFFP is an investment portfolio of priority projects for potential investment - it is not a detailed supply and demand analysis of all pitch provision in a local area. Consequently, it cannot be used in place of a PPS and is not an accepted evidence base for site change of use or disposal.

The original East Hertfordshire LFFP<sup>2</sup> was developed in 2019 and is currently being updated. It identifies 15 potential projects for investment which are outlined in this section and the 3G pitch section of the report. The updated LFFP has been published in 2025 and explores potential 3G pitch and ancillary provision projects for the Authority and will be published prior to the PPS strategy completion. The 2025 LFFP has not applied priority sites for grass football pitches as they are now funded under the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund and the Home Advantage fund.

There is a total of 58 football clubs identified as playing in East Hertfordshire. The larger clubs in the District were offered an opportunity to engage in face-to-face consultations to allow them to provide feedback in greater detail on issues relating to supply and demand.

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<sup>2</sup><https://localplans.footballfoundation.org.uk/local-authorities-index/east-hertfordshire/east-hertfordshire-executive-summary/>

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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The remaining clubs were issued an online survey which was distributed by KKP and Hertfordshire FA. The following clubs were consulted with face to face or via virtual meetings:

- ◀ Bengoe Tigers FC.
- ◀ Bishop's Stortford Community YFC (BSC FC).
- ◀ Buntingford Cougars FC.
- ◀ Bury Rangers FC.
- ◀ Hertford Town YFC.
- ◀ Ware FC Academy.
- ◀ Ware YFC.
- ◀ Watton YFC.

Through face-to-face interviews, survey responses and phone calls, an 85% team response rate (432/511 teams) has been achieved having consulted with 18/58 (31%) of clubs. The difference in percentages is caused by consultations prioritising clubs that have the higher number of teams, such as BSC FC which has 65 teams identified as playing within the District.

The following clubs completed online surveys or were consulted with through telephone calls:

- ◀ Bishops Stortford Swifts Youth FC.
- ◀ Bullsmoor Utd.
- ◀ Buntingford Town FC.
- ◀ Enfield FC.
- ◀ Forest Hall Park FC.
- ◀ Hertford Heath.
- ◀ Hertford Heath Junior FC.
- ◀ Sawbo FC.
- ◀ St Margaretsbury FC.
- ◀ Thorley Manor FC.
- ◀ Ware Lions FC.

## 2.2: Supply

The audit identifies a total of 184 grass football pitches in East Hertfordshire across 70 sites. Of the pitches, 178 are available, at some level, for community use across 66 sites. All non-community accessible pitches are located at education sites, other than Albury Football Ground where community access was removed by the council due to noise complaints. Site assessments reviewing the quantity and quality of provision across the Authority was undertaken by KKP during December 2024.

As presented in the table below, the Hertford, Ware Analysis Area contains the most football pitches in East Hertfordshire with 66 identified (equating to 36% of all provision). In contrast, the Watton-at-Stone Analysis Area contains the least provision with 10 pitches identified (5% of overall provision).

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 2.1: Summary of all grass football pitches

| Analysis area      | Adult     | Youth 11v11 | Youth 9v9 | Mini 7v7  | Mini 5v5  | Total      |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Bishop's Stortford | 11        | 8           | 6         | 13        | 6         | <b>44</b>  |
| Buntingford        | 10        | 8           | 6         | 13        | 9         | <b>46</b>  |
| Hertford, Ware     | 19        | 15          | 14        | 8         | 10        | <b>66</b>  |
| Sawbridgeworth     | 7         | 5           | 4         | 1         | 1         | <b>18</b>  |
| Watton-at-Stone    | 2         | 2           | 2         | 1         | 3         | <b>10</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>49</b> | <b>38</b>   | <b>32</b> | <b>36</b> | <b>29</b> | <b>184</b> |

In East Hertfordshire, out of the 184 pitches, 49 are adult size (27%) and makes up the majority of pitches with the next biggest allocation of pitches being youth 11v11 with 38 (21%). It can be common for youth 11v11 teams to play on adult pitches as a result of a lack of youth 11v11 pitches which is not in line with the FA Youth Review.

Table 2.2: Summary of grass football pitches available to the community

| Analysis area      | Adult     | Youth 11v11 | Youth 9v9 | Mini 7v7  | Mini 5v5  | Total      |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Bishop's Stortford | 10        | 8           | 6         | 11        | 4         | <b>39</b>  |
| Buntingford        | 10        | 8           | 6         | 13        | 9         | <b>46</b>  |
| Hertford, Ware     | 19        | 15          | 14        | 7         | 10        | <b>65</b>  |
| Sawbridgeworth     | 7         | 5           | 4         | 1         | 1         | <b>18</b>  |
| Watton-at-Stone    | 2         | 2           | 2         | 1         | 3         | <b>10</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>48</b> | <b>38</b>   | <b>32</b> | <b>33</b> | <b>27</b> | <b>178</b> |

Of the community available pitches, 38 are of a youth 11v11 size representing 21% of the available supply, which is low in relation to the proportion of youth teams (128 teams – 25% of all teams) which should be playing matches on this size pitch. This issue often results in teams fast tracking youth sides to play on adult pitches given the relatively recent introduction of youth 11v11 pitches within football in the UK.

In accordance with the FA Youth Review, U17 and U18 teams can play on adult pitches. The FA's recommended pitch size for adult football is 100x64 metres. Please refer to the table below for more detail.

Table 2.3: FA recommended grass/3G pitch sizes

| Age group          | Playing format | Recommended pitch dimensions (metres excluding run offs) | Recommended pitch dimensions (metres including run offs) |
|--------------------|----------------|--|--|
| Mini-Soccer U7/U8  | 5v5            | 37x27  | 43x33  |
| Mini-Soccer U9/U10 | 7v7            | 55x37  | 61x43  |
| Youth U11/U12      | 9v9            | 73x46  | 79x52  |
| Youth U13/U14      | 11v11          | 82x50  | 88x56  |
| Youth U15/U16      | 11v11          | 91x55  | 97x61  |
| Youth U17/U18      | 11v11          | 100x64   | 106x70   |
| Over 18/Adult      | 11v11          | 100x64   | 106x70   |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Of the 85 pitches located at 33 education sites in East Hertfordshire 81 across 30 sites are open to community use. Meaning that 95% of schools allow community use of their pitches. The following schools do not allow community access of their respective pitches:

- ◀ Saint Mary's Catholic School (CM23 2NQ).
- ◀ Richard Whittington Primary School (CM23 3NP).
- ◀ Abel Smith Primary School (SG13 8AE).

In most cases the sites do not allow community use due to the small quantity of pitches provided meaning it would not be worthwhile opening up the whole site such as Richard Whittington Primary School and Abel Smith Primary School. Typically, smaller schools like these do not have any other sporting provision that is open to community use, so it is not used to hiring a lettings department or having its site team manage out of hour bookings. Conversely, St Mary's has more pitch space alongside tennis courts and could have more potential for community use.

Playing field sites which have previously accommodated formal pitches are categorised as disused. A disused site is not being used at all by any users and is not available for community hire either. In the case of East Hertfordshire there are no known disused sites across the District.

There are, however, several sites which previously provided formal playing pitch provision that no longer does. The below sites are all open spaces and can still be accessed by the community. The following findings were picked up from site visits and consultations.

Albury Football Ground (SG11 2JG) previously accommodated one adult and one 7v7 pitch each and was accessed by BSC FC. However, access was removed during the season by Albury Parish Council after noise complaints from neighbours.

The Meads (SG9 0DY) previously marked out one adult, one youth 11v11, one 9v9, two 7v7 and one 5v5, however, there is no longer football pitches marked out, and it is operating as a play park and general amenity open space.

Horseman's Meadow (SG12 0LP) and Widford Playing Field (SG12 8SH) both previously accommodated one adult pitch, however, there was no pitch markings at the time of site visit. Consultation with both local clubs and the Hertfordshire FA confirms that there are no clubs playing at either site.

County Hall (SG13 8EH) previously provided two 9v9 and two 7v7, however, has not marked out pitches recently after a fire at the pavilion. The Council confirms the site has been proposed for redevelopment, but the plans are unclear at present.

Both Norfolk Road Playing Fields (SG9 9BT) in Buntingford town centre and Much Hadham Recreation Ground (SG10 6BS) previously provided one adult pitch. Neither site had pitches marked out or posts up at the time of site visits undertaken in December 2024. There are also no affiliated teams stating use of the playing fields for organised play. The sites are mainly used as open spaces now, although it is worth noting that Norfolk Road Playing Fields still has a cricket square.

Avanti Grange Secondary School is a recently built school with brand new community available grass pitches just across the A120. The pitches have not yet been marked out and are not accessible as of yet as a footbridge still needs to be built. BSC YFC is also planning to obtain a new site beside the new school pitches and has held several discussions with different parties. The land belongs to a local farmer which the Club states is in favour, although provision will be subject to planning permission.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Buntingford Cougars FC is concerned around its future tenure position at London Road Playing Fields. The site is owned by both the Buntingford Relief in need and Diocese Church of England St Albans in equal shares and there appears to be some risk of the land being sold.

Hertford Town YFC has identified a grass area behind the 3G pitch it shares with Hertford Town as a potential space to develop a mini 7v7 grass pitch. Alongside this, the Club would like a youth 11v11 pitch to be marked out near the River Lea which originally had a pitch on the marked out but an agreement with the Town Council could not be reached. It feels that it is at capacity and cannot grow without additional pitch space.

Consultation with Sawbridgeworth Sports Association confirmed there is an ambition to develop a new site to be accessed by Sawbridgeworth Town FC and Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club. Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club raises frustrations with accessing Leventhorpe School as a second ground. Both clubs are seeking a shared new site to further growth ambitions.

Regarding the adopted District plan there have been several new community grass football pitches proposed in line with new major housing developments which will significantly increase the supply within East Hertfordshire. The Gilston development which will build 10,000 new homes has 15 new pitches proposed spread across adult, youth and mini pitches. North of Ware development will see 1,800 new homes built and provide one new adult and one new youth pitch. The Bishop's Stortford North development will add one new adult football pitch (Hoggates Park stadia pitch) that is designed to meet ground grading regulations for Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC. Initially the pitch will be grass but the club hopes to fundraise for a 3G pitch in the future.

Two new primary schools have been built in Bishop's Stortford and have community use agreements for sports provision. Avanti Brook and Avanti Meadows Primary School's may have football pitches marked out (layout and formats currently unknown which would be available for community use for the 25/26 season).

Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2 overleaf identifies all football pitches servicing East Hertfordshire. For a key to the map, see Table [2.18](#).



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Figure 2.1: Football pitch locations



The quality of football pitches across East Hertfordshire has been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by the FA) undertaken in December 2024, PitchPower reports for 10 sites which can be found in Table 2.6 and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good.
- ◀ Standard.
- ◀ Poor.

The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows: Good (>80%), Standard (50-80%), Poor (<50%).

Pitch quality primarily influences the carrying capacity of a site; often pitches lack the drainage and maintenance necessary to sustain levels of use. Pitches that receive little to no ongoing repair or post-season remedial work are likely to be assessed as poor, therefore limiting the number of games they are able to accommodate each week without it having a detrimental effect on quality.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Conversely, well maintained pitches that are tended to regularly are likely to be of a higher standard and capable of taking a number of matches without a significant reduction in surface quality.

The table below summarises the quality of pitches that are available for community use. In total, 28 pitches are assessed as good quality (16%), 94 as standard (53%) and 56 (31%) as poor. Table [2.18](#) outlines the quality ratings of all grass pitches in the Authority.

Table 2.4: Pitch quality assessments (community use pitches)

| Pitch type   | No. of good quality pitches | No. of standard quality pitches | No. of poor quality pitches |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Adult        | 8                           | 28                              | 12                          |
| Youth 11v11  | 7                           | 19                              | 12                          |
| Youth 9v9    | 5                           | 16                              | 11                          |
| Mini 7v7     | 4                           | 15                              | 14                          |
| Mini 5v5     | 4                           | 16                              | 7                           |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>28</b>                   | <b>94</b>                       | <b>56</b>                   |

There are 56 poor quality pitches available to the community (31%), most of which are found at education or public open space sites. Pitches at the aforementioned types of site generally do not receive continued and stringent maintenance programmes and are used for other activities other than formal football demand. Consequently, pitch quality can suffer. Good quality pitches are commonly located at sites where Grass Pitch Maintenance Funding is being accessed, the site is fenced and not accessed by the general public and there is a paid groundsman.

The six pitches unavailable for community use are all of standard quality and at education sites other than Albury Football Ground. Albury Parish Council removed Bishop's Stortford Community FC's access to this site mid-season due to various noise complaints from neighbours.

The following clubs raised specific issues during consultation with regards to the quality of their pitches.

Hertford Town YFC raises concerns about the quality of pitches it accesses at Hartham Common and Kingsmead. The pitches are rated poor, and the Club states that the grass does not get cut frequently enough, alongside a basic maintenance regime with no off-season work being carried out. The site is an open space, so is subject to dog walkers and informal football use. Everyone Active manage the pitches on behalf of East Herts District Council.

Bury Rangers FC accesses Presdales Recreation Ground which is currently managed and maintained by East Herts District Council. The pitches are rated standard quality; however, there are issues relating to wider public access as it is within an open space. Ideally the Club would like to take on maintenance and management of the site. The pitches are chalk based so do not hold surface water which is common with most other clay based pitches in East Hertfordshire.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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BSC FC reports that the pitches at Pearce House Playing Fields (Birchwood High School) are poor quality as they are based on clay soil. This typically results in the pitches suffering from inclement weather with drainage problems. It also raises quality inconsistencies at Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre as the site is on a floodplain as well as being an open space site. It states that the pitches are a mix of poor and standard. Site assessment notes concur with these findings as most of the mini pitches were waterlogged at the time of the audit.

Ware YFC which is partnered with Ware United FC accesses its namesake site as well as Allenburys Sports & Social Club pitches which it deems good quality as it is privately maintained. Ware YFC home site is a mix of poor and standard pitches which it maintains itself. The Club does not access any grass pitch maintenance funding but are considering doing so in the future.

The FA has a general pitch improvement strategy which has been developed in partnership with the Grounds Management Association (GMA) to develop a grass pitch maintenance service that can be utilised by grassroots clubs with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and therefore the quality of pitches. The key principles behind the service are to provide clubs with advice/practical solutions in a range of areas, with the simple aim of improving playing surfaces. The programme is designed to help clubs on sites that they themselves manage and maintain but can also be used to advise council-maintained sites.

In addition, the FA's Strategy also aims to focus on developing improved maintenance with local authorities that can be utilised at local authority-maintained sites.

Further to the above, the Football Foundation and the FA has recently developed a new pitch maintenance grant fund that allows clubs and sports organisations to apply for funding for maintenance assistance, consumables and/or equipment. Local authorities are currently ineligible applicants through this fund; however, clubs, leagues and or charitable organisations using local authority sites can apply provided they have security of tenure and/or a proforma is in place.

With quality of grass pitches becoming one of the biggest influences on participation in football, the FA has made it a priority to work towards improving quality of grass pitches across the country. This has resulted in the creation of the Football Foundation Grass Pitch Improvement Programme. As part of this, grass pitches identified as having quality issues undergo a pitch inspection from a member of the Grounds Management Association (GMA, formerly Institute of Groundsmanship).

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

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

The PitchPower assessments use the new five step Performance Quality Standard rating system developed by the Grounds Management Association (GMA), with the Football Foundation and Sport England agreeing alignment with the capacity guidance within the existing PPS guidance.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Alignment was agreed as follows:

Table 2.5: Equivalent PPS quality rating for pitch Performance Quality Standard ratings

| PQS rating | PPS quality rating |
|------------|--------------------|
| Poor       | Poor               |
| Basic      | Standard           |
| Good       | Good               |
| Advanced   | Good               |
| High       | Good               |

The following sites have received an existing PitchPower report, the equivalent PPS Quality Ratings for which have been accepted and applied within the PPS audit and analysis.

- ✦ Bengo Sports Ground.
- ✦ Bishops Stortford Swifts FC.
- ✦ Crouchfields.
- ✦ Freman College.
- ✦ Leventhorpe School.
- ✦ Presdales School.
- ✦ Ralph Sadleir School.
- ✦ The Sele School.
- ✦ Ware Lions FC.
- ✦ Ware Youth Football Club.

Table 2.6: PitchPower report results

| Site ID | Site name                   | Pitch type  | PitchPower rating |
|---------|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| 12      | Bengo Sports Ground         | Adult       | Poor              |
| 20      | Bishops Stortford Swifts FC | Adult       | Standard          |
| 20      | Bishops Stortford Swifts FC | Mini 7v7    | Good              |
| 20      | Bishops Stortford Swifts FC | Mini 7v7    | Poor              |
| 20      | Bishops Stortford Swifts FC | Youth 11v11 | Poor              |
| 35      | Crouchfields                | Adult       | Poor              |
| 35      | Crouchfields                | Mini 5v5    | Standard          |
| 35      | Crouchfields                | Mini 7v7    | Standard          |
| 35      | Crouchfields                | Youth 11v11 | Standard          |
| 35      | Crouchfields                | Youth 9v9   | Standard          |
| 40      | Freman College              | Adult       | Good              |
| 40      | Freman College              | Youth 11v11 | Good              |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School          | Adult       | Standard          |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School          | Youth 11v11 | Poor              |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School          | Youth 9v9   | Standard          |
| 75      | Presdales School            | Mini 5v5    | Standard          |
| 75      | Presdales School            | Mini 7v7    | Standard          |
| 75      | Presdales School            | Youth 11v11 | Standard          |
| 75      | Presdales School            | Youth 11v11 | Standard          |
| 75      | Presdales School            | Youth 9v9   | Standard          |
| 76      | Ralph Sadleir School        | Mini 5v5    | Good              |
| 76      | Ralph Sadleir School        | Mini 5v5    | Standard          |
| 76      | Ralph Sadleir School        | Mini 7v7    | Good              |
| 76      | Ralph Sadleir School        | Mini 7v7    | Good              |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site name                | Pitch type  | PitchPower rating |
|---------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| 76      | Ralph Sadleir School     | Mini 7v7    | Good              |
| 76      | Ralph Sadleir School     | Youth 9v9   | Standard          |
| 108     | The Sele School          | Mini 5v5    | Good              |
| 108     | The Sele School          | Mini 7v7    | Standard          |
| 108     | The Sele School          | Youth 11v11 | Standard          |
| 108     | The Sele School          | Youth 11v11 | Standard          |
| 108     | The Sele School          | Youth 11v11 | Good              |
| 108     | The Sele School          | Youth 9v9   | Good              |
| 118     | Ware Lions FC            | Mini 5v5    | Poor              |
| 118     | Ware Lions FC            | Mini 7v7    | Standard          |
| 118     | Ware Lions FC            | Youth 11v11 | Standard          |
| 118     | Ware Lions FC            | Youth 9v9   | Standard          |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club | Adult       | Poor              |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club | Adult       | Poor              |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club | Mini 5v5    | Poor              |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club | Mini 5v5    | Good              |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club | Mini 7v7    | Poor              |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club | Mini 7v7    | Poor              |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club | Youth 9v9   | Standard          |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club | Youth 9v9   | Standard          |

With quality of grass pitches becoming one of the biggest influences on participation in football, the FA has made it a priority to work towards improving quality of grass pitches across the country. This has resulted in the creation of the GPMF. As part of this, grass pitches identified as having quality issues by the GMA via PitchPower assessment can apply to access funding to improve pitches to good quality or sustain them at good quality.

Once a PitchPower grass pitch assessment report has been produced for the site, eligible organisations can then apply for grant funding support through the FF Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund, a fund offering six-year tapered grants to help eligible organisations such as clubs and leagues enhance or sustain the quality of their grass pitches. The fund is a key part of the FF's Grass Pitch Improvement Programme - an ambition to deliver 20,000 quality grass pitches by 2030. If a site is categorised as 'poor' or 'basic' then organisations can apply for funding to enhance pitch quality, whilst clubs with good or standard quality pitches can also apply for a lower level of funding to sustain quality.

All applicants must have the landowner's permission (as a minimum) and have received a PitchPower Pitch Assessment Report, with the fund currently open to football clubs (excluding stadia pitches used for National League System play), leagues, education establishments and parish and town councils.

Several clubs/schools within East Hertfordshire have been awarded funding from the FF to improve pitch quality, such as, Ware Lions FC, Bengeo Tigers FC, Leventhorpe School, Bengeo Trinity FC, Standon & Puckeridge Hares FC, Wodson Park Youth FC and Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC.

Ancillary facility ratings are primarily influenced by the type of amenities which are available on a site accompanied by their quality, such as a clubhouse, changing rooms, car parking, dedicated official and spectator facilities. Good quality ancillary facilities are particularly important for football clubs as they can assist with income generation. Furthermore, it is becoming increasingly important for the provision to be inclusive, particularly due to growing women's and girls', disability and junior/mini demand.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Although the size and configuration of ancillary provision may alter based on the sports using the provision, and the number of pitches it services, generally the same principles are recommended to allow for varied use from all demographics:

- ◆ Accessible changing areas which can be separated, or are private/self-contained, to allow for separate male/female/all gender or senior/junior separation.
- ◆ A private accessible changing room (with relevant changing and showering provision) for someone who requires assistance.
- ◆ Separate female / male / all gender toilet provision.
- ◆ Suitably designed and specified showering cubicles to all users to maintain dignity and privacy whilst showering.

Open plan changing, toilets and particularly showering facilities can provide a significant barrier to many people resulting in them either not taking part or having a poorer sporting experience.

As a result of the above, those ancillary facilities that do not meet the above criteria, cannot be rated anything higher than standard quality for the purposes of this document. Additional context behind the rationale is provided below.

The table below presents a quality summary of provision at sites which provide dedicated changing rooms and pavilions based on consultation feedback. Furthermore, some sites have been excluded as ancillary provision is not available, additionally, education sites are not included within the list.

Table 2.7: Summary of ancillary facility quality

| Site ID | Site name                         | Analysis area      | Management                          | Ancillary facility quality |
|---------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1       | Albury Football Ground            | Bishop's Stortford | Albury Parish Council               | Standard                   |
| 7       | Aston Playing Field               | Buntingford        | Aston Village Hall Committee        | Standard                   |
| 12      | Bengeo Sports Ground              | Hertford, Ware     | Sport Club                          | Standard                   |
| 20      | Bishops Stortford Swifts FC       | Bishop's Stortford | Sport Club                          | Standard                   |
| 21      | Bramfield Playing Field           | Watton-at-Stone    | Bramfield Parish Council            | Standard                   |
| 22      | Braughing Playing Fields          | Bishop's Stortford | Braughing Parish Council            | Standard                   |
| 31      | Cottered Playing Field            | Buntingford        | Cottered & Throcking Parish Council | Standard                   |
| 35      | Crouchfields                      | Watton-at-Stone    | Wodson Park FC                      | Poor                       |
| 41      | Friedberg Playing Fields          | Bishop's Stortford | Sport Club                          | Standard                   |
| 42      | Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre    | Bishop's Stortford | Everyone Active                     | Good                       |
| 49      | Hertford Heath Playing Fields     | Hertford, Ware     | Hertford Heath Parish Council       | Poor                       |
| 74      | Presdales Recreation Ground       | Hertford, Ware     | East Herts District Council         | Standard                   |
| 77      | RDA Stadium                       | Bishop's Stortford | Sport Club                          | Good                       |
| 84      | Sawbridgeworth Town Football Club | Sawbridgeworth     | Sport Club                          | Standard                   |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site name  | Analysis area   | Management                | Ancillary facility quality |
|---------|--|-----------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 86      | Seth Ward Community Centre                         | Buntingford     | Buntingford Town Council  | Standard                   |
| 94      | St Margaretsbury FC                                | Hertford, Ware  | Sport Club/Association    | Standard                   |
| 98      | Standon Memorial Playing Field                     | Buntingford     | Standon Parish Council    | Standard                   |
| 100     | Tewin Recreation Ground                            | Watton-at-Stone | Tewin Parish Council      | Standard                   |
| 104     | The Bury   | Buntingford     | Sport Club                | Good                       |
| 111     | Thundridge Sports Ground                           | Buntingford     | Thundridge Parish Council | Poor                       |
| 118     | Ware Lions FC                                      | Buntingford     | Sport Club                | Standard                   |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club                           | Hertford, Ware  | Sport Club                | Poor                       |
| 122     | Westmill Recreation Ground                         | Buntingford     | Westmill Parish Council   | Poor                       |
| 125     | Wodson Park Sports Centre                          | Hertford, Ware  | Private                   | Standard                   |
| 126     | Allenburys Sports & Social Club                    | Hertford, Ware  | Private                   | Standard                   |
| 127     | Walkern Sports & Community Centre                  | Buntingford     | Walkern Parish Council    | Standard                   |
| 128     | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Watton-at-Stone | Sport Club                | Good                       |
| 141     | St. George's Playing Field                         | Sawbridgeworth  | High Wych Parish Council  | Standard                   |

Of the 28 ancillary facilities, four are rated good (14%), 19 are rated standard (68%) and five are rated poor (18%) quality. Sites which are listed as poor quality are all dated and have clear evidence of wear and tear throughout. Each requires modernisation to ensure it remains fit for usage in the future.

Ware YFC has 44 teams and accesses poor quality ancillary provision at its home site, it funded a new social room in 2024 as well as having home and away changing rooms and a kitchen. However, the site has a boiler, toilets and communal showers that do not work, while the changing rooms themselves are dated and need refurbishing. It also does not have suitable car parking to service its current demand although does have plans to extend this.

Hertford Heath Playing Fields currently has poor rated ancillary provision. The site is accessed by Hertford Heath FC which has two adult mens and one U16 boys team. The Club states it is planning to investigate rebuilding its changing rooms/clubhouse, however, does not currently have the funding to do so.

Crouchfields has a poor-quality ancillary provision that is accessed by Wodson Park FC which fields 11 teams ranging from U7's through to U18's teams. Westmill Recreation Ground has a poor-quality ancillary provision and one adult pitch. The site is accessed by Westmill Open FC which has two adult mens teams.

Thundridge Sports Ground has a basic poor quality ancillary provision servicing its three grass pitches. The site is not used for football and was formerly accessed by Thundridge Cricket Club which has folded since the previous PPS was written. Improving the ancillary provision could facilitate re-introducing demand to the site and utilising actual spare capacity.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

BSC FC reports that Friedberg Playing Fields has three changing rooms and a referee's room which have limited use. The facility has no showers but does have a kitchen and social room. The building is dated and there is a lack of car parking at the site for the number of pitches.

The Bury which is accessed by Buntingford Cougars is rated good quality and has two changing rooms with self-contained showers in each changing room. Alongside this, the site has a social room and bar with plenty of parking. The Club also states it only uses the toilets at Seth Ward Community Centre and Braughing Playing Fields without accessing the changing facilities as its teams generally come ready to play.

The Richard Hale School is working with Bury Rangers FC to enhance the changing rooms in the school and develop a new classroom and kitchen to be managed by the football club. Bury Rangers FC currently has 81 teams and is a 3\* England Accredited club and as such is seeking better facilities to support its off-field development.

Bury Rangers also access Presdales Recreation Ground which has standard quality facilities. There are eight changing rooms with one communal shower space, and the boiler does not work. Consequently, the Corinthian League which also use pitches at this venue will not access the changing rooms.

As above mentioned, a barrier to women and girls' participation in grassroots football is the lack of suitable ancillary changing provision. Currently, there are only four sites (14%) which have dedicated female changing rooms to support women's and girls' participation in football, which are, Grange Paddocks, Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC, The Bury and Ware FC.

Many teams in East Hertfordshire access pitch provision associated with the District Council or town and parish councils. The tenure of these sites is classified as secure, i.e., unless known otherwise, there is a guarantee that pitches will continue to be provided over the lifespan of the PPOSS. An exception to this is usually found at schools and academies which although may allow community use, are able to terminate community access at any time, unless a written community use agreement is in place.

As an example, in East Hertfordshire, Datchworth Primary School is a site which is used for affiliated football through an agreement of good will, but as there is no long-term agreement in place with the site user Watton YFC, it could in theory, be asked to vacate the site at short notice.

Of education sites in the District, 19 are used for competitive football. In total, affiliated football use at education sites equates to 183 teams from 15 clubs as detailed in the table overleaf.

Table 2.8: Affiliated football demand at education providers

| Site ID | Site                       | Clubs accessing site       | Tenure position  |
|---------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| 8       | Aston St Mary's VA School  | Watton YFC                 | The Club pays a donation toward the school to use the football pitches and has a good relationship.                                      |
| 15      | Birchwood High School      | BSC FC                     | The Club part funded the 3G pitch and is a partner club. It has an annual agreement in place for this and the two 9v9 pitches it access. |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College | BSC FC<br>Thorley Manor FC | BSC FC pays an annual fee toward the school for use of its pitches.  |



## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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

Outside of education settings, many clubs have more complex tenure agreements in place with different landowners. Buntingford Cougars FC has a long-term lease with Hertfordshire County Council for the building and pitches at The Bury for 30 years. The other sites it accesses are all on annual rental agreements.

Ware YFC has a 30-year lease with Hertfordshire County Council for its home site with the same name. The lease applies to the pitches, building and car park all of which the Club is keen to invest into to enhance.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

BSC FC signed a seven-year lease agreement in 2019/20 with East Hertfordshire District Council for the ancillary provision at Friedberg Playing Fields. The Club has a license agreement for the grass pitches at the site which runs until 2027. The Club maintains both the building and pitches. All other sites it accesses are annual rental agreements.

Sawbridgeworth Town FC has a long-term lease for its site, as the ground is in trust for the provision of sport.

Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC has a long-term lease in place with Silver Leys for the use of the football pitches and ancillary facilities at its site. The site is shared with Bishop's Stortford RFC.

Buntingford Cougars FC is concerned around the future of its lease at London Road Playing Fields. The site is owned by both the Buntingford relief in need and Diocese Church of England St Albans in equal shares and there appears to be some risk of land being sold.

As for other clubs, in most cases they access provision that is owned and managed by either the Council or a town or parish council. In such instances, it is safe to assume that the access to these sites is secured over the lifespan of the PPS.

The football pyramid is a series of interconnected leagues for adult men's football clubs in England. It begins below the Football League (the National League) and comprises of six steps and a regional feeder league; there are with various leagues at each level and more leagues lower down the pyramid than at the top. The step system has a hierarchical format with promotion and relegation between the steps, allowing even the smallest club the theoretical possibility of rising to the top of the system.

Clubs playing within the National League System (NLS) must adhere to ground grading requirements set out by the FA. The higher the level of football being played the higher the requirements. Clubs cannot progress into the league above if the ground grading requirements do not meet the correct specifications. Please refer to the FA website<sup>3</sup> for the full specifications for each.

In East Hertfordshire, there are five clubs which compete in the NLS which can be seen in the table overleaf.

Table 2.9: Non-league football teams in East Hertfordshire

| Team                   | League                                   | Level  |
|------------------------|--|--------|
| Bishop's Stortford FC  | Southern League Premier Division Central | Step 3 |
| Enfield FC             | Southern League Division One Central     | Step 4 |
| Ware FC                | Southern League Division One Central     | Step 4 |
| Hertford Town FC       | Southern League Division One Central     | Step 4 |
| Sawbridgeworth Town FC | Essex Senior League                      | Step 5 |

The general principle for clubs in the football pyramid is that they must achieve the appropriate ground grade by March 31<sup>st</sup> of their first season after promotion, which therefore allows a short grace period for facilities to be brought up to standard.

It is important to note that from a ground grading perspective, the jump from a regional feeder league to Step 6 is significant and that as a minimum, sites require a sports lit pitch with hardstanding areas for fans, turnstiles for fan entry and therefore clubs currently at this level ordinarily require a serious overhaul of their existing sites to meet the relevant criteria.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Hertford Heath FC states that its pitch does not meet FA regulations and the first team plays its games at St Margaretsbury FC. It currently plays at step 7 so initially needs to enhance its current provision to meet these regulations, specifically ancillary provision. If the Club was to gain promotion it would need a lot of investment to meet ground grading regulations for step 6.

Correspondingly there is a Women's National League System (WNLS) similar to the adult men's system which provides structure to the women's game. As seen in the table below this ranges from Tier 1 to Tier 7 with each tier requiring differing ground grading requirements.

Table 2.10: Summary of ground grading for women's football

| Level  | League   | Grading category |
|--------|--|------------------|
| Tier 1 | FA Women's Super League  | Step S1          |
| Tier 2 | FA Women's Championship  | Step S2          |
| Tier 3 | FA Women's National League Premier Division (Northern and Southern)              | Step W1          |
| Tier 4 | FA Women's National League Division 1 North / Midlands / South East / South West | Step W2          |
| Tier 5 | Regional Premier Division  | Step W3          |
| Tier 6 | Regional Division One  | -                |
| Tier 7 | County Leagues   | -                |

Although women's clubs within the WNLS still require ground grading requirements set out by the FA, these differ from the men's NLS. Ratings range from Step S1 to W3 each with differing minimum requirements. Step S1 and S2 in the WNLS is akin to Step 3 and 4 of the men's NLS, however, not identical. The system is also a hierarchical format with promotion and relegation between the levels, allowing even the smallest club the theoretical possibility of rising to the top of the system.

In 2017, the FA announced plans to restructure the women's league for the highest performers in the football pyramid. The changes were implemented from the start of the 2018-19 season and saw the top league, FA Women's Super League Tier 1, expand from ten clubs to 14 and the creation of a new national league established at Tier 2 for a maximum of 12 teams. Hertford Town is the only club in East Hertfordshire which has a women's team competing in the WNLS, at Tier 6.

## 2.3: Demand

Through the audit and assessment, 511 teams from 58 clubs are identified as playing in East Hertfordshire. This consists of 75 adult men's (15%), nine adult women's (2%), 194 youth boys' (38%), 35 youth girls' (7%) and 198 mini mixed teams (39%).

East Hertfordshire affiliated demand has increased by 104 teams since the previous Playing Pitch Strategy was written in 2017 when there were 407 teams. Women's and girls' football has also increased in demand since the writing of the previous PPS from 23 teams to 44 teams currently.

The Hertford, Ware Analysis Area provides for the highest number of teams by a large margin, with a total of 277 teams. The analysis area with the fewest number of teams is Watton-at-Stone, with 15 teams identified.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 2.11: Summary of competitive teams currently playing in East Hertfordshire

| Analysis area      | Adult     | Youth 11v11 | Youth 9v9  | Mini 7v7   | Mini 5v5  | Total      |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Bishop's Stortford | 19        | 21          | 23         | 31         | 13        | <b>107</b> |
| Buntingford        | 9         | 21          | 18         | 20         | 22        | <b>90</b>  |
| Hertford, Ware     | 50        | 73          | 50         | 52         | 52        | <b>277</b> |
| Sawbridgeworth     | 4         | 7           | 5          | 3          | 3         | <b>22</b>  |
| Watton-at-Stone    | 2         | 6           | 5          | 2          | -         | <b>15</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>84</b> | <b>128</b>  | <b>101</b> | <b>108</b> | <b>90</b> | <b>511</b> |

Youth 11v11 football is the most prominent format of play, whilst mini 5v5 has the fewest number of teams.

There are 44 dedicated women/girls' teams across six clubs playing in East Hertfordshire, representing 9% of the total number of teams. These are provided at the following clubs:

- ◀ AFC Walkern.
- ◀ Bengoe Tigers.
- ◀ BSC FC.
- ◀ Buntingford Cougars.
- ◀ Buntingford Town.
- ◀ Bury Rangers.
- ◀ Hartham United FC.
- ◀ Hertford Town.
- ◀ St Margaretsbury.
- ◀ Ware United Football Club.
- ◀ Ware YFC.
- ◀ Watton Youth.

The FA currently has a drive to increase women's and girls' participation by 50%. As such, it is imperative that sufficient facilities become suitable for female access, particularly in relation to toilets and appropriate changing facilities.

With the success of the 2022 UEFA Women's Euros and legacy plan of the event paired with the upcoming 2025 Women's World Cup, women's and girls' football is outlined to significantly develop across the country. Hertfordshire FA will be working to use this event as a catalyst for an increase in localised participation in East Hertfordshire.

Exported demand refers to teams that are currently accessing pitches for home fixtures outside of the study area, despite being registered in East Hertfordshire. Likewise, imported demand is demand from neighbouring authorities accessing pitches in East Hertfordshire to play competitive matches.

In total, there is one club and two teams accessing provision outside of East Hertfordshire for matchday purposes, Buntingford Town FC. The Club reports that its women's and vets' teams have to access Barkway Recreation Ground in North Hertfordshire when the Bury is unplayable after Saturday fixtures. Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC reports its men's team has to travel to Harlow to access training provision as it cannot find facilities locally.

Regarding imported demand, Forest Hall Park FC states it is based in Stansted Mountfitchet in Essex yet affiliates as a Hertfordshire team due to a lack of pitches in the area. Enfield FC are originally an Enfield Team which previously played in Enfield, however, have since relocated to ground share with Hertford Town FC. It states it is looking for its own ground in the Hertfordshire area with aspirations of one day relocating back to Enfield.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Latent demand refers to potential demand; clubs that would like to field more teams but currently do not do so. This can be for a variety of reasons including a lack of pitches, appropriate facilities, and qualified coaches. Clubs that report latent demand relating to facilities and the reasons provided for this latent demand can be seen below.

Table 2.12: Latent demand summary

| Club                              | Analysis Area      | Need for more match pitches | Need for more/better training facilities | Need for better/more appropriate changing provision |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Bishops Stortford Swifts Youth FC | Bishop's Stortford | X                           | X  |   |
| BSC FC                            | Bishop's Stortford | X                           | X  |   |
| Forest Hall Park FC               | Bishop's Stortford | X                           | X  | X   |
| Thorley Manor FC                  | Bishop's Stortford | X                           | X  |   |
| Sawbo FC                          | Bishop's Stortford | X                           |  |   |
| Bullsmoor United                  | Buntingford        |                             | X  |   |
| Buntingford Cougars               | Buntingford        | X                           | X  |   |
| Buntingford Town                  | Buntingford        | X                           | X  |   |
| Watton YFC                        | Buntingford        | X                           | X  |   |
| Bengeo Tigers                     | Hertford, Ware     |                             | X  |   |
| Bury Rangers                      | Hertford, Ware     |                             | X  |   |
| Enfield FC                        | Hertford, Ware     | X                           | X  |   |
| Hertford Heath FC                 | Hertford, Ware     | X                           | X  | X   |
| Hertford Heath Junior FC          | Hertford, Ware     | X                           |  | X   |
| Hertford Town YFC                 | Hertford, Ware     |                             | X  |   |
| St Margaretsbury FC               | Hertford, Ware     |                             | X  |   |
| Ware Football Club                | Hertford, Ware     | X                           | X  |   |
| Ware Lions FC                     | Hertford, Ware     | X                           | X  |   |
| Ware YFC                          | Hertford, Ware     | X                           | X  |   |

As can be seen in the table above, the greatest issue identified is the need for additional match pitches located within East Hertfordshire, with 14 clubs stressing this as a problem. Several clubs also made reference to the need for greater access to 3G pitches for training and poor ancillary provision impacting upon the possibility of expanding.

Unmet demand is existing demand that is not getting access to pitches. It is usually expressed, for example, when a team is already training but is unable to access a match pitch, or when a league has a waiting list due to a lack of pitch provision, which in turn is hindering the growth of the league.

Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC confirms it has teams that it could field should more pitches become available. It is also important to note that BSC FC are currently operating a waiting list for new members to join. The Club would like to grow but states it cannot do so due to a lack of pitch space for both training and match play.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Future demand can be defined in three ways through club growth aspirations, population forecasts, and participation trends. Participation trends shall be covered in the Strategy Report where the growth in demand from the 2017 PPS will be forecasted for the upcoming years. The FA and Football Foundation stresses there are expectations of significant growth in demand during the lifespan of the PPOSS.

There are eight clubs which report aspirations to increase the number of teams they provide by the 2025/26 season. In total, these potential demand increases would lead to the creation of 25 teams (if aspirations are realised).

Table 2.13: Potential team increases identified by clubs

| Club                              | Analysis area      | Future demand  | Pitch size                                    | Match equivalent sessions |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--|---|---------------------------|
| Bishops Stortford Swifts Youth FC | Bishop's Stortford | 1x Adult men<br>1x Youth 11v11 boys' team<br>2x 9v9 boys' teams<br>3x Mini teams | Adult<br>Youth 11v11<br>Youth 9v9<br>Mini 7v7 | 3.5                       |
| Forest Hall Park FC               | Bishop's Stortford | 1x Youth 11v11 boys' team<br>2x 9v9 boys' teams<br>3x Mini teams                 | Youth 11v11<br>Youth 9v9<br>Mini 5v5          | 3                         |
| Thorley Manor FC                  | Bishop's Stortford | 1x 9v9 boys<br>2x Mini teams   | Youth 9v9<br>Mini 5v5                         | 1.5                       |
| Buntingford Cougars FC            | Buntingford        | 1x U11 girls<br>1x U9 mixed  | Youth 9v9<br>Mini 7v7                         | 1                         |
| Bengeo FC                         | Hertford, Ware     | 1x U9  | Mini 7v7                                      | 0.5                       |
| Hertford Town YFC                 | Hertford, Ware     | 2x U9/10   | Mini 7v7                                      | 1                         |
| St Margaretsbury FC               | Hertford, Ware     | 1x Youth 11v11<br>1x Mini teams  | Youth 11v11<br>Mini 5v5                       | 1                         |
| Ware YFC                          | Hertford, Ware     | 2x U7/8  | Mini 5v5                                      | 1                         |

Future demand aspirations have been aggregated by analysis area and pitch format and are detailed in Table 2.14 below.

Table 2.14: Potential increases by analysis area

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

In the case of Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC, the future demand ambitions outlined above are dependent upon securing additional match pitches through relocating the club to new sites.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Team generation rates (TGRs) are used to provide an indication of how many people it may take to generate a team (by gender and age group), in order to help estimate the change in demand for pitch sports that may arise from any population change in the study area.

ONS population growth is applied to the TGRs to identify a predicted number of teams that will be generated. As such, TGRs are used below as the basis for calculating the number of teams likely to be generated in the future based on population growth up to 2043 (in line with East Hertfordshire District Plan timeline).

Table 2.15: Team generation rates (2043)

| Age group             | Team generation rate | No. of new teams generated by the new population | No. of new teams generated by the new population - rounded figure | Match equivalent session per week <sup>4</sup> |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--|---|--|
| Adult Mens (18-45)    | 1:279.98             | 6.66   | 6   | 3  |
| Adult Women's (18-45) | 1:2,924.18           | 0.67   | -   | -  |
| Youth Boys (12-17)    | 1:48.17              | 6.59   | 6   | 3  |
| Youth Girls (12-17)   | 1:247.52             | 1.18   | 1   | 0.5  |
| Youth Boys (10-11)    | 1:24.24              | 6.51   | 6   | 3  |
| Youth Girls (10-11)   | 1:107.45             | 1.41   | 1   | 0.5  |
| Mini Mixed (8-9)      | 1:29.71              | 9.32   | 9   | 4.5  |
| Mini Mixed (6-7)      | 1:52.49              | 5.18   | 5   | 2.5  |

As seen above, based on ONS projections, it is forecasted that there will be an increase in football demand equivalent to six adult mens teams, 12 youth boys, two youth girls and 14 mini teams. Once team generation rates are broken down by analysis area, this growth decreases to generate only one adult, five youth 11v11 teams, three youth 9v9 teams, three mini 7v7 mixed teams and one mini 5v5 team.

Table 2.16: Future demand through ONS projections by analysis area

| Analysis area      | Adult      | Youth 11v11 | Youth 9v9 | Mini 7v7   | Mini 5v5 | Totals    |
|--------------------|------------|-------------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|
| Bishop's Stortford | 0.5        | 0.5         | 1         | 1          | -        | 3         |
| Buntingford        | -          | 0.5         | 0.5       | 0.5        | 0.5      | 2         |
| Hertford, Ware     | 2          | 2           | 1.5       | 2          | 1.5      | 9         |
| Sawbridgeworth     | -          | -           | -         | -          | -        | -         |
| Watton-at-Stone    | -          | -           | -         | -          | -        | -         |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>2.5</b> | <b>3</b>    | <b>3</b>  | <b>3.5</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>14</b> |

The predicted level of growth in Table 2.18 is exclusively based on ONS projections and does not account for societal factors or changes in the way people may wish to play sport. As a comparison the East Hertfordshire 2017 PPS identified the Authority as having 407 teams, meaning there has been the growth in 104 teams in the last seven years. This gives an increase in demand of 15 teams per year, meaning the ONS projection of an additional 28 teams by 2043 would be noticeably below the growth rate experienced in recent years.

<sup>4</sup> Two teams require one pitch to account for playing on a home and away basis; therefore, one team accounts to 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week on their relevant pitch type.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Similarly, they cannot account for specific targeted development work within certain areas or focus on certain groups, such as NGB initiatives or coaching within schools. For example, there is a focus on developing female participation within East Hertfordshire and nationally which, as mentioned previously, is likely to lead to more women's and girls' teams in the future and therefore increase demand for pitches.

Outside of women's and girls' increases, given the large amounts of future demand identified through population forecasts, it is considered unlikely that aspirations from clubs will happen exclusively of population growth. Instead, it is thought that the ambitions will generally be absorbed within the increases. However, the strategy and action plan will further test the impact of participation increases including trend based analysis from affiliation data over the last few years.

FA Wildcats centres work with County FA qualified coaches to deliver local weekly sessions, which provide opportunities for girls aged five to 11 to develop fundamental skills and experience football in a safe and fun environment.

In East Hertfordshire, Wildcat centres are run by BSC FC (numbers unspecified) and Ware FC with 32 members. Bengeo FC and Bury Rangers do not do wildcats sessions however do a different club specific version instead.

In light of The FA's aspirations to increase female participation in football by 50% (Game Changer Strategy) and the establishment and foreseen future effect of the Wildcats programme, it is likely that the growth in affiliated women's and girl teams may exceed that shown through population growth. However, this is not able to be quantified through the Wildcats programme due to it being dependent on the localised success of the programme.

Future demand in this report will be applied via the application of population growth. This equates to the growth of six adult, 12 youth boys, two youth girls and 14 mini teams.

The growth in teams outlined through club aspirations will be scenario tested in the forthcoming Strategy, equating to 25 additional teams through the ambitions of eight clubs.

The Strategy will include a scenario showing the participation trends for the upcoming five years based in previous year on year growth.

## 2.4: Capacity analysis

The capacity for pitches to regularly provide for competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of a pitch affect the playing experience and people's enjoyment. In extreme circumstances, it can result in the inability of a pitch to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off-peak times. As a guide, The FA has set a standard number of matches that each grass pitch type should be able to accommodate without it adversely affecting its quality.

The following ratings were used in East Hertfordshire:

| Adult pitch quality | Matches per week | Youth pitch quality | Matches per week | Mini pitch quality | Matches per week |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Good                | 3                | Good                | 4                | Good               | 6                |
| Standard            | 2                | Standard            | 2                | Standard           | 4                |
| Poor                | 1                | Poor                | 1                | Poor               | 2                |



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 2.18 applies the above pitch ratings against the actual level of weekly play to determine a capacity rating as follows:

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Potential capacity</b> | Play is below the level the site could sustain |
| <b>At capacity</b>        | Play matches the level the site can sustain    |
| <b>Overused</b>           | Play exceeds the level the site can sustain    |

For clarity, the following section applies the methodology that one team accessing a pitch equates to 0.5 MES of demand during the peak period.

To account for curricular/extra-curricular use of education pitches it is likely that the carrying capacity at such sites will need to be adjusted. The only time this would not happen is when a school does not use its pitches at all and the sole use is community use. The adjustment is typically dependent on the amount of play carried out, the number of pitches on site and whether there is access to an on-site AGP.

In some cases, where there is no identified community use, there is little capacity to accommodate further play. Internal usage often exceeds recommended pitch capacity, which is further exacerbated by basic maintenance regimes that may not extend beyond grass cutting and line marking.

In East Hertfordshire, one match equivalent session per week of demand has been attributed to each pitch based at school sites to account for curricular demand. This is based on consultation and the expectation that all pitches are in use, as well as experience of how school sites use pitches from other strategies both locally and nationally. In instances where a school site is already overplayed or the inclusion of one match equivalent session from curricular demand would create overlap it has been discounted.

Many football pitches in the area are located within open access sites. As such, these pitches are subject to informal use in the form of dog walkers, unorganised games of football and exercise groups. Informal use is not accounted for in the capacity analysis on the basis that it cannot be quantified on a site-by-site basis. However, it can be expected at popular sites such as Hartham Common & Kingsmead, that there will be a higher level of demand on each pitch (from informal use) over and above that identified.

It is important to understand what the peak time for football pitch access is, to accurately understand the supply and demand balance for football pitches. Peak time access translates to when the high demand is for pitch access during a week. In East Hertfordshire, the peak time for adult football is Saturday afternoon, Saturday morning for youth 9v9 and youth 11v11 and for mini 5v5 and 7v7 football it is Sunday mornings.

In the table overleaf, please note that, on occasions, spare capacity in the peak period is identified despite the pitch being played to capacity or overplayed or more spare capacity is identified in the peak period that what exists overall. This is because most of the use on those particular pitches occurs outside of the peak period, therefore the identified spare capacity at peak time should not be utilised over and above overall capacity unless quality improvements are made that increases overall capacity.

A pitch is only said to have 'actual spare capacity' if it is available for community use and available at the peak time for that format of play. Any pitch not meeting this criterion is therefore not considered to have additional capacity, although it may have capacity outside of peak time.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

There may also be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to operate slightly below full capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of regular friendly matches and activities that take place but are difficult to quantify on a weekly basis.

Pitches that are of a poor quality are not deemed to have actual spare capacity due to the already low carrying capacity of the pitches. Any identified spare capacity should be retained in order to relieve the pitches of use, which in turn will aid the improvement of pitch quality.

Furthermore, any pitches with unsecured tenure are not considered to have actual spare capacity as no further play should be encouraged on such sites given that future access cannot be guaranteed.

Table [2.18](#) identifies the way capacity balance is represented in Table 2.17.

Table 2.17: Capacity balance examples

| Spare capacity in peak period (examples) | Explanation of capacity balance  |
|--|--|
| 1  | Highlighted in green with a number denotes that the pitches have actual spare capacity at peak time.   |
| -  | With a dash, this indicates that the pitch is unavailable in the peak period. If it were to be made available, actual spare capacity could exist.  |
| 0  | Highlighted in orange with a zero, this indicates the pitch is played to capacity, either overall or during the peak period.   |
| 1  | Not highlighted by with a value, this indicates that the pitch has spare capacity in the peak period; however, capacity has been discounted. This may be due to unsecure tenure and/or poor pitch quality. |
| 1  | Highlighted in red with a number denotes that the pitches are overplayed and have no spare capacity across the week. This includes at peak time, despite any availability at peak time which may exist.    |

**EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL:  
PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT**

Table 2.18: Football pitch capacity analysis

| Site ID | Site                        | Clubs accessing site | Postcode | Analysis area      | Community use? | Management                   | Security of tenure | Pitch sizes | No. of pitches | Quality rating | Current play (match sessions) | Pitch capacity (match sessions) | Overused, at capacity or spare capacity | Spare capacity in peak period | Comments  |
|---------|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------|--------------------|----------------|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|
| 1       | Albury Football Ground      | -                    | SG11 2JG | Bishop's Stortford | No             | Albury Parish Council        | Unsecure           | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | -                             | 2                               | 2                                       | -                             | This pitch was previously used for community use; however, this was revoked by the Council during the season due to noise complaints. Consequently, spare capacity has been discounted from the supply. |
| 1       | Albury Football Ground      | -                    | SG11 2JG | Bishop's Stortford | No             | Albury Parish Council        | Unsecure           | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Standard       | -                             | 4                               | 4                                       | -                             | This pitch was previously used for community use; however, this was revoked by the Council during the season due to noise complaints. Consequently, spare capacity has been discounted from the supply. |
| 7       | Aston Playing Field         | Watton YFC           | SG2 7HR  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Aston Village Hall Committee | Secure             | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 4                               | 3                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.   |
| 7       | Aston Playing Field         | Watton YFC           | SG2 7HR  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Aston Village Hall Committee | Secure             | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Standard       | 0.5                           | 4                               | 3.5                                     | 0.5                           | Actual spare capacity of 0.5 MES.   |
| 8       | Aston St Mary's VA School   | Watton YFC           | SG2 7HA  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Education                    | Unsecure           | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Poor           | 0.5                           | 2                               | 1.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.  |
| 8       | Aston St Mary's VA School   | Watton YFC           | SG2 7HA  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Education                    | Unsecure           | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Poor           | 0.5                           | 2                               | 1.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.  |
| 12      | Bengeo Sports Ground        | Bengeo Trinity       | SG14 3JL | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Sport Club                   | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Poor           | 2.5                           | 1                               | 1.5                                     | -                             | Overplayed by 1.5 MES.  |
| 14      | Benington Recreation Ground | Watton YFC           | SG2 7QZ  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Sport Club                   | Secure             | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Poor           | -                             | 1                               | 1                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to poor quality.   |
| 14      | Benington Recreation Ground | Watton YFC           | SG2 7QZ  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Sport Club                   | Secure             | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Poor           | 1                             | 1                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.   |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | BSC FC               | CM23 2PJ | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education                    | Unsecure           | Adult       | 1              | Poor           | 1.5                           | 1                               | 0.5                                     | -                             | Overplayed by 0.5 MES.  |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Thorley Manor        | CM23 2PJ | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education                    | Unsecure           | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Poor           | 2                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.   |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Thorley Manor        | CM23 2PJ | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education                    | Unsecure           | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Poor           | 2                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.   |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site   | Clubs accessing site         | Postcode | Analysis area      | Community use? | Management                          | Security of tenure | Pitch sizes | No. of pitches | Quality rating | Current play (match sessions) | Pitch capacity (match sessions) | Overused, at capacity or spare capacity | Spare capacity in peak period | Comments   |
|---------|--|------------------------------|----------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College                           | BSC FC                       | CM23 2PJ | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education                           | Unsecure           | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Poor           | 2                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.  |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College                           | Thorley Manor                | CM23 2PJ | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education                           | Unsecure           | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Poor           | 2.5                           | 1                               | 1.5                                     | -                             | Overplayed by 1.5 MES  |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College                           | Thorley Manor                | CM23 2PJ | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education                           | Unsecure           | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Poor           | 1.5                           | 1                               | 0.5                                     | -                             | Overplayed by 0.5 MES  |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College                           | Thorley Manor                | CM23 2PJ | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education                           | Unsecure           | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Poor           | 1                             | 1                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.  |
| 20      | Bishops Stortford Swifts FC                          | Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC | CM23 2QE | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Sport Club                          | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 2                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.  |
| 20      | Bishops Stortford Swifts FC                          | Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC | CM23 2QE | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Sport Club                          | Secure             | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Good           | 1                             | 6                               | 5                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 20      | Bishops Stortford Swifts FC                          | Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC | CM23 2QE | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Sport Club                          | Secure             | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Poor           | 0.5                           | 2                               | 1.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 20      | Bishops Stortford Swifts FC                          | Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC | CM23 2QE | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Sport Club                          | Secure             | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Poor           | 0.5                           | 1                               | 0.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 21      | Bramfield Playing Field                              | Golden Griffin               | SG14 2QL | Watton-at-Stone    | Yes            | Bramfield Parish Council            | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Poor           | 0.5                           | 1                               | 0.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 22      | Braughing Playing Fields                             | Buntingford Cougars          | SG11 2QL | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Braughing Parish Council            | Secure             | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Poor           | 1.5                           | 2                               | 0.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 22      | Braughing Playing Fields                             | Buntingford Cougars          | SG11 2QL | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Braughing Parish Council            | Secure             | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Poor           | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 24      | Brewery Field  | Casuals & Pelham             | SG9 0LL  | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Furneux Pelham Parish Council       | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Poor           | 0.5                           | 1                               | 0.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 25      | Bullfields   | Sawbridgeworth Town          | CM21 9EA | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | Sawbridgeworth Town Council         | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Poor           | -                             | 1                               | 1                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to poor quality.  |
| 25      | Bullfields   | Sawbridgeworth Town          | CM21 9EA | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | Sawbridgeworth Town Council         | Secure             | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Poor           | 0.5                           | 1                               | 0.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 29      | Christ Church C Of E (VA) Primary School And Nursery | -                            | SG12 7BT | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education                           | Unsecure           | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 4                               | 3                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. |
| 30      | Church Lane Playing Field                            | -                            | SG14 3ND | Watton-at-Stone    | Yes            | Stapleford Parish Council           | Secure             | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Poor           | -                             | 2                               | 2                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to poor quality.  |
| 31      | Cottered Playing Field                               | Buntingford Cougars          | SG9 9QW  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Cottered & Throcking Parish Council | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | -                             | 2                               | 2                                       | 1                             | Actual spare capacity of 1 MES   |
| 31      | Cottered Playing Field                               | Buntingford Cougars          | SG9 9QW  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Cottered & Throcking Parish Council | Secure             | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |

**EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL:  
PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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|---------|---|-----------------------------------|----------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| 35      | Crouchfields                              | -                                 | SG12 0PS | Watton-at-Stone    | Yes            | Wodson Park FC  | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Poor           | -                             | 1                               | 1                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to poor quality.  |
| 35      | Crouchfields                              | -                                 | SG12 0PS | Watton-at-Stone    | Yes            | Wodson Park FC  | Secure             | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Standard       | -                             | 4                               | 4                                       | 1                             | Actual spare capacity of 1 MES   |
| 35      | Crouchfields                              | Wodson Park FC                    | SG12 0PS | Watton-at-Stone    | Yes            | Wodson Park FC  | Secure             | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 4                               | 3                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 35      | Crouchfields                              | Wodson Park FC                    | SG12 0PS | Watton-at-Stone    | Yes            | Wodson Park FC  | Secure             | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Standard       | 2.5                           | 2                               | 0.5                                     | -                             | Overplayed by 0.5 MES  |
| 35      | Crouchfields                              | Wodson Park FC                    | SG12 0PS | Watton-at-Stone    | Yes            | Wodson Park FC  | Secure             | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 36      | Datchworth All Saints C Of Primary School | Watton YFC                        | SG3 6RE  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Education       | Unsecure           | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Standard       | 0.5                           | 4                               | 3.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |
| 36      | Datchworth All Saints C Of Primary School | Watton YFC                        | SG3 6RE  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Education       | Unsecure           | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Standard       | 0.5                           | 4                               | 3.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |
| 36      | Datchworth All Saints C Of Primary School | Watton YFC                        | SG3 6RE  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Education       | Unsecure           | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 4                               | 3                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |
| 39      | Edwinstree C Of E Middle School           | -                                 | SG9 9AW  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Education       | Unsecure           | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. |
| 40      | Freman College                            | -                                 | SG9 9BT  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Education       | Unsecure           | Adult       | 1              | Good           | 1                             | 3                               | 2                                       | -                             | 2 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. |
| 40      | Freman College                            | Buntingford Cougars               | SG9 9BT  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Education       | Unsecure           | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Good           | 1.5                           | 4                               | 2.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |
| 41      | Friedberg Playing Fields                  | BSC FC                            | CM23 4RF | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Sport Club      | Secure             | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Poor           | 2                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.  |
| 41      | Friedberg Playing Fields                  | BSC FC                            | CM23 4RF | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Sport Club      | Secure             | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Poor           | 4.5                           | 2                               | 2.5                                     | -                             | Overplayed by 2.5 MES  |
| 41      | Friedberg Playing Fields                  | BSC FC                            | CM23 4RF | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Sport Club      | Secure             | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Poor           | 2.5                           | 1                               | 1.5                                     | -                             | Overplayed by 1.5 MES  |
| 41      | Friedberg Playing Fields                  | BSC FC                            | CM23 4RF | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Sport Club      | Secure             | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Poor           | 3.5                           | 1                               | 2.5                                     | -                             | Overplayed by 2.5 MES  |
| 42      | Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre            | Community Church Stortford BSC FC | CM23 2HH | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Everyone Active | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 42      | Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre            | Football For Fathers              | CM23 2HH | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Everyone Active | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 42      | Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre            | Athletico Corvale                 | CM23 2HH | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Everyone Active | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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|---------|--------------------------------|---|----------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| 42      | Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre | Grange United   | CM23 2HH | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Everyone Active | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.                        |
| 42      | Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre | Sawbo Open Sawbo FC   | CM23 2HH | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Everyone Active | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.                        |
| 42      | Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre | BSC FC  | CM23 2HH | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Everyone Active | Secure             | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Poor           | 0.5                           | 2                               | 1.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to poor quality.    |
| 42      | Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre | BSC FC  | CM23 2HH | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Everyone Active | Secure             | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Poor           | 0.5                           | 2                               | 1.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to poor quality.    |
| 42      | Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre | BSC FC  | CM23 2HH | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Everyone Active | Secure             | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Poor           | 1.5                           | 1                               | 0.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity.                        |
| 42      | Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre | Forest Hall Park  | CM23 2HH | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Everyone Active | Secure             | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Poor           | 1                             | 1                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.                                |
| 43      | Haileybury Sports Complex      | -   | SG13 7NU | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Sport Complex   | Unsecure           | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Good           | -                             | 6                               | 6                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure. |
| 43      | Haileybury Sports Complex      | -   | SG13 7NU | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Sport Complex   | Unsecure           | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Good           | -                             | 4                               | 4                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure. |
| 43      | Haileybury Sports Complex      | -   | SG13 7NU | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Sport Complex   | Unsecure           | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Good           | -                             | 4                               | 4                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure. |
| 43      | Haileybury Sports Complex      | -   | SG13 7NU | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Sport Complex   | Unsecure           | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Good           | -                             | 4                               | 4                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure. |
| 43      | Haileybury Sports Complex      | -   | SG13 7NU | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Sport Complex   | Unsecure           | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Good           | -                             | 4                               | 4                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure. |
| 43      | Haileybury Sports Complex      | -   | SG13 7NU | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Sport Complex   | Unsecure           | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Good           | -                             | 4                               | 4                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure. |
| 43      | Haileybury Sports Complex      | -   | SG13 7NU | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Sport Complex   | Unsecure           | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Good           | -                             | 4                               | 4                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure. |
| 44      | Hartham Leisure Centre         | Green Rangers Hartham United FC Hertford Club de Futbol       | SG14 1QR | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Everyone Active | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 1.5                           | 2                               | 0.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity.                        |
| 44      | Hartham Leisure Centre         | Hertford Stags Hertford Unite Lord Haig FC Northside Spartans | SG14 1QR | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Everyone Active | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 2                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.                                |
| 44      | Hartham Leisure Centre         | -   | SG14 1QR | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Everyone Active | Secure             | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Standard       | -                             | 2                               | 2                                       | 1                             | Actual spare capacity of 1 MES.                  |

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PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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|---------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| 49      | Hertford Heath Playing Fields | Hertford Heath                | SG13 7QS | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Hertford Heath Parish Council | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Poor           | 1                             | 1                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.  |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School            | -                             | CM21 9BY | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | Education                     | Unsecure           | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School            | Sawbridgeworth Town           | CM21 9BY | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | Education                     | Unsecure           | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Poor           | 1                             | 1                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.  |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School            | -                             | CM21 9BY | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | Education                     | Unsecure           | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Standard       | 0.5                           | 2                               | 1.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |
| 65      | London Road Playing Fields    | Buntingford Cougars           | SG9 9HZ  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Sport Club                    | Unsecure           | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Poor           | 2                             | 1                               | 1                                       | -                             | Overplayed by 1 MES  |
| 66      | Manor Fields Primary School   | Thorley Manor                 | CM23 4LE | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education                     | Unsecure           | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 4                               | 3                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |
| 66      | Manor Fields Primary School   | Thorley Manor                 | CM23 4LE | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education                     | Unsecure           | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Standard       | 1.5                           | 4                               | 2.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |
| 68      | Morgans Field                 | -                             | SG13 8DR | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education                     | Unsecure           | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | -                             | 2                               | 2                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |
| 68      | Morgans Field                 | Bury Rangers                  | SG13 8DR | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education                     | Unsecure           | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Standard       | 3                             | 4                               | 1                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 68      | Morgans Field                 | Bury Rangers                  | SG13 8DR | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education                     | Unsecure           | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Standard       | 3                             | 4                               | 1                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 68      | Morgans Field                 | Bury Rangers                  | SG13 8DR | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education                     | Unsecure           | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Standard       | 4                             | 4                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.  |
| 68      | Morgans Field                 | Bury Rangers                  | SG13 8DR | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education                     | Unsecure           | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Standard       | 2                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.  |
| 74      | Presdales Recreation Ground   | Angel Open                    | SG12 9PD | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | East Herts District Council   | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 0.5                           | 2                               | 1.5                                     | 0.5                           | Actual spare capacity of 0.5 MES.  |
| 74      | Presdales Recreation Ground   | Broxbourne Albion             | SG12 9PD | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | East Herts District Council   | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 0.5                           | 2                               | 1.5                                     | 0.5                           | Actual spare capacity of 0.5 MES.  |
| 74      | Presdales Recreation Ground   | WGC Stormers                  | SG12 9PD | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | East Herts District Council   | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 0.5                           | 2                               | 1.5                                     | 0.5                           | Actual spare capacity of 0.5 MES.  |
| 74      | Presdales Recreation Ground   | Red Star Eagles Ware Herts FC | SG12 9PD | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | East Herts District Council   | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 74      | Presdales Recreation Ground   | Bury Rangers                  | SG12 9PD | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | East Herts District Council   | Secure             | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Standard       | -                             | 4                               | 4                                       | 1                             | Actual spare capacity of 1 MES   |
| 74      | Presdales Recreation Ground   | Bury Rangers                  | SG12 9PD | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | East Herts District Council   | Secure             | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Standard       | 2.5                           | 2                               | 0.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 74      | Presdales Recreation Ground   | Bury Rangers                  | SG12 9PD | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | East Herts District Council   | Secure             | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Standard       | 2                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.  |

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|---------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|--------------------|----------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| 75      | Presdales School                     | Bury Rangers                  | SG12 9NX | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education  | Unsecure           | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Standard       | 4                             | 4                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.  |
| 75      | Presdales School                     | Hertford Town Bury Rangers    | SG12 9NX | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education  | Unsecure           | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Standard       | 1.5                           | 4                               | 2.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 75      | Presdales School                     | Bury Rangers                  | SG12 9NX | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education  | Unsecure           | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Standard       | 2                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.  |
| 75      | Presdales School                     | Hertford Town Bury Rangers    | SG12 9NX | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education  | Unsecure           | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Standard       | 2                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.  |
| 75      | Presdales School                     | Hertford Town Bury Rangers    | SG12 9NX | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education  | Unsecure           | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Standard       | 6                             | 2                               | 4                                       | -                             | Overplayed by 4 MES.   |
| 76      | Ralph Sadleir School                 | Standon & Puckeridge Hares FC | SG11 1TF | Buntingford        | Yes            | Education  | Unsecure           | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Good           | 1                             | 6                               | 5                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |
| 76      | Ralph Sadleir School                 | Standon & Puckeridge Hares FC | SG11 1TF | Buntingford        | Yes            | Education  | Unsecure           | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Standard       | 0.5                           | 4                               | 3.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |
| 76      | Ralph Sadleir School                 | Standon & Puckeridge Hares FC | SG11 1TF | Buntingford        | Yes            | Education  | Unsecure           | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Good           | 0.5                           | 6                               | 5.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |
| 76      | Ralph Sadleir School                 | Standon & Puckeridge Hares FC | SG11 1TF | Buntingford        | Yes            | Education  | Unsecure           | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Good           | 0.5                           | 6                               | 5.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |
| 76      | Ralph Sadleir School                 | Standon & Puckeridge Hares FC | SG11 1TF | Buntingford        | Yes            | Education  | Unsecure           | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |
| 77      | RDA Stadium                          | Bishop's Stortford FC         | CM23 5RG | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Sport Club | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Good           | 1                             | 3                               | 2                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 78      | Reedings Junior School               | Sawbridgeworth Town           | CM21 9DD | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | Education  | Unsecure           | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Standard       | 0.5                           | 4                               | 3.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |
| 80      | Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School | -                             | SG12 9HY | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education  | Unsecure           | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. |
| 80      | Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School | -                             | SG12 9HY | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education  | Unsecure           | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. |
| 81      | Saint Mary's Catholic School         | -                             | CM23 2NQ | Bishop's Stortford | No             | Education  | Unsecure           | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 4                               | 3                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. |
| 81      | Saint Mary's Catholic School         | -                             | CM23 2NQ | Bishop's Stortford | No             | Education  | Unsecure           | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 4                               | 3                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular   |



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PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT**

| Site ID | Site                              | Clubs accessing site | Postcode | Analysis area  | Community use? | Management               | Security of tenure | Pitch sizes | No. of pitches | Quality rating | Current play (match sessions) | Pitch capacity (match sessions) | Overused, at capacity or spare capacity | Spare capacity in peak period | Comments   |
|---------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
|         |                                   |                      |          |                |                |                          |                    |             |                |                |                               |                                 |   |                               | use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.  |
| 84      | Sawbridgeworth Town Football Club | Sawbridgeworth Town  | CM21 0DE | Sawbridgeworth | Yes            | Sport Club               | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Good           | 1                             | 3                               | 2                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 84      | Sawbridgeworth Town Football Club | Sawbridgeworth Town  | CM21 0DE | Sawbridgeworth | Yes            | Sport Club               | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Good           | 1                             | 3                               | 2                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 86      | Seth Ward Community Centre        | Buntingford Cougars  | SG9 9SG  | Buntingford    | Yes            | Buntingford Town Council | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 0.5                           | 2                               | 1.5                                     | 0.5                           | Actual spare capacity of 0.5 MES.  |
| 86      | Seth Ward Community Centre        | Buntingford Cougars  | SG9 9SG  | Buntingford    | Yes            | Buntingford Town Council | Secure             | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Standard       | 2                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.  |
| 89      | Simon Balle School                | -                    | SG13 8AJ | Hertford, Ware | Yes            | Education                | Unsecure           | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. |
| 89      | Simon Balle School                | -                    | SG13 8AJ | Hertford, Ware | Yes            | Education                | Unsecure           | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. |
| 89      | Simon Balle School                | -                    | SG13 8AJ | Hertford, Ware | Yes            | Education                | Unsecure           | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. |
| 90      | St Edmunds College & Prep School  | Bully's Crusaders    | SG11 1DS | Buntingford    | Yes            | Education                | Unsecure           | Adult       | 1              | Good           | 0.5                           | 3                               | 2.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |
| 90      | St Edmunds College & Prep School  | -                    | SG11 1DS | Buntingford    | Yes            | Education                | Unsecure           | Adult       | 1              | Good           | 1                             | 3                               | 2                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. |
| 90      | St Edmunds College & Prep School  | -                    | SG11 1DS | Buntingford    | Yes            | Education                | Unsecure           | Adult       | 1              | Good           | 1                             | 3                               | 2                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. |
| 90      | St Edmunds College & Prep School  | -                    | SG11 1DS | Buntingford    | Yes            | Education                | Unsecure           | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Good           | 1                             | 4                               | 3                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. |
| 90      | St Edmunds College & Prep School  | Watton YFC           | SG11 1DS | Buntingford    | Yes            | Education                | Unsecure           | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Good           | 1.5                           | 4                               | 2.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site   | Clubs accessing site                                       | Postcode | Analysis area      | Community use? | Management             | Security of tenure | Pitch sizes | No. of pitches | Quality rating | Current play (match sessions) | Pitch capacity (match sessions) | Overused, at capacity or spare capacity | Spare capacity in peak period | Comments   |
|---------|--|--|----------|--------------------|----------------|------------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| 91      | St Joseph's Catholic Primary School                              | -  | CM23 2NL | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education              | Secure             | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | 1                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity of 1 MES.                          |
| 94      | St Margaretsbury FC  | Hertford Heath St Margaretsbury                            | SG12 8EH | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Sport Club/Association | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 2                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.  |
| 94      | St Margaretsbury FC  | Hoddesdon FC AFC Abbotts                                   | SG12 8EH | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Sport Club/Association | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 2                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.  |
| 95      | St Marys Junior School   | -  | SG12 0RL | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education              | Unsecure           | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. |
| 95      | St Marys Junior School   | -  | SG12 0RL | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education              | Unsecure           | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. |
| 98      | Standon Memorial Playing Field                                   | Standon & Puckeridge Hares FC<br>Standon & Puckeridge Vets | SG11 1TF | Buntingford        | Yes            | Standon Parish Council | Secure             | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Poor           | 1                             | 1                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.  |
| 100     | Tewin Recreation Ground  | -  | AL6 0LE  | Watton-at-Stone    | Yes            | Tewin Parish Council   | Secure             | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Poor           | -                             | 2                               | 2                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to poor quality.  |
| 101     | The Bishop's Stortford High School                               | -  | CM23 3LU | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education              | Unsecure           | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. |
| 101     | The Bishop's Stortford High School                               | -  | CM23 3LU | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education              | Secure             | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | 1                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare of 1 MES.                                   |
| 101     | The Bishop's Stortford High School                               | -  | CM23 3LU | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education              | Secure             | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | 1                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare of 1 MES.                                   |
| 102     | The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood) | BSC FC   | SG10 6FB | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | Education              | Unsecure           | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 0.5                           | 2                               | 1.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |
| 102     | The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood) | -  | SG10 6FB | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | Education              | Unsecure           | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. |

**EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL:  
PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT**

| Site ID | Site   | Clubs accessing site                   | Postcode | Analysis area      | Community use? | Management             | Security of tenure | Pitch sizes | No. of pitches | Quality rating | Current play (match sessions) | Pitch capacity (match sessions) | Overused, at capacity or spare capacity | Spare capacity in peak period | Comments   |
|---------|--|--|----------|--------------------|----------------|------------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| 102     | The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood) | -                                      | SG10 6FB | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | Education              | Unsecure           | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. |
| 102     | The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood) | BSC FC                                 | SG10 6FB | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | Education              | Unsecure           | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Standard       | 0.5                           | 2                               | 1.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |
| 102     | The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood) | BSC FC                                 | SG10 6FB | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | Education              | Unsecure           | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Standard       | 0.5                           | 2                               | 1.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |
| 102     | The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood) | Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC           | SG10 6FB | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | Education              | Unsecure           | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Standard       | 0.5                           | 2                               | 1.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |
| 102     | The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood) | Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC<br>BSC FC | SG10 6FB | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | Education              | Unsecure           | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.  |
| 103     | The Bishops Stortford Sports Trust                               | BSC FC                                 | CM23 2TD | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Sport Club/Association | Secure             | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Standard       | 2                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.  |
| 104     | The Bury   | Buntingford Town                       | SG9 9HZ  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Sport Club             | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 2                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.  |
| 104     | The Bury   | Buntingford Cougars                    | SG9 9HZ  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Sport Club             | Secure             | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Standard       | 2                             | 4                               | 2                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 104     | The Bury   | Buntingford Cougars                    | SG9 9HZ  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Sport Club             | Secure             | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Standard       | 2.5                           | 4                               | 1.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 104     | The Bury   | Buntingford Cougars                    | SG9 9HZ  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Sport Club             | Secure             | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 4                               | 3                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 105     | The Chauncy School   | Deaconsfield Vets<br>Hartham United FC | SG12 0DP | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education              | Unsecure           | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.  |
| 105     | The Chauncy School   | -                                      | SG12 0DP | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education              | Unsecure           | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. |
| 105     | The Chauncy School   | -                                      | SG12 0DP | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education              | Unsecure           | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure. |
| 108     | The Sele School  | Bengeo Tigers                          | SG14 2DG | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education              | Unsecure           | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Good           | 4.5                           | 6                               | 1.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.   |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site                           | Clubs accessing site | Postcode | Analysis area   | Community use? | Management                | Security of tenure | Pitch sizes | No. of pitches | Quality rating | Current play (match sessions) | Pitch capacity (match sessions) | Overused, at capacity or spare capacity | Spare capacity in peak period | Comments   |
|---------|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| 108     | The Sele School                | Bengeo Tigers        | SG14 2DG | Hertford, Ware  | Yes            | Education                 | Unsecure           | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Standard       | 3                             | 4                               | 1                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure. |
| 108     | The Sele School                | Bengeo Tigers        | SG14 2DG | Hertford, Ware  | Yes            | Education                 | Unsecure           | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Standard       | 0.5                           | 2                               | 1.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure. |
| 108     | The Sele School                | Bengeo Tigers        | SG14 2DG | Hertford, Ware  | Yes            | Education                 | Unsecure           | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Standard       | 0.5                           | 2                               | 1.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure. |
| 108     | The Sele School                | Bengeo Tigers        | SG14 2DG | Hertford, Ware  | Yes            | Education                 | Unsecure           | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Good           | 1.5                           | 4                               | 2.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure. |
| 108     | The Sele School                | Bengeo Tigers        | SG14 2DG | Hertford, Ware  | Yes            | Education                 | Unsecure           | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Good           | 3                             | 4                               | 1                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure. |
| 111     | Thundridge Sports Ground       | -                    | SG12 0SU | Buntingford     | Yes            | Thundridge Parish Council | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | -                             | 2                               | 2                                       | 1                             | Actual spare capacity of 1 MES.                  |
| 111     | Thundridge Sports Ground       | -                    | SG12 0SU | Buntingford     | Yes            | Thundridge Parish Council | Secure             | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Standard       | -                             | 4                               | 4                                       | 1                             | Actual spare capacity of 1 MES.                  |
| 111     | Thundridge Sports Ground       | -                    | SG12 0SU | Buntingford     | Yes            | Thundridge Parish Council | Secure             | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Standard       | -                             | 4                               | 4                                       | 1                             | Actual spare capacity of 1 MES.                  |
| 113     | Walkern School                 | AFC Walkern          | SG2 7NS  | Buntingford     | Yes            | Education                 | Unsecure           | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Standard       | 0.5                           | 4                               | 3.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure. |
| 118     | Ware Lions FC                  | Ware Lions           | SG12 0SJ | Buntingford     | Yes            | Sport Club                | Secure             | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Poor           | 3                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | Overplayed by 1 MES.                             |
| 118     | Ware Lions FC                  | Ware Lions           | SG12 0SJ | Buntingford     | Yes            | Sport Club                | Secure             | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Standard       | 2.5                           | 4                               | 1.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity.                        |
| 118     | Ware Lions FC                  | Ware Lions           | SG12 0SJ | Buntingford     | Yes            | Sport Club                | Secure             | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Standard       | 2                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.                                |
| 118     | Ware Lions FC                  | Ware Lions           | SG12 0SJ | Buntingford     | Yes            | Sport Club                | Secure             | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Standard       | 2.5                           | 2                               | 0.5                                     | -                             | Overplayed by 0.5 MES.                           |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club       | Ware United FC       | SG12 7NN | Hertford, Ware  | Yes            | Sport Club                | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Poor           | 1                             | 1                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.                                |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club       | Ware YFC             | SG12 7NN | Hertford, Ware  | Yes            | Sport Club                | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Poor           | 1                             | 1                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.                                |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club       | Ware YFC Ware FC     | SG12 7NN | Hertford, Ware  | Yes            | Sport Club                | Secure             | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Poor           | 2                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.                                |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club       | Ware YFC Ware FC     | SG12 7NN | Hertford, Ware  | Yes            | Sport Club                | Secure             | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Good           | 6                             | 6                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.                                |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club       | Ware YFC             | SG12 7NN | Hertford, Ware  | Yes            | Sport Club                | Secure             | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Poor           | 3                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | Overplayed by 1 MES.                             |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club       | Ware YFC             | SG12 7NN | Hertford, Ware  | Yes            | Sport Club                | Secure             | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Poor           | 2.5                           | 2                               | 0.5                                     | -                             | Overplayed by 0.5 MES.                           |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club       | Ware YFC             | SG12 7NN | Hertford, Ware  | Yes            | Sport Club                | Secure             | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Standard       | 3                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | Overplayed by 1 MES.                             |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club       | Ware YFC             | SG12 7NN | Hertford, Ware  | Yes            | Sport Club                | Secure             | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Standard       | 2                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.                                |
| 120     | Watton-At-Stone Primary School | Watton YFC           | SG14 3SG | Watton-at-Stone | Yes            | Education                 | Unsecure           | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Poor           | 1.5                           | 1                               | 0.5                                     | -                             | Overplayed by 0.5 MES.                           |

**EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL:  
PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT**

| Site ID | Site   | Clubs accessing site  | Postcode | Analysis area      | Community use? | Management              | Security of tenure | Pitch sizes | No. of pitches | Quality rating | Current play (match sessions) | Pitch capacity (match sessions) | Overused, at capacity or spare capacity | Spare capacity in peak period | Comments                                      |
|---------|--|---|----------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|
| 122     | Westmill Recreation Ground                         | Westmill Open   | SG9 9LH  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Westmill Parish Council | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity.                     |
| 125     | Wodson Park Sports Centre                          | Ware United FC  | SG12 0UQ | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Private                 | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 0.5                           | 2                               | 1.5                                     | 0.5                           | Actual spare capacity of 0.5 MES.             |
| 125     | Wodson Park Sports Centre                          | Bury Rangers  | SG12 0UQ | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Private                 | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Standard       | 0.5                           | 2                               | 1.5                                     | 0.5                           | Actual spare capacity of 0.5 MES.             |
| 126     | Allenburys Sports & Social Club                    | Allenbury Vets<br>Allenburys Sports<br>Allenburys Mangrove Vets<br>Boca Seniors FC<br>The Herts Prodigies<br>Ware YFC | SG12 0AW | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Private                 | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Good           | 3                             | 3                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.                             |
| 126     | Allenburys Sports & Social Club                    | -   | SG12 0AW | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Private                 | Secure             | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Good           | -                             | 4                               | 4                                       | 1                             | Actual spare capacity of 1 MES.               |
| 127     | Walkern Sports & Community Centre                  | AFC Walkern<br>Walkern Vets   | SG2 7NP  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Walkern Parish Council  | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Poor           | 1.5                           | 1                               | 0.5                                     | -                             | Overplayed by 0.5 MES.                        |
| 127     | Walkern Sports & Community Centre                  | AFC Walkern   | SG2 7NP  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Walkern Parish Council  | Secure             | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Poor           | 1                             | 1                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.                             |
| 128     | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Watton YFC  | SG14 3SF | Watton-at-Stone    | Yes            | Sport Club              | Secure             | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Poor           | 1                             | 1                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.                             |
| 131     | Hartham Common & Kingsmead                         | -   | SG13 7JY | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Everyone Active         | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Poor           | -                             | 1                               | 1                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to poor quality. |
| 131     | Hartham Common & Kingsmead                         | Hertford Town   | SG13 7JY | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Everyone Active         | Secure             | Adult       | 1              | Poor           | 0.5                           | 1                               | 0.5                                     | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to poor quality. |
| 131     | Hartham Common & Kingsmead                         | Hertford Town   | SG13 7JY | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Everyone Active         | Secure             | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Poor           | 2                             | 1                               | 1                                       | -                             | Overplayed by 1 MES.                          |
| 131     | Hartham Common & Kingsmead                         | Hertford Town   | SG13 7JY | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Everyone Active         | Secure             | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Poor           | 2                             | 1                               | 1                                       | -                             | Overplayed by 1 MES.                          |
| 132     | Hertfordshire & Essex High School Sports Centre    | Thorley Manor   | CM23 5LH | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education               | Unsecure           | Youth 11v11 | 1              | Poor           | 1.5                           | 1                               | 0.5                                     | -                             | Overplayed by 0.5 MES.                        |
| 139     | Pearce House Playing Fields                        | BSC FC  | CM23 5BD | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education               | Unsecure           | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Poor           | 2                             | 1                               | 1                                       | -                             | Overplayed by 1 MES.                          |
| 139     | Pearce House Playing Fields                        | BSC FC  | CM23 5BD | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education               | Unsecure           | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Poor           | 2                             | 1                               | 1                                       | -                             | Overplayed by 1 MES.                          |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site                               | Clubs accessing site | Postcode | Analysis area      | Community use? | Management               | Security of tenure | Pitch sizes | No. of pitches | Quality rating | Current play (match sessions) | Pitch capacity (match sessions) | Overused, at capacity or spare capacity | Spare capacity in peak period | Comments  |
|---------|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|
| 141     | St. George's Playing Field         | -                    | CM21 0JJ | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | High Wych Parish Council | Secure             | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Poor           | -                             | 2                               | 2                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to poor quality.   |
| 142     | Hillmead Primary School            | -                    | CM23 4PW | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education                | Unsecure           | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 4                               | 3                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.    |
| 143     | Richard Whittington Primary School | -                    | CM23 3NP | Bishop's Stortford | No             | Education                | Unsecure           | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 4                               | 3                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.    |
| 148     | Thundridge Primary School          | -                    | SG12 0SY | Buntingford        | Yes            | Education                | Unsecure           | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Poor           | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.    |
| 149     | Abel Smith Primary School          | -                    | SG13 8AE | Hertford, Ware     | No             | Education                | Unsecure           | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 4                               | 3                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.    |
| 166     | Layston C of E First School        | Buntingford Cougars  | SG9 9EU  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Education                | Unsecure           | Mini 7v7    | 1              | Poor           | 2                             | 2                               | -                                       | -                             | Used at capacity.   |
| 167     | Mandeville Primary School          | -                    | CM21 0BL | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | Education                | Secure             | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Poor           | 1                             | 1                               | -                                       | -                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality. |
| 167     | Mandeville Primary School          | -                    | CM21 0BL | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | Education                | Secure             | Youth 9v9   | 1              | Standard       | 1                             | 2                               | 1                                       | 1                             | 1 MES of demand attributed to curricular use. Actual spare capacity of 1 MES.                             |
| 169     | St John the Baptist CE VA Primary  | -                    | SG12 9SE | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education                | Unsecure           | Mini 5v5    | 1              | Standard       | -                             | 4                               | 4                                       | -                             | No actual spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.  |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

To determine 'actual spare capacity', each site with 'potential capacity identified in Table 2.18 has been reviewed. A pitch is only said to have 'actual spare capacity' if it is available for community use and available at the peak time for that format of the game. Any pitch not meeting this criterion has consequently been discounted.

Pitches that are of a poor quality are not deemed to have actual spare capacity due to their already low carrying capacity. Any identified spare capacity should be retained in order to relieve the pitches of use, which in turn, can aid the improvement of pitch quality.

Unless tenure is considered secure through the operator, school sites that are currently available for community use but unused are also not considered to have actual spare capacity as the full availability of these pitches cannot be relied upon in the long term.

The table below identifies actual spare capacity by site and pitch type across East Hertfordshire. It totals 15.5 match equivalent sessions per week and is identified across 19 pitches at 12 sites.

Table 2.19: Summary of actual spare capacity by pitch

| Site ID | Site                                | Analysis area      | Pitch Type  | Capacity rating (sessions) |
|---------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| 7       | Aston Playing Field                 | Buntingford        | Mini 7v7    | 0.5                        |
| 31      | Cottered Playing Field              | Buntingford        | Adult       | 1                          |
| 35      | Crouchfields                        | Watton-at-Stone    | Mini 5v5    | 1                          |
| 44      | Hartham Leisure Centre              | Hertford, Ware     | Youth 11v11 | 1                          |
| 74      | Presdales Recreation Ground         | Hertford, Ware     | Adult       | 0.5                        |
| 74      | Presdales Recreation Ground         | Hertford, Ware     | Adult       | 0.5                        |
| 74      | Presdales Recreation Ground         | Hertford, Ware     | Adult       | 0.5                        |
| 74      | Presdales Recreation Ground         | Hertford, Ware     | Mini 7v7    | 1                          |
| 86      | Seth Ward Community Centre          | Buntingford        | Adult       | 0.5                        |
| 91      | St Joseph's Catholic Primary School | Bishop's Stortford | Mini 7v7    | 1                          |
| 101     | The Bishop's Stortford High School  | Bishop's Stortford | Youth 11v11 | 1                          |
| 101     | The Bishop's Stortford High School  | Bishop's Stortford | Youth 9v9   | 1                          |
| 111     | Thundridge Sports Ground            | Buntingford        | Adult       | 1                          |
| 111     | Thundridge Sports Ground            | Buntingford        | Mini 7v7    | 1                          |
| 111     | Thundridge Sports Ground            | Buntingford        | Mini 7v7    | 1                          |
| 125     | Wodson Park Sports Centre           | Hertford, Ware     | Adult       | 0.5                        |
| 125     | Wodson Park Sports Centre           | Hertford, Ware     | Adult       | 0.5                        |
| 126     | Allenburys Sports & Social Club     | Hertford, Ware     | Youth 11v11 | 1                          |
| 167     | Mandeville Primary School           | Sawbridgeworth     | Youth 9v9   | 1                          |

Actual spare capacity has been aggregated by area and by pitch type below.

Table 2.20: Summary of actual spare capacity (in match equivalent sessions per week)

| Analysis area      | Adult    | Youth 11v11 | Youth 9v9 | Mini 7v7   | Mini 5v5 | Total       |
|--------------------|----------|-------------|-----------|------------|----------|-------------|
| Bishop's Stortford | -        | 1           | 1         | 1          | -        | 3           |
| Buntingford        | 2.5      | -           | -         | 2.5        | -        | 5           |
| Hertford, Ware     | 2.5      | 2           | -         | 1          | -        | 5.5         |
| Sawbridgeworth     | -        | -           | 1         | -          | -        | 1           |
| Watton-at-Stone    | -        | -           | -         | -          | 1        | 1           |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>5</b> | <b>3</b>    | <b>2</b>  | <b>4.5</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>15.5</b> |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

In addition to the above, it is worthy of note that 31.5 match equivalent sessions per week of potential spare capacity at community use sites has been discounted due to either sites having unsecure tenure or poor pitch quality.

Overplay occurs when there is more play accommodated on a site than it can sustain (which can often be due to reduced quality). Once pitches become overplayed, their ability to accommodate match fixtures deteriorates due to issues relating to wear and tear and a difficulty in recovering after match play.

In total, 22 pitches across 13 sites are identified as being overplayed. Total overplay equates to 25.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

Table 2.21: Summary of overplay by pitch

| Site ID | Site  | Analysis area      | Pitch type  | Capacity rating (sessions) |
|---------|---|--------------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| 12      | Bengeo Sports Ground                            | Hertford, Ware     | Adult       | 1.5                        |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College                      | Bishop's Stortford | Adult       | 0.5                        |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College                      | Bishop's Stortford | Youth 11v11 | 1.5                        |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College                      | Bishop's Stortford | Youth 9v9   | 0.5                        |
| 35      | Crouchfields                                    | Watton-at-Stone    | Youth 11v11 | 0.5                        |
| 41      | Friedberg Playing Fields                        | Bishop's Stortford | Mini 7v7    | 2.5                        |
| 41      | Friedberg Playing Fields                        | Bishop's Stortford | Youth 11v11 | 1.5                        |
| 41      | Friedberg Playing Fields                        | Bishop's Stortford | Youth 9v9   | 2.5                        |
| 65      | London Road Playing Fields                      | Buntingford        | Youth 9v9   | 1                          |
| 75      | Presdales School                                | Hertford, Ware     | Youth 9v9   | 4                          |
| 118     | Ware Lions FC                                   | Buntingford        | Mini 5v5    | 1                          |
| 118     | Ware Lions FC                                   | Buntingford        | Youth 9v9   | 0.5                        |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club                        | Hertford, Ware     | Mini 7v7    | 1                          |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club                        | Hertford, Ware     | Mini 7v7    | 0.5                        |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club                        | Hertford, Ware     | Youth 9v9   | 1                          |
| 120     | Watton-At-Stone Primary School                  | Watton-at-Stone    | Youth 9v9   | 0.5                        |
| 127     | Walkern Sports & Community Centre               | Buntingford        | Adult       | 0.5                        |
| 131     | Hartham Common & Kingsmead                      | Hertford, Ware     | Youth 11v11 | 1                          |
| 131     | Hartham Common & Kingsmead                      | Hertford, Ware     | Youth 9v9   | 1                          |
| 132     | Hertfordshire & Essex High School Sports Centre | Bishop's Stortford | Youth 11v11 | 0.5                        |
| 139     | Pearce House Playing Fields                     | Bishop's Stortford | Youth 9v9   | 1                          |
| 139     | Pearce House Playing Fields                     | Bishop's Stortford | Youth 9v9   | 1                          |

Table 2.22: Summary of overplay by analysis area (in match equivalent sessions per week)

| Analysis area      | Adult      | Youth 11v11 | Youth 9v9 | Mini 7v7 | Mini 5v5 | Total       |
|--------------------|------------|-------------|-----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| Bishop's Stortford | 0.5        | 3.5         | 5         | 2.5      | -        | 11.5        |
| Buntingford        | 0.5        | -           | 1.5       | -        | 1        | 4           |
| Hertford, Ware     | 1.5        | 1           | 6         | 1.5      | -        | 10          |
| Sawbridgeworth     | -          | -           | -         | -        | -        | -           |
| Watton-at-Stone    | -          | 0.5         | 0.5       | -        | -        | 1           |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>2.5</b> | <b>5</b>    | <b>13</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>25.5</b> |



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Most overplay taking place in East Hertfordshire is situated in the Bishop's Stortford Analysis Area with 11.5 MES. Most of this (8.5 MES) is at youth football with 3.5 MES at youth 11v11 and five MES at youth 9v9. This can be attributed to big clubs such as BSC FC who field several teams at this level with the biggest overplay at its own site Friedberg Playing Fields and Birchwood High School.

Youth 9v9 pitches being overplayed is a common theme across East Hertfordshire with it being the most overplayed pitch type across all Analysis Areas, equating to 13 MES. The least overplayed pitch type is mini 5v5 equating to one MES.

Most of the pitches that are overplayed not only receive a lot of use but are also of poor quality, meaning the capacity is reduced. Should these pitches improve in quality the volume of overplay across the District would ease.

## 2.5: Supply and demand analysis

Having considered supply and demand, the tables below identify the current demand and future demand balance (i.e. spare capacity taking away overplay) in each of the analysis areas for each pitch type, based on match equivalent sessions per week.

Total future demand in East Hertfordshire accounts for population growth. As a reminder, growth from population increases equates to three adult men's teams, six youth boys', one youth girls and seven mini teams. Future demand from club ambitions and participation trends will be included as a scenario in the forthcoming Strategy.

On a districtwide basis, there is a currently a sufficient supply of adult provision to accommodate existing demand. However, should future demand be realised there would be a shortfall in adult pitches. The Buntingford and Hertford, Ware analysis areas show current spare capacity. Comparatively, the Bishop's Stortford Analysis Area has a shortfall of 0.5 match equivalent sessions for adult provision.

Table 2.23: Supply and demand balance of adult pitches (in match equivalent sessions per week)

| Analysis area      | Actual spare capacity | Overplay   | Current total | Future demand | Total    |
|--------------------|-----------------------|------------|---------------|---------------|----------|
| Bishop's Stortford | -                     | 0.5        | 0.5           | 0.5           | 1        |
| Buntingford        | 2.5                   | 0.5        | 2             | -             | 2        |
| Hertford, Ware     | 2.5                   | 1.5        | 1             | 2             | 1        |
| Sawbridgeworth     | -                     | -          | -             | -             | -        |
| Watton-at-Stone    | -                     | -          | -             | -             | -        |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>5</b>              | <b>2.5</b> | <b>2.5</b>    | <b>2.5</b>    | <b>-</b> |

Table 2.24: Supply and demand balance of youth 11v11 pitches (in match equivalent sessions per week)

| Analysis area      | Actual spare capacity | Overplay | Current total | Future demand | Total    |
|--------------------|-----------------------|----------|---------------|---------------|----------|
| Bishop's Stortford | 1                     | 3.5      | 2.5           | 0.5           | 3        |
| Buntingford        | -                     | -        | -             | 0.5           | 0.5      |
| Hertford, Ware     | 2                     | 1        | 1             | 2             | 1        |
| Sawbridgeworth     | -                     | -        | -             | -             | -        |
| Watton-at-Stone    | -                     | 0.5      | 0.5           | -             | 0.5      |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>3</b>              | <b>5</b> | <b>2</b>      | <b>3</b>      | <b>5</b> |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

The current picture is that there is an insufficient supply of provision of youth 11v11 pitches in East Hertfordshire to accommodate existing demand. This is largely caused sites such as Friedberg Playing Fields (BSC FC) contributing to three match equivalent sessions per week of overplay. This shortfall is exacerbated to six match equivalent sessions per week once future demand from population growth is considered.

If this is broken down by analysis areas it can be seen that there is a shortfall of youth 11v11 pitches in the Bishop's Stortford and Watton-at-Stone analysis areas, the Buntingford and Sawbridgeworth analysis areas are used at capacity and Hertford, Ware has actual spare capacity of one MES.

Table 2.25: Supply and demand balance of youth 9v9 pitches (in match equivalent sessions per week)

| Analysis area      | Actual spare capacity | Overplay  | Current total | Future demand | Total     |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|-----------|
| Bishop's Stortford | 1                     | 5         | 4             | 1             | 5         |
| Buntingford        | -                     | 1.5       | 1.5           | 0.5           | 2         |
| Hertford, Ware     | -                     | 6         | 6             | 1.5           | 7.5       |
| Sawbridgeworth     | 1                     | -         | 1             | -             | 1         |
| Watton-at-Stone    | -                     | 0.5       | 0.5           | -             | 0.5       |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>2</b>              | <b>13</b> | <b>11</b>     | <b>3</b>      | <b>14</b> |

There is insufficient supply of youth 9v9 pitches in East Hertfordshire to accommodate current demand due to 11 match equivalent sessions per week of overplay being identified. When considering future demand, this shortfall increases to 14 match equivalent sessions. Only the Sawbridgeworth Analysis Area has actual spare capacity for youth 9v9 pitches. All remaining analysis areas have a shortfall of provision for this pitch type.

Table 2.26: Supply and demand balance of mini 7v7 pitches (in match equivalent sessions per week)

| Analysis area      | Actual spare capacity | Overplay | Current total | Future demand | Total    |
|--------------------|-----------------------|----------|---------------|---------------|----------|
| Bishop's Stortford | 1                     | 2.5      | 1.5           | 1             | 2.5      |
| Buntingford        | 2.5                   | -        | 2.5           | 0.5           | 2        |
| Hertford, Ware     | 1                     | 1.5      | 0.5           | 2             | 2.5      |
| Sawbridgeworth     | -                     | -        | -             | -             | -        |
| Watton-at-Stone    | -                     | -        | -             | -             | -        |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>4.5</b>            | <b>4</b> | <b>0.5</b>    | <b>3.5</b>    | <b>3</b> |

The table above shows that there is an insufficient supply on mini 7v7 pitches in East Hertfordshire to accommodate future levels of demand. There is current actual spare capacity of 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week, a figure that decreases to three sessions of overplay once future demand is considered. There is actual spare capacity in the Buntingford Analysis Area for mini 7v7 pitches. Sawbridgeworth and Watton-at-Stone are both used at capacity and the Bishop's Stortford and Hertford, Ware analysis areas have a shortfall of mini 7v7 pitches.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 2.27: Supply and demand balance of mini 5v5 pitches (in match equivalent sessions per week)

| Analysis area      | Actual spare capacity | Overplay | Current total | Future demand | Total    |
|--------------------|-----------------------|----------|---------------|---------------|----------|
| Bishop's Stortford | -                     | -        | -             | -             | -        |
| Buntingford        | -                     | 1        | 1             | 0.5           | 1.5      |
| Hertford, Ware     | -                     | -        | -             | 1.5           | 1.5      |
| Sawbridgeworth     | -                     | -        | -             | -             | -        |
| Watton-at-Stone    | 1                     | -        | 1             | -             | 1        |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>1</b>              | <b>1</b> | <b>-</b>      | <b>2</b>      | <b>2</b> |

Mini 5v5 pitches in East Hertfordshire are currently at capacity meaning there is currently a sufficient supply to accommodate demand. However, future demand from population growth would take the match equivalent sessions to two of overplay per week. The Bishop's Stortford, Hertford, Ware and Sawbridgeworth analysis areas are currently used at capacity for 5v5 pitches, and there is actual spare capacity in the Watton-at-Stone Analysis Area. There is a shortfall of one match equivalent sessions for mini 5v5 pitches in the Buntingford Analysis Area.

The following five tables break the capacity balance down by analysis areas.

Table 2.28: Summary of supply and demand in Bishop's Stortford (in match equivalent sessions per week)

| Pitch format | Actual spare capacity | Overplay | Current total | Future demand | Total |
|--------------|-----------------------|----------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| Adult        | -                     | 0.5      | 0.5           | 0.5           | 1     |
| Youth 11v11  | 1                     | 3.5      | 2.5           | 0.5           | 3     |
| Youth 9v9    | 1                     | 5        | 4             | 1             | 5     |
| Mini 7v7     | 1                     | 2.5      | 1.5           | 1             | 2.5   |
| Mini 5v5     | -                     | -        | -             | -             | -     |

As can be seen the Bishop's Stortford Analysis Area has overplay across four of the five pitch types. Only mini 5v5 pitches are not showing overplay as they are used at capacity. Future demand exacerbates the shortfalls for all overplayed pitch formats.

Table 2.29: Summary of supply and demand in Buntingford (in match equivalent sessions per week)

| Pitch format | Actual spare capacity | Overplay | Current total | Future demand | Total |
|--------------|-----------------------|----------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| Adult        | 2.5                   | 0.5      | 2             | -             | 2     |
| Youth 11v11  | -                     | -        | -             | 0.5           | 0.5   |
| Youth 9v9    | -                     | 1.5      | 1.5           | 0.5           | 2     |
| Mini 7v7     | 2.5                   | -        | 2.5           | 0.5           | 2     |
| Mini 5v5     | -                     | 1        | 1             | 0.5           | 1.5   |

In Buntingford there is actual spare capacity present for adult and mini 7v7 pitches, whilst youth 9v9 and mini 5v5 pitches are overplayed. Youth 11v11 pitches are used at capacity. Future demand creates overplay for youth 11v11 pitches.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 2.30: Summary of supply and demand in Hertford, Ware (in match equivalent sessions per week)

| Pitch format | Actual spare capacity | Overplay | Current total | Future demand | Total |
|--------------|-----------------------|----------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| Adult        | 2.5                   | 1.5      | 1             | 2             | 1     |
| Youth 11v11  | 2                     | 1        | 1             | 2             | 1     |
| Youth 9v9    | -                     | 6        | 6             | 1.5           | 7.5   |
| Mini 7v7     | 1                     | 1.5      | 0.5           | 2             | 2.5   |
| Mini 5v5     | -                     | -        | -             | 1.5           | 1.5   |

In Hertford, Ware there is actual spare capacity for adult and youth 11v11 pitches whilst mini 5v5 pitches are used at capacity. Shortfalls are present for youth 9v9 and mini 7v7 pitches. Future demand from ONS projections shows there will be an increase in teams across all pitch formats. If this takes place all pitch formats will become overplayed in Hertford, Ware.

Table 2.31: Summary of supply and demand in Sawbridgeworth (in match equivalent sessions per week)

| Pitch format | Actual spare capacity | Overplay | Current total | Future demand | Total |
|--------------|-----------------------|----------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| Adult        | -                     | -        | -             | -             | -     |
| Youth 11v11  | -                     | -        | -             | -             | -     |
| Youth 9v9    | 1                     | -        | 1             | -             | 1     |
| Mini 7v7     | -                     | -        | -             | -             | -     |
| Mini 5v5     | -                     | -        | -             | -             | -     |

In Sawbridgeworth there is actual spare capacity for youth 9v9 pitches and all other pitch types are used at capacity. Future demand from ONS projections did not result in any growth meaning this position is unchanged in the future.

Table 2.32: Summary of supply and demand in Watton-at-Stone (in match equivalent sessions per week)

| Pitch format | Actual spare capacity <sup>5</sup> | Overplay | Current total | Future demand | Total |
|--------------|------------------------------------|----------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| Adult        | -                                  | -        | -             | -             | -     |
| Youth 11v11  | -                                  | 0.5      | 0.5           | -             | 0.5   |
| Youth 9v9    | -                                  | 0.5      | 0.5           | -             | 0.5   |
| Mini 7v7     | -                                  | -        | -             | -             | -     |
| Mini 5v5     | 1                                  | -        | 1             | -             | 1     |

Finally, the Watton-at-Stone Analysis Area is showing overplay for youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 pitches. There is actual spare capacity for mini 5v5 pitches and adult and mini 7v7 pitches are used at capacity. Future demand from ONS projections did not result in any growth meaning this position is unchanged in the future.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## 2.6: Conclusion

Having considered the supply and demand position for each football pitch type, it is evident that the overall position is broadly an insufficient supply of grass pitches in the District.

Currently, youth 11v11, 9v9 and 7v7 pitches have a shortfall of provision whilst, 5v5 pitches are at capacity and adult pitches have spare capacity of 2.5 match equivalent sessions per week. When accounting for future demand the actual spare capacity for adult pitches disappears and becomes played at capacity. Mini 5v5 pitches which are currently used at capacity becomes a shortfall of two match equivalent sessions and the rest of the current shortfalls are exacerbated.

Table 2.33: Summary of supply and demand in East Hertfordshire (in match equivalent sessions per week)

| Pitch format | Actual spare capacity <sup>6</sup> | Overplay | Current total | Future demand | Total |
|--------------|------------------------------------|----------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| Adult        | 5                                  | 2.5      | 2.5           | 2.5           | -     |
| Youth 11v11  | 3                                  | 5        | 2             | 3             | 5     |
| Youth 9v9    | 2                                  | 13       | 11            | 3             | 14    |
| Mini 7v7     | 4.5                                | 4        | 0.5           | 3.5           | 3     |
| Mini 5v5     | 1                                  | 1        | -             | 2             | 2     |

<sup>6</sup> In match equivalent sessions

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Football – grass pitch summary

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

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## PART 3: THIRD GENERATION TURF (3G) PITCHES

### 3.1: Introduction

Third generation (3G) artificial grass pitches utilise longer fibres with a combination of rubber and sand infill to offer heightened performance. They are predominately used for football matches but most commonly for football training. They can also be used for rugby matches dependent upon being constructed to World Rugby Regulation 22.

Competitive football can take place on 3G artificial grass pitches that have been FIFA or International Matchball Standard tested and approved by the FA for inclusion on the FA Pitch Register<sup>7</sup>. As such, a growing number of 3G artificial grass pitches are now used for competitive match play, provided that the performance standard meets FIFA Quality (previously FIFA One Star), as well as for training purposes. Football training does, however, take place on hockey suitable artificial grass pitches (please refer to Part 5: Artificial grass pitches for greater explanation on pitch specifications) but is not the preferred option.

World Rugby produced the 'Performance Specification for artificial grass pitches for rugby'<sup>8</sup>, more commonly known as 'Regulation 22' that provides the necessary technical detail to produce pitch systems that are appropriate for rugby union. The artificial surface standards identified in Regulation 22 allows matches to be played on surfaces that meet the standard, meaning full contact activity, including tackling, rucking, mauling and lineouts, can take place.

The specification includes a rigorous test programme that assesses ball/surface interaction and player/surface interaction and has been modified to align the standard with that of FIFA. Any 3G artificial grass pitch used for any form of competitive rugby or contact training must comply with this specification and must be tested every two years to retain compliance.

England Hockey's Artificial Grass Playing Surface Policy (updated June 2018)<sup>9</sup> advises that third generation artificial grass pitches should not be used for hockey matches or training and that they can only be used for lower level hockey (introductory level) as a last resort when no sand-based or water-based artificial grass pitches are available.

Table 3.1: 3G type and sport suitability

| Surface      | Category                           | Comments   |
|--------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Rubber crumb | Long Pile 3G (60mm with shock pad) | Rugby surface – must comply with World Rugby regulation 22 and/or RFL Community Standard, requires a minimum of 60mm pile. |
| Rubber crumb | Medium Pile 3G (55-60mm)           | Preferred football surface. Suitable for non-contact rugby union/league practice or play.                                  |
| Rubber crumb | Short Pile 3G (40mm)               | Acceptable surface for some competitive football, able to be used for low level curricular hockey.                         |

It should be noted that the FA generally refers to 3G pitches as 3G football turf pitches, though this term is not adopted in this PPS as 3G pitches can be and are used for other sports including rugby union, rugby league, lacrosse and American football, amongst others.

<sup>7</sup> [Football Foundation | 3G Pitch Register](#)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.world.rugby/handbook/regulations/reg-22/>

<sup>9</sup> [Deliver - Developing Your Project | England Hockey](#)

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## 3.2: Current provision

An 11v11 size 3G pitch is considered by the FA to measure at least 91 x 57 metres; however, for the purposes of this report, all pitches measuring this size and above will be considered as 11v11 pitches. Pitches of this size threshold are able to accommodate competitive adult football. Anything measuring below than this is considered small sided due to its inability to accommodate such activity.

On the above basis, there are eight 11v11 3G pitches provided in East Hertfordshire located at as many sites as seen below. All eight 11v11 3G pitches are sports lit and open to community use.

There are a further two small sided 3G pitches within the District across as many sites.

A breakdown of the supply is below.

Table 3.2: 3G pitch supply summary

| Site ID | Site                              | Analysis area      | Community use? | Pitch size | Surface type         | No. of pitches | Sports lit? |
|---------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------|----------------------|----------------|-------------|
| 15      | Birchwood High School             | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | 92m x 53m  | Short Pile 3G (40mm) | 1              | Yes         |
| 42      | Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre    | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | 105m x 70m | Short Pile 3G (40mm) | 1              | Yes         |
| 44      | Hartham Leisure Centre            | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | 35m x20m   | Short Pile 3G (40mm) | 1              | Yes         |
| 54      | Hertingfordbury Park              | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | 105m x 70m | Short Pile 3G (40mm) | 1              | Yes         |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School                | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | 100m x 60m | Short Pile 3G (40mm) | 1              | Yes         |
| 75      | Presdales School                  | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | 103m x 64m | Short Pile 3G (40mm) | 1              | Yes         |
| 79      | Richard Hale School               | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | 106m x 70m | Short Pile 3G (40mm) | 1              | Yes         |
| 116     | Ware Football Club                | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | 105m x 69m | Long Pile 3G (60mm)  | 1              | Yes         |
| 125     | Wodson Park Sports Centre         | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | 102m x 63m | Short Pile 3G (40mm) | 1              | Yes         |
| 126     | Allenburys Sports and Social Club | Hertford, Ware     | No             | 40m x 25m  | Short Pile 3G (40mm) | 1              | Yes         |

All existing 11v11 size 3G pitches in East Hertfordshire are available for community use and are accompanied by sports lighting. One of the small sided 3G pitches is open to community use. The Allenburys Sports and Social Club pitch is managed by GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) a private business and it services employees of the company.



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Management

The management and availability of sites is summarised in the table below.

Table 3.3: 3G pitch operator and opening times breakdown

| Site ID | Site                              | Analysis area      | Community use? | Pitch size | Operator                | Opening times  |
|---------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------|-------------------------|--|
| 15      | Birchwood High School             | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | 11v11      | School                  | 18:00- 22:00<br>midweek<br>09:00-13:00<br>weekends                             |
| 42      | Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre    | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | 11v11      | Everyone Active         | 06:00- 21:00<br>midweek<br>08:00-18:00<br>weekends                             |
| 44      | Hartham Leisure Centre            | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | 35m x20m   | Everyone Active         | 06:00-22:00<br>midweek<br>07:00-17:00<br>weekends                              |
| 54      | Hertingfordbury Park              | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | 11v11      | Sports Club             | 17:00-21:00<br>midweek<br>09:00-18:00<br>weekends                              |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School                | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | 11v11      | School                  | 17:00-22:00<br>midweek<br>09:00-16:00<br>weekends                              |
| 75      | Presdales School                  | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | 11v11      | School                  | 17:00-22:00<br>midweek<br>10:00-18:00<br>weekends                              |
| 79      | Richard Hale School               | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | 11v11      | School                  | 18:00-22:00<br>09:00-17:00<br>weekends   |
| 116     | Ware Football Club                | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | 11v11      | Sports Club             | 07:00-22:00<br>midweek<br>09:00- 16:00<br>Saturdays<br>09:00- 14:00<br>Sundays |
| 125     | Wodson Park Sports Centre         | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | 11v11      | Registered Charity      | 07:00-22:00<br>midweek<br>09:00- 16:00<br>Saturdays<br>09:00- 14:00<br>Sundays |
| 126     | Allenburys Sports and Social Club | Hertford, Ware     | No             | 40m x 25m  | Private membership Club | No community use   |

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Potential future provision

The East Hertfordshire 2025 LFFP identifies five potential investment projects for the District. This has been informed by the shortfalls for 3G pitches presented in the PPS. Table 3.4 below outlines the detail in the LFFP.

The validity of these projects will be assessed in the Strategy & Action Plan with recommendations around portfolio inclusions or expulsions.

Table 3.4: Site identified in the LFFP for new 3G provision and rationale provided

| Site ID | Site name                           | LFFP rationale  |
|---------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 104     | The Bury                            | The site has four grass pitches and is accessed by Buntingford Cougars FC which has 32 teams. A pitch at the site will support the development of junior girls' football and align to the Football Foundation KPI of developing 11v11 3G pitches at Club managed sites.   |
| 105     | The Chauncy School                  | The site has three grass pitches and is located centrally within the town of Ware. Given the scale of the site, the on-site management, the location within the town and the dual use form curricular and community demand the site is identified for an 11v11 3G pitch.  |
| 108     | The Sele School                     | The site has six grass pitches that are accessed by Bengoe Tigers FC which fields 29 teams. A 3G pitch at the site will look to meet the 3G pitch shortfalls in the Hertford, Ware Analysis Area presented in table 3.9.  |
| 119     | Ware Youth Football Club            | Ware YFC have 44 teams and has a 30-year lease for its site with eight grass pitches. Given the shortfalls identified in the Hertford, Ware Analysis Area, the scale of the site and the Club managed operating model the site is identified for an 11v11 3G pitch.       |
| -       | New site Watton Youth Football Club | There is a shortfall of 3G provision in the Watton-at-Stone area. Watton YFC has 19 teams and is exploring developing a new site in the South East of the village which could result in a small sided 3G pitch, grass pitches and a new ancillary provision if developed. |

The validity of these projects will be assessed in the Strategy & Action Plan with recommendations around portfolio inclusions or expulsions.

In addition to the LFFP potential 3G pitch developments, the following were identified through club consultation as part of the PPOSS.

Bishop's Stortford High School and Freman College are in the process of installing 11v11 3G pitches. Both pitches will be sports lit and open to community use for the 2025/26 season. Neither pitch has currently been counted in the current supply as they are not operational at the time of writing, however, they will play a role in meeting the training need across the Authority during the lifespan of the PPS. Additionally, the pitch at Bishop's Stortford High School will be a WR22 compliant pitch.

Bishop's Stortford Swifts is planning a move to a new site, Hoggates Park, from its current location at Bishop's Stortford RFC. The new site will initially be a stadia grass pitch and is located beside Hoggates Wood in Bishop's Stortford. However, the Club has aspirations to fundraise to upgrade the pitch to 3G.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Watton YFC is working towards the possibility of building a 3G pitch and accompanying ancillary facilities at the site of a former depot for the A602 works on Ware Road. The Club has also agreed, in principle, a long-term lease with the landowner (Woodhall Estate). However, funding for the development is still uncertain. The Club confirms it has no home ground local to Watton-at-Stone and resorts to accessing multiple sites out of the area.

St Margaretsbury FC is seeking a business partner to help the Club change its main adult grass pitch to a 3G pitch. This only aspirational currently.

Consultation with Buntingford Cougars FC confirms that it uses the small sided AGP at Norfolk Road Playing Fields. The pitch was last resurfaced in 2010 so has surpassed its lifespan. The Club states that Buntingford Town Council is planning to convert this pitch to a 3G in 2025.

There are three major developments planned that will potentially add further 3G provision in the District. Firstly, The Gilston development which is providing 10,000 new homes is proposing four new pitches, 2 in a football hub site and two more in schools. Secondly, the North of Ware development, creating 1,800 new homes will generate a single 3G pitch whilst Birchall Garden Suburb will provide two more pitches servicing East Hertfordshire.

Figure 3.1 identifies all 3G pitches servicing East Hertfordshire. For a key to the map, see Table 3.3.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Figure 3.1: 3G pitches servicing East Hertfordshire



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## FA Pitch Register

In order for competitive matches to be played on 3G pitches, the pitch should be FIFA or IMS tested and approved and added to the FA Pitch Register, which can be found at: <https://footballfoundation.org.uk/3g-pitch-register>

In the case of East Hertfordshire, all eight 11v11 3G pitches are on the FA Register and the Leventhorpe School and Presdales School pitches are on the FIFA register.

Table 3.5: Accreditation of provision

| Site ID | Site                           | Accreditation type | Accreditation expiry |
|---------|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 15      | Birchwood High School          | FA approved        | 31/05/26             |
| 42      | Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre | FA approved        | 31/05/26             |
| 54      | Hertingfordbury Park           | FA approved        | 31/05/26             |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School             | FIFA approved      | 31/05/27             |
| 75      | Presdales School               | FIFA approved      | 31/05/27             |
| 79      | Richard Hale School            | FIFA approved      | 31/05/28             |
| 116     | Ware Football Club             | FIFA approved      | 31/05/26             |
| 125     | Wodson Park Sports Centre      | FA approved        | 31/05/28             |

## World Rugby (WR) compliant pitches

To enable 3G pitches to host competitive rugby union matches, WR has developed the Rugby Turf Performance Specification.

This is to ensure that the surfaces replicate the playing qualities of good quality grass pitches, provide a playing environment that will not increase the risk of injury and are of an adequate durability.

The specification includes a rigorous test programme that assesses ball/surface interaction and player/surface interaction and has been modified to align the standard with that of FIFA. Any 3G pitch used for any form of competitive rugby and contact training must comply with this specification and must be tested every two years to retain compliance.

In East Hertfordshire there are currently no WR22 3G pitches, however the new Bishop's Stortford High School 3G pitch will be WR22 compliant.

## Quality

Depending on use, it is considered that the carpet of a 3G pitch usually lasts for approximately ten years and it is the age of the surface, combined with maintenance levels, which most commonly affects quality. It is therefore recommended that sinking funds be put into place by providers to enable long-term sustainability, ongoing repairs and future refurbishment beyond this period.

Taking the above into account, the quality of third generation artificial grass pitches across East Hertfordshire have been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by the FA) during December 2024 and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good.
- ◀ Standard.
- ◀ Poor.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows; Good (>80%), Standard (60-79%), Poor (<60%). The quality ratings assigned to the sites also consider the user quality ratings gathered from consultation.

The quality of 11v11 size 3G provision is varied with four good, three standard and one poor quality pitch within the Authority. The pitches at Wodson Park Sports Centre are of a poor quality and is now in need of a replacement surface. Of the sites providing small sided provision, both pitches are of a poor quality.

Table 3.6: Age and quality of 3G pitches in East Hertfordshire

| Site ID | Site                              | Pitch type | Year installed or resurfaced | Quality  |
|---------|-----------------------------------|------------|------------------------------|----------|
| 15      | Birchwood High School             | 92m x 53m  | 2007 / 2017                  | Standard |
| 42      | Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre    | 105m x 70m | 2022                         | Good     |
| 54      | Hertingfordbury Park              | 105m x 70m | 2021                         | Good     |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School                | 100m x 60m | 2024                         | Good     |
| 75      | Presdales School                  | 103m x 64m | 2025                         | Good     |
| 79      | Richard Hale School               | 106m x 70m | 2017                         | Standard |
| 116     | Ware Football Club                | 105m x 69m | 2018                         | Standard |
| 125     | Wodson Park Sports Centre         | 102m x 63m | 1995 / 2015                  | Poor     |
| 44      | Hartham Leisure Centre            | 35m x20m   | 2016                         | Poor     |
| 126     | Allenburys Sports and Social Club | 40m x 25m  | 2009                         | Poor     |

## Ancillary facilities

The ancillary facilities at Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre, Richard Hale School and Birchwood High School are all of a good quality. The Leventhorpe School, Hertingfordbury Park, Presdales School, Ware Football Club and Wodson Park Sports Centre changing rooms were all of a standard quality.

## 3.3: Demand

The following table summarises the availability of all 3G pitches in East Hertfordshire which are available for community use. In addition, it records the availability of provision within the peak period. Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM) applies an overall peak period for AGPs of 34 hours a week (Monday to Thursday 17:00-21:00; Friday 17:00-19:00; Saturday and Sunday 09:00-17:00). This equates to a peak time midweek available usage of 18 hours and a peak time weekend usage of 16 hours.

Table 3.7: Availability and capacity of provision summary

| Site ID | Site                           | Management      | Total hours available during peak period     | Comments  |
|---------|--------------------------------|-----------------|--|---|
| 15      | Birchwood High School          | School          | 18:00- 22:00 midweek<br>09:00-13:00 weekends | Site is fully booked during the week. There is spare capacity on Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings. |
| 42      | Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre | Everyone Active | 06:00- 21:00 midweek<br>08:00-18:00 weekends | Site is fully booked during the week. Pitch is underutilised on weekends.                                 |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site                      | Management         | Total hours available during peak period                              | Comments   |
|---------|---------------------------|--------------------|---|--|
| 44      | Hartham Leisure Centre    | Everyone Active    | 06:00-22:00 midweek<br>07:00-17:00 weekends                           | Usage of the pitch is limited. Pitch is potentially outlined to be converted into Padel provision.                                   |
| 54      | Hertingfordbury Park      | Sports Club        | 17:00-21:00 midweek<br>09:00-18:00 weekends                           | Site is fully booked on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays. There is some spare capacity on Mondays and Fridays. |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School        | School             | 17:00-22:00 midweek<br>09:00-16:00 weekends                           | Site is fully booked other than Friday evenings.   |
| 75      | Presdales School          | School             | 17:00-22:00 midweek<br>10:00-18:00 weekends                           | Pitch has only recently become operational. Bury Rangers FC is outlined as the partner Club and fields 81 teams.                     |
| 79      | Richard Hale School       | School             | 18:00-22:00<br>09:00-17:00 weekends                                   | Pitch is fully booked other than from 20:00 on Fridays.  |
| 116     | Ware Football Club        | Sports Club        | 07:00-22:00 midweek<br>09:00- 16:00 Saturdays<br>09:00- 14:00 Sundays | Pitch is fully booked, Ware YFC field 44 teams and manages and accesses the pitch.   |
| 125     | Wodson Park Sports Centre | Registered Charity | 07:00-22:00 midweek<br>09:00- 16:00 Saturdays<br>09:00- 14:00 Sundays | Pitch is fully booked.   |

All eight 11v11 3G pitches within East Hertfordshire are open to community use and accessed by affiliated teams. Only the small sided pitch at Hartham Leisure Centre has limited use by affiliated teams.

### Football

The FA considers high quality 3G pitches as an essential tool in promoting coach and player development. The pitches can support intensive use and as such are great assets for football use. Primarily, such facilities have been installed for social use and training, however, they are increasingly used for competition, which The FA wholly supports.

#### Training demand

Getting access to good quality, affordable training facilities is a problem for many clubs throughout the country. In the winter months, midweek training is only possible at sports lit facilities.

Of the responsive football clubs, 16 clubs report that they require additional training facilities and specifically mention demand for 3G pitches. When asked a follow-up question of how many teams do not access a 3G pitch midweek training slot only five clubs state that it fields teams that do not train on a 3G pitch midweek. Club consultation states there are 39 teams not training on a 3G pitch midweek as outlined in the table below.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 3.8: Latent demand for 3G pitches

| Club                               | Number of teams not currently training        | Analysis area      | Need for more/better training facilities |
|------------------------------------|---|--------------------|--|
| Bengeo Tigers                      | 0   | Hertford, Ware     | ✓  |
| Bishop's Stortford Swifts Youth FC | 0   | Bishop's Stortford | ✓  |
| BSC FC                             | 22  | Bishop's Stortford | ✓  |
| Buntingford Cougars                | 13  | Buntingford        | ✓  |
| Buntingford Town                   | 1   | Buntingford        | ✓  |
| Bury Rangers                       | 0 (once Presdales School becomes operational) | Hertford, Ware     | ✓  |
| Enfield FC                         | 1   | Hertford, Ware     | ✓  |
| Forest Hall Park FC                | 0   | Bishop's Stortford | ✓  |
| Hertford Heath FC                  | 2   | Hertford, Ware     | ✓  |
| Hertford Town YFC                  | 0   | Hertford, Ware     | ✓  |
| Sawbo FC                           | 0   | Bishop's Stortford | ✓  |
| St Margaretsbury FC                | 0   | Hertford, Ware     | ✓  |
| Thorley Manor FC                   | 0   | Bishop's Stortford | ✓  |
| Ware Football Club                 | 0   | Hertford, Ware     | ✓  |
| Ware Lions FC                      | 0   | Hertford, Ware     | ✓  |
| Ware YFC                           | 0   | Hertford, Ware     | ✓  |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>39 teams</b>                               | -                  | ✓  |

## Football supply and demand analysis

The FA's long-term ambition is to provide every affiliated team in England the opportunity to train once per week on a sports lit 3G surface, together with priority access for every England football accreditation club through a partnership agreement. In order to calculate the number of football teams a 3G pitch can service for training, peak time access is considered to be from 18:00 until 22:00 Tuesday-Thursday resulting in an overall peak period of 12 hours per week. Mondays and Fridays are not included within this calculation as it is considered that most teams do not want to train in such close proximity to a weekend match (although these times slots are often popular as a recreational offer).

To ensure the current supply and any future supply is of a good enough standard to accommodate demand, providers are encouraged to put sinking funds in place to ensure long-term sustainability. This will allow for re-surfacing to take place when required and will ensure that FA certification remains in place.

An 11v11 3G pitch is divided into thirds or quarters for training purposes meaning they can accommodate either three or four teams per hour and either 36 or 48 teams per week (during the peak training period). Based on an average of these numbers, it is estimated that 38 teams can be accommodated on 11v11 3G pitch for training.

Given the above, with 511 teams currently accessing playing provision within East Hertfordshire, there is a theoretical need for 13.5 11v11 3G pitch equivalents to accommodate all affiliated training demand.



## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

The contribution each pitch makes towards the 1:38 model is summarised in the table below. This then informs the proceeding modelling tables. Any pitch too small to accommodate training demand are discounted, as well as any pitches that are unavailable for community use.

Table 3.9: Contribution of 3G pitches in meeting training requirements

| Site ID | Site name                          | Analysis area      | Size (meters) | Context  | Contribution towards 1:38 model |
|---------|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|--|---------------------------------|
| 15      | Birchwood High School              | Bishop's Stortford | 92m x 53m     | 11v11 3G pitch fully available to the community.   | 1                               |
| 40      | Freman College                     | Buntingford        | 11v11 scale   | 11v11 3G pitch outlined to be accessible for the 2025/26 season                                      | 1                               |
| 42      | Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre     | Bishop's Stortford | 105m x 70m    | 11v11 3G pitch fully available to the community.   | 1                               |
| 44      | Hartham Leisure Centre             | Hertford, Ware     | 35m x 20m     | Too small to accommodate training demand.  | 0                               |
| 54      | Hertingfordbury Park               | Hertford, Ware     | 105m x 70m    | 11v11 3G pitch fully available to the community.   | 1                               |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School                 | Sawbridgeworth     | 100m x 60m    | 11v11 3G pitch fully available to the community.   | 1                               |
| 75      | Presdales School                   | Hertford, Ware     | 103m x 64m    | 11v11 3G pitch fully available to the community.   | 1                               |
| 79      | Richard Hale School                | Hertford, Ware     | 106m x 70m    | 11v11 3G pitch fully available to the community.   | 1                               |
| 101     | The Bishop's Stortford High School | Bishop's Stortford | 11v11 scale   | 11v11 3G pitch outlined to be accessible for the 2025/26 season. Used by rugby union demand midweek. | 0.75                            |
| 116     | Ware Football Club                 | Hertford, Ware     | 105m x 69m    | 11v11 3G pitch fully available to the community. Used during the week for NLS fixtures.              | 0.75                            |
| 125     | Wodson Park Sports Centre          | Hertford, Ware     | 102m x 63m    | 11v11 3G pitch fully available to the community.   | 1                               |
| 126     | Allenburys Sports and Social Club  | Hertford, Ware     | 40m x 25m     | Too small to accommodate training demand.  | 0                               |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

As there are currently 9.5 11v11 3G pitches open to community use across the District, there is a theoretical need for an additional 4 11v11 3G pitches to accommodate football training demand. Neither of the small sided pitches have contributed to the 1 to 38 model below.

Table 3.10: Current demand for 3G pitches in East Hertfordshire (based on 38 teams per pitch)

| Analysis area      | Current number of teams | 11v11 3G requirement | Current number of 3G pitches | Theoretical shortfall |
|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Bishop's Stortford | 107                     | 3                    | 2.75                         | 0.25                  |
| Buntingford        | 90                      | 2.25                 | 1                            | 1.25                  |
| Hertford, Ware     | 277                     | 7.25                 | 4.75                         | 2.5                   |
| Sawbridgeworth     | 22                      | 0.5                  | 1                            | 0.5                   |
| Watton-at-Stone    | 15                      | 0.5                  | 0                            | 0.5                   |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>511</b>              | <b>13.5</b>          | <b>9.5</b>                   | <b>4</b>              |

As can be seen above the shortfalls in the Hertford, Ware Analysis Area are greatest as there is the need for 2.5 additional 3G 11v11 3G pitches. Demand in the Sawbridgeworth Analysis Area is met by the one pitch at Leventhorpe School. With the Bishop's Stortford High School pitch contributing to the 1:38 model it is determined that the need for 3G pitches in Bishop's Stortford is showing a shortfall of 0.25 pitches. It should be stressed that the Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth analysis areas have imported demand from Essex and that growth in teams is expected during the lifespan of the PPOSS.

The table below examines what the need for 3G pitches is based on future demand identified in the football section of this report (Part 2: Football Pitches). Future demand is based on ONS projections which equates to the growth of a further 28 teams.

Table 3.11: Future demand for 3G pitches in East Hertfordshire (based on 38 teams per pitch)

| Analysis area      | Future number of teams | 11v11 3G requirement | Current number of 3G pitches | Theoretical shortfall |
|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Bishop's Stortford | 113                    | 3                    | 2.75                         | 0.25                  |
| Buntingford        | 94                     | 2.5                  | 1                            | 1.5                   |
| Hertford, Ware     | 295                    | 7.75                 | 4.75                         | 3                     |
| Sawbridgeworth     | 22                     | 0.5                  | 1                            | 0.5                   |
| Watton-at-Stone    | 15                     | 0.5                  | 0                            | 0.5                   |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>539</b>             | <b>14.25</b>         | <b>9.5</b>                   | <b>4.75</b>           |

Based on the above, the overall shortfall increases to 4.75 11v11 sports lit 3G pitches. This is based on future demand through ONS projections of 28 teams. Increases of facility from ONS projections are broken down by analysis areas. The Bishop's Stortford, Buntingford and Hertford, Ware analysis areas have all seen growth.

The Freman College (Buntingford Analysis Area) and Bishop's Stortford High School (Bishop's Stortford) will be operational for the 2025/26 season. Therefore, both pitches have contributed to the 1:38 model above.

The number of additional teams identified through club ambitions is 25 teams. Combining both ONS projections and club ambitions gives a total potential future demand of 53 additional teams. The forthcoming Strategy & Action Plan will explore how future demand through club ambitions and participation trend modelling impacts the need for more 3G pitches.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

The East Hertfordshire LFFP presents that FA forecasting is predicting significantly more growth than the ONS projections used the PPOSS and anticipated there will be an additional 216 teams by 2030 if national growth trends are achieved.

Improving grass pitch quality is one way to increase the capacity at sites but given the cost of doing such work and the continued maintenance required (and associated costs), alternatives need to be considered that can offer a more sustainable model for the future of football. The substitute to grass pitches is the use of 3G pitches for competitive matches, providing that the pitch is FA approved, sports lit and available for community use during the peak period, and the location does not have an impact on other pitch sports.

The forthcoming Strategy & Action Plan will explore scenarios for the 3G pitch requirement for competitive match play. This will include a focus on accommodating both mini and youth football.

## 3.4: Conclusion

In conclusion, there is an insufficient supply of 11v11 3G pitches to meet current and anticipated future football training demand based on the FA training model, in East Hertfordshire. As such, it is determined that an increase in provision is required, with the most explicit need identified in the Hertford, Ware Analysis Area.

### 3G summary

#### Supply:

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

#### Quality:

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

#### Supply vs demand analysis:

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

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## PART 4: RUGBY UNION PITCHES

### 4.1: Introduction

The Rugby Football Union (RFU) is split into four areas across the country with a workforce team that covers development, coaching, governance and competitions, of which East Hertfordshire falls into the southern region.

The RFU governs a variety of formats and programmes, including 15-a-side, 10-a-side, 7-a-side and Tag rugby as well as the Touch Union. Its aim is to increase and retain participation within the game, with facilities needing to be appropriate, affordable and accessible in order to enable this.

The rugby union playing season operates from September to May, with senior men's fixtures being held on Saturday afternoons whilst ladies, juniors and mini fixtures are held on Sundays.

There are four rugby union clubs based in East Hertfordshire. Three of which, were responsive to consultation attempts, giving a response rate of 75%. All consultation was undertaken via face to face or phone calls.

Table 4.1: Summary of consultation

| Club name              | Responded? |
|------------------------|------------|
| Bishop's Stortford RFC | Yes        |
| Blackhorse RFC         | No         |
| Datchworth RFC         | Yes        |
| Hertford RFC           | Yes        |

### 4.2: Supply

Rugby union in England (as specified by the RFU) is played in the following formats and as such these references are used throughout this section to refer to supply (pitch types) and demand (team types)

Table 4.2: Rugby union age group and pitch format definitions

| Team reference  | Age group         | Team type  | Max dimensions (metres)  |
|-----------------|-------------------|--|--|
| Senior men      | Over 18 years old | Senior   | 100x70 (with posts at either end)                                      |
| Senior women    | Over 18 years old | Senior   | 100x70 (with posts at either end)                                      |
| Age Grade Boys  | U13s – U18s       | U13s*, U14s, U15s, U16s, U18s (as dual age band w/U17s)  | 100x70 (with posts at either end)<br>*90x60 (with posts at either end) |
| Age Grade Girls | U12s – U18        | U12 (Single age band)<br>U14s (as dual age band w/U13s),<br>U16s (as dual age w/U15s),<br>U18s (as dual age band w/U17s) | 100x70 (with posts at either end)                                      |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

For age grade mixed rugby (for children aged between U7 through to U12) there is no requirement for rugby posts to be provided for competitive play. However, in most cases nationally, play of this type takes place on senior pitches which are overmarked for such activity. The audit only identifies dedicated, line marked pitches with accompanying posts. The dimensions for age grade mixed rugby are detailed in the table below.

Table 4.3: Rugby union pitch dimensions

| Team type (ages) | Team reference  | Maximum pitch dimensions (metres) |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Under 7          | Age grade mixed | 20 x 12                           |
| Under 8          | Age grade mixed | 45 x 22                           |
| Under 9          | Age grade mixed | 60 x 30                           |
| Under 10         | Age grade mixed | 60 x 35                           |
| Under 11         | Age grade mixed | 60 x 43                           |

Based on the above criteria, there is a total of 53 rugby union pitches identified within East Hertfordshire across 16 sites. This consists of 35 senior and 18 junior pitches.

Of the total supply, 11 pitches are unavailable for community use. All unavailable provision is located at education sites including as detailed in Table 4.5.

Table 4.4: Supply of all rugby union pitches by analysis area

| Analysis area      | Number of senior pitches | Number of junior pitches | Number of community accessible pitches |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Bishop's Stortford | 16                       | 15                       | 25                                     |
| Buntingford        | 8                        | -                        | 6                                      |
| Hertford, Ware     | 8                        | 2                        | 9                                      |
| Sawbridgeworth     | 3                        | 1                        | 4                                      |
| Watton-at-Stone    | -                        | -                        | -                                      |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>35</b>                | <b>18</b>                | <b>42</b>                              |

Most provision is situated within the Bishop's Stortford Analysis Area, where a total of 31 pitches are identified (this includes pitches which are unavailable for community use). Comparatively, Sawbridgeworth has only four pitches whilst the Watton-at-Stone Analysis Area has no pitches. A site-by-site breakdown of identified provision can be found in the table overleaf.

Table 4.5: Supply of all rugby union pitches

| Site ID | Site                        | Analysis area      | Community accessible? | No. of senior pitches | No of junior pitches |
|---------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 15      | Birchwood High School       | Bishop's Stortford | No                    | 4                     | -                    |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Bishop's Stortford | Yes                   | 6                     | 13                   |
| 18      | Bishops Stortford RFC       | Bishop's Stortford | Yes                   | 4                     | -                    |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club      | Buntingford        | Yes                   | 3                     | -                    |
| 40      | Freman College              | Buntingford        | No                    | 2                     | -                    |
| 43      | Haileybury Sports Complex   | Hertford, Ware     | No                    | 2                     | -                    |
| 51      | Herford Rugby Football Club | Hertford, Ware     | Yes                   | 5                     | -                    |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site   | Analysis area      | Community accessible? | No. of senior pitches | No of junior pitches |
|---------|--|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 58      | Hockerill Anglo-European College                                 | Bishop's Stortford | No                    | 1                     | 1                    |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School   | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes                   | 1                     | 1                    |
| 89      | Simon Balle School   | Hertford, Ware     | Yes                   | -                     | 1                    |
| 90      | St Edmunds College & Prep School                                 | Buntingford        | Yes                   | 2                     | -                    |
| 101     | The Bishop's Stortford High School                               | Bishop's Stortford | Yes                   | 1                     | -                    |
| 102     | The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood) | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes                   | 2                     | -                    |
| 105     | The Chauncy School   | Hertford, Ware     | No                    | 1                     | -                    |
| 108     | The Sele School  | Hertford, Ware     | Yes                   | -                     | 1                    |
| 168     | The Avanti Grange Secondary School                               | Bishop's Stortford | Yes                   | -                     | 1                    |
| 170     | Datchworth Village Hall  | Buntingford        | Yes                   | 1                     | -                    |
| -       | -  | -                  | <b>Total</b>          | <b>31</b>             | <b>18</b>            |

Avanti Grange Secondary School is a recently built school with brand new community available grass pitches just across the A120. The pitches have not yet been marked out and are not accessible as of yet as a footbridge still needs to be built. However, the School has a community use agreement in place for its future grass pitches, which is reflected in Table 4.5.

In addition to the above table, there are six mini pitches that were identified during site audits and consultation with clubs. Mini pitches are located at Datchworth Sports Club and Dane O'Coys Road which borders Bishop's Stortford RFC. It should be noted that there are several pitches (including the aforementioned mini pitches) within East Hertfordshire that service demand but have been discounted from this report due to not having accompanying posts. RFU regulations stipulate that a pitch should only be accounted for if it meets the aforementioned criteria. Despite being discounted it should be stressed that the additional pitches without accompanying posts equate to a substantial amount of playing field which accommodates a high amount of demand. An example of this are two junior pitches at Hertford RFC which cannot be counted as they are not posted but will host some form of demand.

Sports lit training areas are dedicated sections of playing field which are used for the specific purpose of accommodating midweek training demand away from formal pitches (which allows them to retain exclusive use for match purposes).

These areas constitute formal playing field, despite not accommodating any formal pitches, and are important for accommodating demand from clubs. Hertford RFC confirm having a dedicated training area at its site which it can use portable sports lighting on for junior training. For the remaining clubs; training predominantly takes place on grass pitches with sports lighting.

The senior rugby pitch at Richard Hale School has not been used for two years due to an issue with the neighbours. The school is hopeful of reaching an agreement with the neighbours to allow it to be used during the day again.

There is a new WR22 compliant 3G pitch currently being constructed at Bishop's Stortford High School which will be open for the 25/26 season.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Figure 4.1: Rugby union pitches



Security of tenure refers to the rights of occupation on playing field and infrastructure. Clubs and stakeholders generally fall into the bracket of owner-occupier, tenant or licensee.

The table below identifies the current tenure position of each rugby union club based on information collated during the consultation. The tenure position of both Bishop’s Stortford RFC, Datchworth RFC and Hertford RFC is that the clubs are operating with security of tenure. In the case of Blackhorse RFC, the Club rents both a pitch on a weekly basis with the Hertford RFC.

Table 4.6: Rugby union clubs security of tenure

| Club                   | Tenure arrangement  | Secure? |
|------------------------|---|---------|
| Bishop’s Stortford RFC | Two senior pitches at the back are owned by the Club, two senior pitches are rented from the Silver Leys Trust, two mini pitches on another piece of land are leased (unknown owner). | Yes     |
| Blackhorse RFC         | The Club rents a pitch at Hertford RFC.   | No      |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Club           | Tenure arrangement  | Secure? |
|----------------|---|---------|
| Datchworth RFC | Tenure is complex as the land the sports club and accompanying pitches sits on is owned by a few different parties. All the pitches are leased from two different farmers, one individual owns the three pitches surrounding the clubhouse and another individual owns the grass space behind the village hall. There are long term lease agreements between the Club and individual farmers. The land under the clubhouse and car park is common land owned by Datchworth Parish Council but is also partly owned by aforementioned farmers. The Club has a long-term lease with the Parish Council with five years remaining. | Yes     |
| Hertford RFC   | Herts County Council owns two of the adult pitches at the clubs site which the Club leases on a 20-year agreement. Two more pitches are owned by Richard Hale Association which is an all-boys school. This season the Richard Hale Association are giving the land back to the rugby club. The Club owns the other pitch.  | Yes     |

The quality of rugby pitches has been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by RFU) undertaken in December 2024 and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good.
- ◀ Standard.
- ◀ Poor.

The methodology for assessing rugby pitch quality looks at two key elements: the maintenance programme and the level of drainage on each pitch. An overall quality based on both drainage and maintenance can then be generated. The agreed rating for each pitch type also represents actions required to improve pitch quality. A breakdown of actions required based on the ratings can be seen below:

Table 4.7: Definition of maintenance categories

| Category | Definition  |
|----------|---|
| M0       | Action is significant improvements to maintenance programme |
| M1       | Action is minor improvements to maintenance programme       |
| M2       | Action is no improvements to maintenance programme          |

Table 4.8: Definition of drainage categories

| Category | Definition  |
|----------|---|
| D0       | Action is pipe drainage system is needed on pitch |
| D1       | Action is pipe drainage is needed on pitch        |
| D2       | Action is slit drainage is needed on pitch        |
| D3       | No action is needed on pitch drainage             |

Table 4.9: Quality ratings based on maintenance and drainage scores

|          |                            | Maintenance |               |           |
|----------|----------------------------|-------------|---------------|-----------|
|          |                            | Poor (M0)   | Adequate (M1) | Good (M2) |
| Drainage | Natural Inadequate (D0)    | Poor        | Poor          | Standard  |
|          | Natural Adequate (D1)      | Poor        | Standard      | Good      |
|          | Pipe Drained (D2)          | Standard    | Standard      | Good      |
|          | Pipe and Slit Drained (D3) | Standard    | Good          | Good      |



## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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The figures are based upon a pipe drained system at 5m centres that has been installed in the last eight years and a slit drained system at 1m centres that has been installed in the last five years.

Based on the above criteria, of those senior pitches available for community use, five are good quality, 12 are standard and eight are poor quality senior pitches. Of the 17 (community available) junior pitches, 14 are poor quality and three are standard quality.

From a community club perspective, there is a mixture of quality ratings. Bishop's Stortford RFC has comprehensive maintenance programmes which consist of pitch aeration, sand dressing, weed killing and post season pitch seeding.

The quality of pitches within East Hertfordshire have been determined through a combination of non-technical site assessments, consultation with clubs regarding its maintenance regimes and quantity of usage.

Bishop's Stortford RFC provides the best quality provision within the District, with its first and second pitch both of a good quality. The remaining pitches at the site are of a standard quality. The Club confirms it has a maintenance budget of £60,000 for all pitches and received compliments on the pitches from the Twickenham groundsman during a visit. The first and second pitches also host Herts County matches.

Datchworth RFC is similar as it also has a good quality first pitch alongside standard and poor pitches. The Club confirms a strict maintenance regime as well as resting the pitch and only allowing match play on it. It also states that the first pitch has the best drainage whereas the other pitches would struggle with inclement weather.

Comparatively, Hertford RFC has five standard quality senior pitches with no drainage which it shares with Blackhorse RFC and does not use any 3G pitches for training. The Club does all of the maintenance itself with the help of volunteers.

Please refer to Table 4.10 overleaf for a breakdown of pitch quality.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 4.10: Site quality ratings at community available rugby union sites

| Site ID | Site name   | Club   | Analysis area      | Number of senior grass pitches | Number of junior grass pitches | Sports lighting? | Non-technical assessment score | Quality rating |
|---------|---|--|--------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | 1                              | -                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | 1                              | -                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | 1                              | -                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | 1                              | -                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | 1                              | -                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | 1                              | -                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | -                              | 1                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | -                              | 1                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | -                              | 1                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | -                              | 1                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | -                              | 1                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | -                              | 1                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | -                              | 1                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | -                              | 1                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | -                              | 1                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | -                              | 1                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | -                              | 1                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | -                              | 1                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College  | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | -                              | 1                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 18      | Bishops Stortford RFC   | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | 1                              | -                              | No               | M2/D1                          | Good           |
| 18      | Bishops Stortford RFC   | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | 1                              | -                              | Yes              | M2/D1                          | Good           |
| 18      | Bishops Stortford RFC   | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | 1                              | -                              | Yes              | M1/D1                          | Standard       |
| 18      | Bishops Stortford RFC   | Bishops Stortford RFC                          | Bishop's Stortford | 1                              | -                              | Yes              | M1/D1                          | Standard       |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club  | Datchworth RFC                                 | Buntingford        | 1                              | -                              | No               | M2/D1                          | Good           |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club  | Datchworth RFC                                 | Buntingford        | 1                              | -                              | No               | M1/D1                          | Standard       |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club  | Datchworth RFC                                 | Buntingford        | 1                              | -                              | Yes              | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 51      | Hertford Rugby Football Club  | Hertford Rugby Football Club<br>Blackhorse RFC | Hertford, Ware     | 1                              | -                              | Yes              | M1/D1                          | Standard       |
| 51      | Hertford Rugby Football Club  | Hertford Rugby Football Club                   | Hertford, Ware     | 1                              | -                              | Yes              | M1/D1                          | Standard       |
| 51      | Hertford Rugby Football Club  | Hertford Rugby Football Club                   | Hertford, Ware     | 1                              | -                              | No               | M1/D1                          | Standard       |
| 51      | Hertford Rugby Football Club  | Hertford Rugby Football Club                   | Hertford, Ware     | 1                              | -                              | No               | M1/D1                          | Standard       |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School  | -  | Sawbridgeworth     | 1                              | -                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School  | -  | Sawbridgeworth     | -                              | 1                              | No               | M1/D0                          | Poor           |
| 89      | Simon Balle School  | -  | Hertford, Ware     | -                              | 1                              | No               | M1/D1                          | Standard       |
| 90      | St Edmunds College & Prep School                                    | -  | Buntingford        | 1                              | -                              | No               | M2/D1                          | Good           |
| 90      | St Edmunds College & Prep School                                    | -  | Buntingford        | 1                              | -                              | No               | M2/D1                          | Good           |
| 101     | The Bishop's Stortford High School                                  | -  | Bishop's Stortford | 1                              | -                              | No               | M1/D1                          | Standard       |
| 102     | The Bishop's Stortford High School<br>Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood) | -  | Sawbridgeworth     | 1                              | -                              | No               | M1/D1                          | Standard       |
| 102     | The Bishop's Stortford High School<br>Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood) | -  | Sawbridgeworth     | 1                              | -                              | No               | M1/D1                          | Standard       |
| 108     | The Sele School   | -  | Hertford, Ware     | -                              | 1                              | No               | M1/D1                          | Standard       |
| 168     | The Avanti Grange Secondary<br>School                               | -  | Bishop's Stortford | -                              | 1                              | No               | M1/D1                          | Standard       |
| 170     | Datchworth Village Hall   | Datchworth RFC                                 | Buntingford        | 1                              | -                              | No               | M1/D1                          | Standard       |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Ancillary facility ratings are primarily influenced by the type of amenities which are available on a site accompanied by their quality, such as a clubhouse, changing rooms, car parking, dedicated official and spectator facilities. Good quality ancillary facilities are particularly important for rugby clubs as they can assist with income generation. Furthermore, it is becoming increasingly important for the provision to be inclusive, particularly due to growing women's and girls', disability and junior/age grade demand.

Although the size and configuration of ancillary provision may alter based on the type of sport accessing provision, and the number of pitches it services, generally the same principles are recommended to allow for varied use from all demographics:

- ◀ Accessible changing areas which can be separated, or are private/self-contained, to allow for separate male/female/all gender or senior/junior separation.
- ◀ A private accessible changing room (with relevant changing and showering provision) for someone who requires assistance.
- ◀ Separate female / male / all gender toilet provision.
- ◀ Suitably designed and specified showering cubicles to all users to maintain dignity and privacy whilst showering.

Open planned changing, toilets and particularly showering facilities can provide a significant barrier to many people resulting in them either not taking part or having a poorer sporting experience.

Consequently, any ancillary facilities that do not meet the outlined criteria cannot be rated above standard quality. Further context and rationale are provided below.

Table 4.11: Ancillary provision feedback

| Club                   | Ancillary position  | Overall rating |
|------------------------|---|----------------|
| Bishop's Stortford RFC | The site currently has five changing rooms and a function room and bar. The changing rooms are dated and do not have dedicated showers and toilets in each room. The Club has built foundations to develop five new RFU compliant changing rooms, which will come at the loss of two old changing rooms. The main driver for this project is to obtain self-contained showers and toilets in the new changing rooms. The new facility will also cater for officials changing rooms. | Standard       |
| Datchworth RFC         | The Club accesses poor quality provision at its home site, Datchworth Sports Club. It contains five changing rooms and an official's room, with a communal shower room to service all. Consultation with the Club confirms that the building is very dated and needs refurbishing and it has had planning permission accepted to do this. The Club is currently still fundraising to enable this project to go ahead.   | Poor           |
| Hertford RFC           | The clubhouse currently has six changing rooms with communal showers servicing all six changing rooms. It has made space for women's and girls' changing rooms; however, it has had planning permission granted to extend and rebuild its changing rooms. The site has plenty of parking as well as a bar and function room.  | Standard       |

The broad position is that the current facilities are not entirely inclusive and do not encourage participation of all demographics. Hertford RFC is the only club that has separate changing rooms provided for women and girls. Despite this, it still has a communal shower room servicing all the changing rooms which is why it cannot score any higher than standard quality.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

With the women's rugby World Cup on the horizon, demand for the women's and girls' game is set to increase and clubs will need to have the facilities to accommodate existing and future demand. All three clubs have plans to change current ancillary facilities to bring them in line with the RFU specifications and modernise each building.

### 4.3: Demand

Demand for rugby pitches in East Hertfordshire tends to fall within the categories of organised competitive play and organised training.

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

Table 4.12: Demand summary

| Club                   | Senior men's | Senior women's | Colt boys (U17/U18) | Junior boys U13 - U16 | Junior girls U13 - U18 | Mixed age grade U7 - U12 | Club total |
|------------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Bishop's Stortford RFC | 5            | 1              | 2                   | 8                     | 3                      | 7                        | 26         |
| Blackhorse RFC         | 1            | -              | -                   | -                     | -                      | -                        | 1          |
| Datchworth RFC         | 2            | 1              | 1                   | 5                     | 4                      | 6                        | 19         |
| Hertford RFC           | 4            | -              | 1                   | 4                     | 2                      | 6                        | 17         |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>12</b>    | <b>2</b>       | <b>4</b>            | <b>17</b>             | <b>9</b>               | <b>19</b>                | <b>63</b>  |

Throughout the Country, many rugby teams train at its home ground on match pitches. As a result, usage is concentrated which reduces the capacity for match play on these pitches and means they are more likely to be overplayed. A key factor in determining the extent of training on match pitches is the presence of sports lighting.

Full details of each of the clubs training schedules are detailed in the table below. The match equivalent sessions for training relates to the demand which takes place on grass pitches only, unless otherwise stated.

Table 4.13: Training demand summary

| Club                   | Midweek training requirements   | Match equivalent sessions (MES) on match pitches  |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Bishop's Stortford RFC | <p><b>Bishop's Stortford RFC pitches:</b><br/> <b>Tuesday:</b> 1st and 2nd teams, colts (2) and women's team.<br/> <b>Wednesday:</b> girls rugby (3) and boys' teams (8)<br/> <b>Thursday:</b> 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and colts (2)<br/> <b>Bishop's Stortford College</b><br/>                     Mini teams (7) on one senior pitch</p> | <p><b>13.25 MES total per week</b><br/>                     4 MES - senior men's and women's<br/>                     7.5 MES - colts, junior boys and girls<br/>                     1.75 MES - mini rugby<br/> <b>Bishop's Stortford RFC - 11.5 MES</b><br/>                     Pitch 3 – 5.75 MES<br/>                     Pitch 4 – 5.75 MES<br/> <b>Bishop's Stortford College - 1.75 MES</b><br/>                     Pitch 1 - 1.75 MES</p> |
| Blackhorse RFC         | Unknown.  | Unknown.  |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Club           | Midweek training requirements   | Match equivalent sessions (MES) on match pitches  |
|----------------|---|---|
| Datchworth RFC | The Club rotates three pitches frequently for training depending on which need resting. The 1st pitch is never used for training although the pitch behind Datchworth Village Hall does get used. It has one sports lit pitch as, however, has portable sports lighting, enabling use of the other two pitches for training. All teams train once a week. | <b>8 MES total per week</b><br>1.5 MES - senior men's and women's<br>5 MES - colts, junior boys and girls<br>1.5 MES - mini rugby<br><b>Datchworth Sports Club</b><br>Pitch 2 - 2 MES<br>Pitch 3 - 3 MES<br><b>Datchworth Village Hall</b><br>Pitch 4 - 3 MES |
| Hertford RFC   | Herford RFC pitches:<br><b>Tuesday:</b> 1st, 2nd and colts training (1)<br><b>Wednesday:</b> all youth (6), mini teams (6) and the mixed ability team<br><b>Thursday:</b> 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th teams  | <b>8.5 MES total per week</b><br>3 MES senior men's<br>4 MES colts, junior boys, girls and mixed ability team<br>1.5 MES mini rugby   |

To enable 3G pitches to accommodate competitive rugby union matches, WR has developed the Rugby Turf Performance Specification. This is to ensure that the surfaces replicate the playing qualities of good quality grass pitches, provide a playing environment that will not increase the risk of injury and are of an adequate durability.

The specification includes a rigorous test programme that assesses ball/surface interaction and player/surface interaction and has been modified to align the standard with that of FIFA. Any 3G pitch used for any form of competitive rugby must comply with this specification and must be tested every two years to retain compliance. The compliancy standard is known as to as WR Regulation 22 (WR22).

There are no WR22 compliant 3G pitches located within East Hertfordshire. However, as previously mentioned there is a WR22 pitch currently being constructed at Bishop's Stortford High School that will be available for use in the 25/26 season.

Nationally, clubs identify the use of 3G pitches for training as a method of protecting the match pitches and providing a high-quality surface for full contact practice. Competitive play continues to take place on grass pitches for the most part, however, the use of 3Gs for the fulfilment of competition fixtures does take place regularly in some areas if suitable provision is available, particularly on sites where Rugby 365 pitches have been provided. Further detail on use of 3G pitches can be found in Part 3: Third Generation Artificial Pitches.

In the case of East Hertfordshire Bishop's Stortford RFC delivers touch rugby sessions on the sand based AGP at Bishop's Stortford College once a week.

To actively encourage participation, rugby union clubs may provide alternative offers to traditional club competition. Touch rugby is one possible format which clubs can use. Touch rugby is non-contact rugby sessions, during which participants compete in teams to score tries, following similar laws to traditional rugby union formats. Clubs, schools or community organisations can establish their own touch rugby sessions or can become hosts of Touch Union<sup>10</sup> sessions.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/playing/ways-to-play/the-touch-union>

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Touch Union sessions are 90 minutes long and combine music, fitness and rugby skills. Sessions are of mixed gender, ability and age and are based on touch rugby being a social activity. Bishop's Stortford offers touch rugby sessions all year round, however, does not operate any teams currently. Whilst Hertford RFC offers a touch rugby festival in the summer. Datchworth RFC reports that it does not offer touch rugby. In December 2024, the Sawbridgeworth Sports Association launched a new rugby skills club in which it offers non-contact rugby for children aged eight to 11.

Walking rugby is a slower game of touch rugby that is accessible for disability groups and older participants, generally aged 55 years and above.

The game is less physical than traditional rugby, but the general aim remains the same, with passing and scoring laws applying; and tackling involves a two-handed touch to the waist or below. Sessions for over 55's are an opportunity for participants to become physically active and for others to re-engage with rugby at a less strenuous pace.

In East Hertfordshire, Datchworth RFC holds a weekly walking rugby on a Monday evening and has roughly eight people attending. During consultation, Bishop's Stortford discussed that it would like to offer walking rugby sessions but states a lack of space to offer the sessions. Hertford RFC states it is due to start a walking rugby session every Monday.

Exported demand refers to existing demand, which is transferred outside of the study area. Imported demand refers to any demand from neighbouring local authorities that accesses facilities in East Hertfordshire due to a lack of available facilities in other local authorities where such team or club is based. Locally, there is no known cases of either imported or exported demand, with all clubs accommodating demand at the respective sites.

Unmet demand is existing demand at clubs which is not able to access sufficient supply of pitches for match play or training. It is usually expressed, for example, where a team is already training but is unable to access a match pitch or where a league or club operates a waiting list. Consultation did not highlight any potential unmet demand.

Latent demand is demand that evidence suggests may be generated from the current population should they have access to more or better provision. Bishop's Stortford RFC is currently operating a waiting list for its junior and mini rugby sections. It also expresses how it does not have the pitch space to offer walking rugby sessions.

Future demand can be defined in two ways, through participation increases and using population forecasts.

- ◀ During consultation with the District's rugby union clubs, each were asked how they would like to grow over the next three to five years (over the lifespan of the PPS). Details of aspirations are below. Bishop's Stortford RFC: Report growth equating to one senior ladies' team.
- ◀ Datchworth RFC: No growth ambitions identified.
- ◀ Hertford RFC: Report growth equating to one senior ladies' team.

Team generation rates are used below as the basis for calculating the number of teams likely to be generated in the future based on population growth (2043).

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 4.14: Team generation rates (2043)

| Age group             | Team generation rate | No. of new teams generated by the new population | No. of new teams generated by the new population | Peak time | Match equivalent session per season <sup>11</sup> |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--|--|-----------|---|
| Senior Mens (19-45)   | 1:2,778.18           | 0.59   | -  | Saturday  | -   |
| Senior Womens (19-45) | 1:5,891.82           | 0.30   | -  | Sunday    | -   |
| Junior Boys (13-18)   | 1:322.61             | 1.41   | 1  | Sunday    | 0.5   |
| Junior Girls (13-18)  | 1:812.28             | 0.52   | -  | Sunday    | -   |
| Mini Mixed (7-12)     | 1:627.18             | 1.41   | 1  | Sunday    | 0.5   |

Based on future projections, it is forecast that there will be growth of one new junior boy and one new mini team for rugby through population increases to 2043.

It is important to note that population growth is exclusively applied to current team numbers and does not account for specific targeted development work within certain areas or focused on certain groups, such as coaching activity within schools linking to local clubs or specific RFU targets.

The RFU is focused on actively exploring opportunities to assist with the transition between late junior years and senior rugby with a specific focus on growing the senior game with the addition of adult teams (both men's and women's). This area has a strategic focus from the RFU and is being facilitated by encouraging casual play and midweek senior matches, along with touch rugby and cross pitch 7s. The RFU recognises the pressures on participation in the traditional forms of the game at this time and by offering alternative match times and formats then clubs may be able to retain a larger number of players.

With the Women's Rugby World Cup scheduled to be held in England in 2025, there is an expectation that there shall be a growth in women's and girls' demand within Rugby in the build up to the event. This shall be followed by a large push from the RFU to increase demand in women's and girls' rugby as a legacy for hosting the event.

The expanded showcase event will be hosted across eight venues and cities around England (Brighton & Hove, Bristol, Exeter, London, Manchester, Northampton, Sunderland and York) with 16 teams competing to be crowned world champions.

Women's Rugby World Cup 2025 will represent a generational moment for global rugby that will set new standards, welcome new fans and families to the sport and inspire a new generation of players, providing an exciting catalyst to nationwide and global rugby growth.

It should be noted that given the current and future levels of rugby union demand in East Hertfordshire immediate growth for women and girls demand is expected to be limited with any such demand travelling to larger clubs in neighbouring authorities.

<sup>11</sup> Two teams require one pitch to account for playing on a home and away basis; therefore, 1 team accounts to 0.5 match equivalent sessions on their relevant pitch type.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

This being said, based on current ancillary provision none of the clubs in the Authority currently have the facilities (separate changing rooms and showering facilities) to accommodate such demand. Hertford RFC has separated changing rooms but still only has a communal shower room servicing all changing rooms. As such, considerations should be made by the remaining clubs to modernise the changing and showering facilities to meet current RFU specifications. Bishop's Stortford is in the process of installing RFU specifications changing rooms at its site.

## 4.4: Capacity analysis

The capacity for pitches to regularly accommodate competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of a pitch affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment of playing rugby. In extreme circumstances, it can result in the inability of a pitch to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off-peak times. To enable an accurate supply and demand assessment of rugby pitches, the following assumptions are applied to site by site analysis:

- ◀ All sites that are used for competitive rugby matches (regardless of whether this is secured community use) are included on the supply side.
- ◀ Use of school pitches by schools increases demand by one match equivalent session, unless school activity levels are known.
- ◀ All competitive play is on senior size pitches (except for where age grade specific pitches are provided).
- ◀ U13 teams generally play on a 90 x 60m pitch and play 13 vs 13.
- ◀ From U14 upwards, teams generally play 15 v15 and use a full pitch.
- ◀ Mini teams (U6-U12) play on half of a senior pitch i.e. two teams per senior pitch or a dedicated mini pitch. See RFU Age Grade Rugby Guidance for more details.
- ◀ For senior and youth teams the current level of play per week is set at 0.5 for each match played based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis (assumes half of matches will be played away).
- ◀ For mini teams playing on a senior pitch, play per week is set at 0.25 for each match played based on all teams operating on a traditional home and away basis and playing across half of one senior pitch.
- ◀ Senior men's rugby generally takes place on Saturday afternoons.
- ◀ Senior women's rugby generally takes place on Sunday afternoons.
- ◀ Junior rugby generally takes place on Sunday mornings.
- ◀ Mini rugby generally takes place on Sunday mornings.
- ◀ Training that takes place on club pitches is reflected by the addition of match equivalent sessions to current usage levels.

As a guide, the RFU has set a standard number of matches that each pitch should be able to accommodate, set out below.

Table 4.15: Pitch capacity (matches per week) based on quality assessments

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



## **EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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Capacity is based upon a basic assessment of the drainage system and maintenance programme ascertained through a combination of the quality assessment and consultation. This guide, however, is only a very general measure of potential pitch capacity. It does not account for specific circumstances at time of use, and it assumes average rainfall and an appropriate end of season rest and renovation programme.

In order to fully establish actual spare capacity, the peak period needs to be established for all types of rugby. For senior teams, it is Saturday PM, as all senior men's teams play at this time, with senior women's teams playing on Sunday afternoons. Peak time for mini and junior rugby is Sunday AM.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 4.16: Capacity table for senior rugby union pitches

| Site ID | Site name                    | Analysis area      | Community use? | Security of tenure | Number of pitches | Non-tech score | Quality rating | Sports lit? | Match equivalent sessions (per week) | Training equivalent sessions | Pitch Capacity (sessions per week) | Capacity rating | Comments   |
|---------|------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| 15      | Birchwood High School        | Bishop's Stortford | No             | Unsecure           | 1                 | M1/D0          | Poor           | No          | 1                                    | -                            | 1.5                                | 0.5             | Pitch used for curricular demand with spare capacity of 0.5 MES  |
| 15      | Birchwood High School        | Bishop's Stortford | No             | Unsecure           | 1                 | M1/D0          | Poor           | No          | 1                                    | -                            | 1.5                                | 0.5             | Pitch used for curricular demand with spare capacity of 0.5 MES  |
| 15      | Birchwood High School        | Bishop's Stortford | No             | Unsecure           | 1                 | M1/D0          | Poor           | No          | 1                                    | -                            | 1.5                                | 0.5             | Pitch used for curricular demand with spare capacity of 0.5 MES  |
| 15      | Birchwood High School        | Bishop's Stortford | No             | Unsecure           | 1                 | M1/D0          | Poor           | No          | 1                                    | -                            | 1.5                                | 0.5             | Pitch used for curricular demand with spare capacity of 0.5 MES  |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College   | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Unsecure           | 1                 | M1/D0          | Poor           | No          | -                                    | 1.75                         | 1.5                                | 0.25            | Curricular demand is unknown, however, Bishop's Stortford use this site for training its mixed age grade teams   |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College   | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Unsecure           | 1                 | M1/D0          | Poor           | No          | 1                                    | -                            | 1.5                                | 0.5             | Pitch used for curricular demand with spare capacity of 0.5 MES  |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College   | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Unsecure           | 1                 | M1/D0          | Poor           | No          | 1                                    | -                            | 1.5                                | 0.5             | Pitch used for curricular demand with spare capacity of 0.5 MES  |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College   | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Unsecure           | 1                 | M1/D0          | Poor           | No          | 1                                    | -                            | 1.5                                | 0.5             | Pitch used for curricular demand with spare capacity of 0.5 MES  |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College   | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Unsecure           | 1                 | M1/D0          | Poor           | No          | 1                                    | -                            | 1.5                                | 0.5             | Pitch used for curricular demand with spare capacity of 0.5 MES  |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College   | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Unsecure           | 1                 | M1/D0          | Poor           | No          | 1                                    | -                            | 1.5                                | 0.5             | Pitch used for curricular demand with spare capacity of 0.5 MES  |
| 18      | Bishops Stortford RFC        | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Secure             | 1                 | M2/D1          | Good           | Yes         | 3                                    | -                            | 3                                  | -               | Pitch is used at capacity  |
| 18      | Bishops Stortford RFC        | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Secure             | 1                 | M2/D1          | Good           | No          | 3                                    | -                            | 3                                  | -               | Pitch is used at capacity  |
| 18      | Bishops Stortford RFC        | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Secure             | 1                 | M1/D1          | Standard       | Yes         | 1.5                                  | 5.5                          | 2                                  | 5               | One of two training pitches at the site and is overplayed by 5 MES when match play and training demand is accounted for. This is discounting mixed grade teams which play at Bishop's Stortford College. |
| 18      | Bishops Stortford RFC        | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Secure             | 1                 | M1/D1          | Standard       | Yes         | 2                                    | 6                            | 2                                  | 6               | One of two training pitches at the site and is overplayed by 6 MES when match play and training demand is accounted for. This is discounting mixed grade teams which play at Bishop's Stortford College. |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club       | Buntingford        | Yes            | Secure             | 1                 | M2/D1          | Good           | No          | 2                                    | -                            | 3                                  | 1               | The pitch has spare capacity of 1 MES, although has no actual capacity as it is used during peak period.   |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club       | Buntingford        | Yes            | Secure             | 1                 | M1/D1          | Standard       | No          | 1.5                                  | 2                            | 2                                  | 1.5             | The second pitch which caters for both training and match play is overplayed by 1.5 MES. It can be used for training as the Club has portable floodlights.   |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club       | Buntingford        | Yes            | Secure             | 1                 | M1/D0          | Poor           | Yes         | -                                    | 3                            | 1.5                                | 1.5             | As it is flood lit this pitch accommodates the majority of senior team training demand and is overplayed by 1.5 MES.   |
| 51      | Hertford Rugby Football Club | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Secure             | 1                 | M1/D1          | Standard       | Yes         | 1                                    | 2                            | 2                                  | 1               | 1st and 2nd team training take place on the floodlit 1st team pitch as well as games resulting in overplay of one MES.   |

**EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL:  
PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT**

| Site ID | Site name  | Analysis area      | Community use? | Security of tenure | Number of pitches | Non-tech score | Quality rating | Sports lit? | Match equivalent sessions (per week) | Training equivalent sessions | Pitch Capacity (sessions per week) | Capacity rating | Comments   |
|---------|--|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| 51      | Hertford Rugby Football Club                                     | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Secure             | 1                 | M1/D1          | Standard       | Yes         | 1                                    | 1.5                          | 2                                  | 0.5             | This pitch accommodates the 3rd and 4th senior team match play and training as well as colts training.   |
| 51      | Hertford Rugby Football Club                                     | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Secure             | 1                 | M1/D1          | Standard       | No          | 2                                    | -                            | 2                                  | -               | Club has a training area which it can use portable floodlights on which accounts for five MES per week which has been discounted from total training demand. This pitch caters for four youth teams match play (including colts).  |
| 51      | Hertford Rugby Football Club                                     | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Secure             | 1                 | M1/D1          | Standard       | No          | 2                                    | -                            | 2                                  | -               | This pitch accommodates Blackhorse RFC, which is a single team club which plays it's home fixtures at Hertford RFC as well as three youth teams. It is worth noting that there is two junior pitches at this site which have been discounted from the total supply as they do not have posts up that could potentially cater for demand at the site. |
| 51      | Hertford Rugby Football Club                                     | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Secure             | 1                 | M1/D1          | Standard       | No          | 1.5                                  | -                            | 2                                  | 0.5             | This pitch hosts six mini rugby teams at 1.5 MES leaving 0.5 spare capacity.   |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School   | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | Unsecure           | 1                 | M1/D0          | Poor           | No          | 1                                    | -                            | 1.5                                | 0.5             | Pitch used for curricular demand with spare capacity of 0.5 MES  |
| 90      | St Edmunds College & Prep School                                 | Buntingford        | Yes            | Unsecure           | 1                 | M2/D1          | Good           | No          | 1                                    | -                            | 3                                  | 2               | Pitch used for curricular demand with spare capacity of 2 MES  |
| 90      | St Edmunds College & Prep School                                 | Buntingford        | Yes            | Unsecure           | 1                 | M2/D1          | Good           | No          | 1                                    | -                            | 3                                  | 2               | Pitch used for curricular demand with spare capacity of 2 MES  |
| 101     | The Bishop's Stortford High School                               | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Unsecure           | 1                 | M1/D1          | Standard       | No          | 1                                    | -                            | 2                                  | 1               | Pitch used for curricular demand with spare capacity of 1 MES  |
| 102     | The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood) | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | Unsecure           | 1                 | M1/D1          | Standard       | No          | 1                                    | -                            | 2                                  | 1               | Pitch used for curricular demand with spare capacity of 1 MES  |
| 102     | The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood) | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | Unsecure           | 1                 | M1/D1          | Standard       | No          | 1                                    | -                            | 2                                  | 1               | Pitch used for curricular demand with spare capacity of 1 MES  |
| 170     | Datchworth Village Hall  | Buntingford        | Yes            | Secure             | 1                 | M1/D1          | Standard       | No          | 4.5                                  | 3                            | 2                                  | 5.5             | This pitch is used by Datchworth RFC for junior rugby demand as well as to spread training as the Club has portable lights it can use on this pitch.   |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Mini (mixed age grade) pitches are accessed by Bishop's Stortford RFC and Datchworth RFC, which has been discounted from its capacity balance as per RFU regulations as to what constitutes a pitch, as these pitches are not posted. For reference, demand expressed by mixed age grade teams, on mixed age grade pitches, equates to 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week (as opposed to 0.25 when expressed on senior pitches). The demand has therefore been placed onto senior pitches at 0.25 MES.

The next step is to ascertain whether or not any identified 'potential capacity' can be deemed 'actual capacity'. There may be situations where, although a site is highlighted as potentially able to accommodate some additional play, this should not be recorded as spare capacity against the site. For example, a site may be managed to regularly operate slightly below full capacity to ensure that it can cater for a number of regular friendly matches and activities that take place but are difficult to quantify on a weekly basis.

Table 4.17: Summary of spare capacity on senior

| Site ID | Site   | No of pitches | Potential spare capacity (MES) | Actual Saturday spare capacity (MES) | Comments  |
|---------|--|---------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College                                       | 1             | 0.5                            | -                                    | No spare capacity due to poor pitch quality.            |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College                                       | 1             | 0.5                            | -                                    | No spare capacity due to poor pitch quality.            |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College                                       | 1             | 0.5                            | -                                    | No spare capacity due to poor pitch quality.            |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College                                       | 1             | 0.5                            | -                                    | No spare capacity due to poor pitch quality.            |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College                                       | 1             | 0.5                            | -                                    | No spare capacity due to poor pitch quality.            |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club   | 1             | 1                              | -                                    | The pitch is used during the peak period                |
| 51      | Hertford Rugby Football Club                                     | 1             | 0.5                            | 0.5                                  | Actual spare capacity for one senior team on Saturdays. |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School   | 1             | 0.5                            | -                                    | No spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.               |
| 90      | St Edmunds College & Prep School                                 | 1             | 2                              | -                                    | No spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.               |
| 90      | St Edmunds College & Prep School                                 | 1             | 2                              | -                                    | No spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.               |
| 101     | The Bishop's Stortford High School                               | 1             | 1                              | -                                    | No spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.               |
| 102     | The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood) | 1             | 1                              | -                                    | No spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.               |
| 102     | The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood) | 1             | 1                              | -                                    | No spare capacity due to unsecure tenure.               |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

When reviewing all potential spare capacity on senior pitches. It is evident that actual spare capacity exists on one senior pitch at Hertford RFC in the Hertford, Ware Analysis Area. No other pitches, at any site, have spare capacity at peak time.

Five sites and eight pitches are overplayed as detailed in the table below. Overplayed pitches are based in the Bishop's Stortford, Buntingford and Hertford, Ware analysis areas.

Table 4.18: Summary of overplay (senior pitches)

| Site ID | Site name                    | Analysis area      | Number of pitches | Overplay (MES) |
|---------|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College   | Bishop's Stortford | 1                 | 0.25           |
| 18      | Bishops Stortford RFC        | Bishop's Stortford | 1                 | 5              |
| 18      | Bishops Stortford RFC        | Bishop's Stortford | 1                 | 6              |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club       | Buntingford        | 1                 | 1.5            |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club       | Buntingford        | 1                 | 1.5            |
| 51      | Hertford Rugby Football Club | Hertford, Ware     | 1                 | 1              |
| 51      | Hertford Rugby Football Club | Hertford, Ware     | 1                 | 0.5            |
| 170     | Datchworth Village Hall      | Buntingford        | 1                 | 5.5            |
| -       | -                            | <b>Total</b>       | <b>8</b>          | <b>21.25</b>   |

In total, overplay equates to 21.25 match equivalent sessions per week, with shortfalls deriving from eight pitches.

### 4.5: Supply and demand analysis

Having considered supply and demand, the tables below identify the overall spare capacity or overplay in each of the analysis areas for senior rugby union pitches based on match equivalent sessions per week.

The analysis is undertaken for play on senior pitches only. In the instance of East Hertfordshire, the analysis results are the same for the peak time modelling for Saturday afternoons (senior men's rugby peak time) and Sundays (when it is the peak time for mixed aged grade rugby and junior/colts' teams). This is due to an overall limited amount of spare capacity for additional play throughout the District. Future demand is based on club ambitions and is equating to two senior ladies' teams.

Table 4.19: Summary of supply and demand balance on senior rugby union pitches (in match equivalent sessions per week)

| Analysis area      | Actual spare capacity <sup>12</sup> | Overplay     | Current total demand | Future demand | Future total demand |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Bishop's Stortford | -                                   | 11.25        | 11.25                | 0.5           | 11.75               |
| Buntingford        | -                                   | 8.5          | 8.5                  | -             | 8.5                 |
| Hertford, Ware     | 0.5                                 | 1.5          | 1                    | 0.5           | 1.5                 |
| Sawbridgeworth     | -                                   | -            | -                    | -             | -                   |
| Watton-at-Stone    | -                                   | -            | -                    | -             | -                   |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>0.5</b>                          | <b>21.25</b> | <b>20.75</b>         | <b>1</b>      | <b>21.75</b>        |

The table above shows that there is an insufficient supply of provision to accommodate existing demand, with shortfalls equating to 20.75 match equivalent sessions per week.

<sup>12</sup> In match equivalent sessions

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Shortfalls predominantly originate from concentrated midweek training demand and the sheer quantity of demand.

When considering future demand shortfalls increase to 21.75 match equivalent sessions per week.

## 4.6: Conclusion

Based on the supply and demand analysis, it is evident that there is insufficient supply of senior rugby union pitches in East Hertfordshire to accommodate for both current and anticipated future levels of demand. The main issues are centred around pressures on midweek training opportunities as well as the volume of demand at Bishop's Stortford RFC and Datchworth RFC.

The priority for rugby union in East Hertfordshire (which will be further explored in the forthcoming Strategy & Action Plan) is to ensure that pitches are of suitable quality for demand, sufficient sports lighting is available and ancillary infrastructures are of a good quality which supports the long-term development of rugby union across the local area.

Should Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC relocate to Hoggates Park and vacate Bishop's Stortford RFC this would enable the addition of new rugby pitches that could help better spread training demand across the site and reduce the overplay significantly on the third and fourth pitches.

### Rugby union summary

- There is insufficient level of senior rugby union provision in East Hertfordshire to accommodate current and future demand with a current overplay of 20.75 match equivalent sessions on senior rugby pitches open to community use.
- There is a total of 53 rugby union pitches in East Hertfordshire across 17 sites. This consists of 35 senior pitches and 18 junior pitches. Of these, 25 senior pitches and 17 junior pitches are open to community use.
- There are no WR compliant 3G pitches located within East Hertfordshire. However, there will be one in Bishop's Stortford at the Bishop's Stortford High School for the 25/26 season.
- In terms of quality of senior pitches available for community use, five are good quality, 12 are standard and eight are poor quality pitches. Of the community available junior pitches, 14 are poor quality and three are standard quality.
- From a community club perspective, poor quality pitch provision is an issue for Datchworth RFC with on one of its pitches.
- Of the three clubs in the District with sites, Bishop's Stortford RFC and Hertford RFC access standard quality ancillary provision, whilst Datchworth RFC access poor ancillary provision. All Clubs are in the process of upgrading current ancillary offerings to bring the facilities in line with RFU specifications, to encourage inclusivity and promote the women's and girls' game.
- Datchworth RFC has plans to rebuild and enhance its ancillary offering and has been granted planning permission to do. The Club is currently fundraising to enable this project.
- Hertford RFC has had planning permission to extend and rebuild its changing rooms whilst Bishop's Stortford have built foundations for its new changing rooms.
- There are four rugby union clubs in East Hertfordshire which in total generate demand equating to 63 teams. As a breakdown, this consists of 12 senior men's, two senior women's, four boy's colts, 17 junior boys, nine junior girls and 19 mixed age grade teams.
- Future demand from club ambitions equates to two senior ladies' teams.
- There is an overall insufficient supply of provision to cater for both current and future demand.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## PART 5: ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCHES (HOCKEY)

### 5.1: Introduction

Competitive league hockey matches and training can only be played on sand filled, sand dressed or water based artificial grass pitches (AGPs). Although competitive, adult and junior club training cannot take place on 3G pitches, 40mm pitches may be suitable at introductory level, such as school curriculum low level hockey. England Hockey's (EH) Artificial Grass Playing Surface Policy details suitability of surface type for varying levels of hockey, as seen below.

Table 5.1: England Hockey guidelines on artificial surface types suitable for hockey

| Category                  | Surface  | Playing Level  | Playing Level  |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| England Hockey Category 1 | Water surface approved within the FIH Global/National Parameters | <b>Essential</b><br>International Hockey - Training and matches  | <b>Desirable</b><br>Domestic National Premier competition<br>Higher levels of EH Player Pathway Performance Centres and upwards<br>England |
| England Hockey Category 2 | Sand dressed surfaces within the FIH National Parameter          | <b>Essential</b><br>Domestic National Premier competition<br>Higher levels of player pathway: Academy Centres and Upwards                                    | <b>Desirable</b><br>All adult and junior League Hockey<br>Intermediate or advanced School Hockey   |
| England Hockey Category 3 | Sand based surfaces within the FIH National Parameter            | <b>Essential</b><br>All adult and junior club training and league Hockey<br>EH competitions for clubs and schools<br>Intermediate or advanced schools hockey | EH competitions for clubs and schools (excluding domestic national league)   |
| England Hockey Category 4 | All 3G surfaces  | <b>Essential</b><br>None   | <b>Desirable</b><br>Lower level hockey (Introductory level) when no category 1-3 surface is available.                                     |

In addition to the above pitch types, EH reports that it is currently trialling a different multi-sport surface in order to better accommodate lower levels of hockey demand on a pitch that is also suitable for other sports such as netball and tennis. The surface type, known as Gen 2<sup>13</sup>, is a versatile surface that will ensure that the sports do not need to compromise on the playing experience; it will be a sand dressed synthetic turf with a compatible shock pad. The concept is designed to provide facilities, including schools, with a dynamic surface which reduces the amount of space required and enables the provision to be utilised to its full potential.

For senior teams, a full-size pitch for competitive matches must measure at least 91.4 x 55 metres excluding surrounding run-off areas, which must be a minimum of two metres at the sides and three metres at the ends.

<sup>13</sup> [Deliver - Developing Your Project | England Hockey](#)

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

EH's preference is for four-metre side and five-metre end run offs, with a preferred overall area of 101.4 x 63 metres, though a minimum overall area of 97.4 x 59 metres is accepted.

It is considered that a hockey pitch can accommodate a maximum of four matches on one day (peak time) provided the pitch has sports lighting. Training is generally midweek and also requires access to a pitch with sports lighting.

There are two hockey clubs in East Hertfordshire, Bishop's Stortford Hockey Club and Hertford Hockey Club. Both clubs were consulted with either via telephone interview or a face-to-face meeting.

Table 5.2: Summary of consultation

| Club name                      | Responded? |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Bishop's Stortford Hockey Club | Yes        |
| Hertford Hockey Club           | Yes        |

## 5.2: Supply

There are eight full size hockey suitable artificial grass pitches in East Hertfordshire located across six sites. All sites are serviced by sports lighting and are open to community use, other than St Edmunds College which has no community use.

Table 5.3: Summary of full-size hockey suitable AGPs

| Site ID | Site name                        | Analysis area      | Community use? | Quantity of provision | Size (metres) | Sports lit? |
|---------|----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College       | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | One pitch             | 100m x 63m    | Yes         |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College       | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | One pitch             | 100m x 62m    | Yes         |
| 56      | Herts & Essex Sports Centre      | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | One pitch             | 100m x 60m    | Yes         |
| 58      | Hockerill Anglo-European College | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | One pitch             | 98m x 62.5m   | Yes         |
| 89      | Simon Balle School               | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | One pitch             | 101m x 64m    | Yes         |
| 90      | St Edmunds College & Prep School | Buntingford        | No             | One pitch             | 97m x 60m     | Yes         |
| 163     | Haileybury College               | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | One pitch             | 100m x 60m    | Yes         |
| 163     | Haileybury College               | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | One pitch             | 100m x 60m    | Yes         |

There are also a further three small sided AGPs provided at Amwell View School, Heath Mount School and Norfolk Road Playing Fields. The latter being the only pitch open to community use and to have sports lighting.



## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 5.4: Summary of small-size hockey suitable AGPs

| Site ID | Site name                   | Analysis area   | Community use? | Quantity of provision | Size (metres) | Sports lit? |
|---------|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 3       | Amwell View School          | Hertford, Ware  | No             | One pitch             | 29m x 13m     | No          |
| 46      | Heath Mount School          | Watton-at-Stone | No             | One pitch             | 70m x 44m     | No          |
| 72      | Norfolk Road Playing Fields | Buntingford     | Yes            | One Pitch             | 51m x 32m     | Yes         |

Consultation with the school operators within East Hertfordshire failed to raise any potential developments for additional AGP pitches in the District. Bishop's Stortford Hockey Club confirms it has an ambition to develop a second full sized hockey pitch at Herts & Essex Sports Centre alongside the existing pitch and references potential Bishop's Stortford Town Council Section 106 funding available. The Club states its long-term ambition is to operate two full sized AGPs at the site to reduce its dependency on the other school pitches in the town.

In line with the Gilston development a new full size hockey AGP has been proposed as part of one of the new secondary schools. In terms of delivery this is likely to be further down the line and will potentially not happen if the lifetime of this PPOSS.

There are no disused AGPs in East Hertfordshire.

A map of the current hockey provision is provided in Figure 5.1 overleaf.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Figure 5.1: Location of full size AGPs



Sport England’s Facilities Planning Model applies an overall peak period for artificial grass pitches of 34 hours per week (Monday to Thursday 17:00-21:00; Friday 17:00-19:00; Saturday and Sunday 09:00-17:00).

The table below identifies the availability of AGP provision (where known) which is available for community use. As can be seen both Herts & Essex Sports Centre and Hockerill Anglo-European College open its facilities for the full 34 hours per week in line with the Sport England Facilities Planning Model. Regarding Bishop’s Stortford College one of its AGPs is used solely for school use during typical community use hours. Its other pitch is open for 28 hours and is used for school team use on Saturday’s.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 5.5: Management and availability (full size pitches)

| Site ID | Site name                        | Management    | Availability  | Total hours available in peak period |
|---------|----------------------------------|---------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College       | School        | School use only during CU hours                                   | 0                                    |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College       | School        | 17:00-21:00 midweek<br>09:00-17:00 Sunday                         | 28                                   |
| 56      | Herts & Essex Sports Centre      | Sport centre  | 08:00-21:00 midweek<br>09:00-18:00 Saturday<br>09:00-17:00 Sunday | 34                                   |
| 58      | Hockerill Anglo-European College | School        | 18:00-22:00 midweek<br>09:00-18:00 Saturday<br>09:00-17:00 Sunday | 34                                   |
| 89      | Simon Balle School               | School        | Midweek and Sunday unknown<br>09:30 - 17:30 Saturday              | 8                                    |
| 163     | Haileybury College               | Sport complex | 19:00-20:30 midweek<br>17:30-18:30 Saturday<br>09:00-18:30 Sunday | 15.5                                 |

Hertford HC is currently accessing Simon Balle School, Haileybury School and Queenswood School (Welwyn Hatfield) for training and match play. There are no official agreements between the Club and any of the schools, it accesses its pitches on a weekly rental basis.

Bishops Stortford HC accesses Herts & Essex Sports Centre and Hockerill Anglo-European School for training and match play as well as Bishop's Stortford School infrequently. The Club raised half the required funds for the pitches at Herts & Essex Sports Centre and Hockerill Anglo-European and currently pay an annual fee to each to access them.

Taking the above into account, the quality of hockey suitable artificial grass pitches have been assessed via a combination of site visits (using non-technical assessments as determined by EH) undertaken in December 2024 and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good.
- ◀ Standard.
- ◀ Poor.

The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows; Good (>80%), Standard (60-79%), Poor (<60%). The quality ratings assigned to the sites also consider the user quality ratings gathered from consultation.

In addition, depending on use, it is considered that the carpet of an artificial grass pitch usually lasts for approximately ten years, and it is the age of the surface, combined with maintenance levels, which most commonly affects quality. The table overleaf summarises the quality of artificial grass pitches in East Hertfordshire.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 5.6: Summary of quality

| Site ID | Site name                        | Surface type | User                         | Quality rating | Built/resurfaced |
|---------|----------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| 3       | Amwell View School               | Sand filled  | -                            | Poor           | 2013             |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College       | Sand dressed |                              | Standard       | 2016             |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College       | Sand dressed | Bishop Stortford Hockey Club | Poor           | 2012             |
| 46      | Heath Mount School               | Sand dressed | -                            | Poor           | 2004 / 2014      |
| 56      | Herts & Essex Sports Centre      | Sand dressed | Bishop Stortford Hockey Club | Good           | 2019             |
| 58      | Hockerill Anglo-European College | Sand filled  | Bishop Stortford Hockey Club | Standard       | 1993 / 2017      |
| 72      | Norfolk Road Playing Fields      | Sand filled  | -                            | Standard       | 1980 / 2010      |
| 89      | Simon Balle School               | Sand filled  | Hertford Hockey Club         | Poor           | 1965 / 2012      |
| 90      | St Edmunds College & Prep School | Sand filled  | -                            | Standard       | 2001             |
| 163     | Haileybury College               | Sand filled  | Hertford Hockey Club         | Standard       | 1989 / 2013      |
| 163     | Haileybury College               | Sand filled  | Hertford Hockey Club         | Standard       | 2014             |

Simon Balle School currently provides a poor AGP with it last being resurfaced in 2012 it has surpassed its suggested life span. Hertford Hockey Club also reports that the pitch has three nights of football bookings throughout a typical week, causing damage to the surface. The Club's biggest priority is to resurface the pitch and has tried to start discussions with the school. The school confirms it has a sinking fund in place to resurface the pitch.

Both pitches at Haileybury College are rated standard quality, despite having exceeded the suggested lifespan for an AGP, both pitches are still in a decent playing condition. Consultation with the school confirms that a regular and rigorous maintenance schedule is carried out as well as ensuring that there is a sufficient sinking fund in place to resurface both pitches. It also confirms that one pitch is used solely for hockey usage while the other allows both football and hockey.

The pitch at Heath Mount School is rated poor as it was last refurbished in 2014, meaning it has surpassed its lifespan. During the site assessment it was picked up that the pitch looked very tired and worn with poor line markings. Consultation with the school confirms that its main users are football clubs, mainly, Monday to Thursday. The school states that the surface is getting replaced in 2025 and is a self-funded project.

The Bishop's Stortford College has two AGPs on site, one rated poor and one rated standard quality. Both pitches are well used with the first pitch being solely used for the schools curricular and extracurricular use with very limited community use. It was last resurfaced in 2016, however, appears to be well used. The second pitch was last resurfaced in 2012 and is heavily used by clubs as well as the school therefore is more worn than the first pitch, resulting in a poor rating. There are sinking funds in place for both pitches to be resurfaced.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Consultation with Buntingford Cougars FC confirms that it uses the small sided AGP at Norfolk Road Playing Fields 90% of the time 5pm – 9pm Monday – Friday. The pitch was last resurfaced in 2010 so has surpassed its lifespan. However, site visits carried out by KKP confirm that the pitch is still in a useable condition considering its age, with no rips, tears or clear signs of wear and tear. The Club states that Buntingford Town Council is planning to convert this pitch to a 3G in 2025.

Hockerill Anglo-European College last had its pitch resurfaced in 2017 and is of standard quality which is congruent with club consultation and the site audit. The School is partnered with Bishop's Stortford HC which use the pitch throughout the week and at weekends, alongside several football clubs.

The term ancillary facilities, relates to built facility infrastructures at sites. Typically, this includes (but is not limited too) clubhouses, changing rooms, showers, car parking and toilet facilities.

The facilities at The Herts & Essex Sports Centre are in good condition with four changing rooms for its users. There is also a viewing balcony overlooking the pitch for spectators accompanied by a bar, offering food and drink.

Hockerill Anglo-European School currently offer poor changing room provision with issues such as the floorboards giving in. The School confirms that it will have to soon cease allowing teams to use the spaces due to health and safety concerns.

When using the AGP at Simon Balle School, Hertford Hockey Club share ancillary facilities with Hertford Cricket Club. The clubhouse is rated good quality, with plenty of parking, bar facilities with an outdoor patio and four changing rooms. Two of the changing rooms were only added 10 years ago. However, the hockey club would like to refurbish the men's changing rooms and showers but realise that fundraising for such a project is difficult.

## 5.3: Demand

Bishop's Stortford Hockey Club has seven adult men's teams, 10 adult women's teams, three junior girl's teams, three junior boy's teams, six mixed junior teams and one mini under eight team. Additionally, there are over 35s and over 45's men's and women's teams. The Club considers itself at capacity as it has seen an increase in membership over recent years, specifically in women's teams. It uses several sites for training and match play including, Bishop's Stortford College, where use is limited, Herts & Essex Sports Centre, and Hockerill Anglo-European College.

Hertford Hockey Club currently has seven men's teams, four ladies' teams, seven junior boys' teams and 10 junior girls' teams. Alongside both a men's over 35 and over 45 team and women's over 35 team. Demand has mostly stayed consistent over recent years, although has seen a slight increase for senior women's numbers. The Club is hoping to add an extra senior women's team, however, it states it will struggle for pitch space, umpires and coaches. It plays and trains at various sites yet, has no long-term lease agreements for any site it accesses and has demand for more midweek pitch time for training. It is currently playing out of Simon Balle School, Haileybury College and Queenswood School, located in Welwyn Hatfield.

Both Bishop's Stortford HC and Hertford HC delivers back to hockey sessions. Bishop's Stortford HC currently runs a six week back to hockey programme and has 20 members attend whilst Hertford HC mainly run it in the summer and couldn't quantify attendance. Bishop's Stortford reports it will be offering walking hockey starting in 2025, whilst Hertford HC do not offer it.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Imported demand refers to teams which originate outside of the East Hertfordshire, accessing facilities within the area for its home fixtures and/or training needs, normally because its pitch requirements cannot be met, which is usually because of pitch supply, in some cases quality issues or stipulated league requirements for access to certain facilities.

There are no known cases of imported demand to East Hertfordshire from neighbouring authorities.

Exported demand refers to teams which originate within the East Hertfordshire, accessing facilities outside the area for its home fixtures and/or training needs, normally because its pitch requirements cannot be met, which is usually because of pitch supply, in some cases quality issues or stipulated league requirements for access to certain facilities.

Hertford Hockey Club reports playing some of its games at Queenswood School, in Welwyn Hatfield.

Access to artificial grass pitches for midweek training is important to sustain and grow all formats of hockey.

Bishop's Stortford HC trains at Hockerill Anglo-European College 19:00 – 22:00 on Tuesdays, 19:00 – 21:00 on Wednesday's and 19:00 – 20:30 on Friday's. It also accesses The Herts & Essex Sports Centre 18:00 – 19:30 on Monday's, 19:00 – 21:00 on Tuesday's, Wednesday's and Thursday's. It also runs coaching at both sites on a Sunday morning from 09:00 - 13:30 as well as Bishop's Stortford College 09:00 – 12:00 for master's and mixed training.

Hertford HC trains at Simon Balle School, Tuesday – Thursday for an hour and a half each night, Haileybury on Tuesday's and Wednesday's for an hour and a half and for three hours Sunday mornings. The Club finds it very difficult to book Haileybury as it is heavily used by the School and other clubs.

Growing participation is the number one aim within EH's Strategic Plan and key drivers include working with clubs, universities and schools, regional and local leagues, developing opportunities for over 40s and delivering a quality programme of competition. Growth in participation will not only come from the traditional 11 a side game but from the informal, recreational ways to play hockey such as small-sided hockey, which can be played at any time during the week or at weekends.

There remains a desire from EH to increase participation within the club/ league-based game, not all future demand may be realised entirely as new formalised teams playing at peak time. Some clubs may decide to offer pay and play opportunities to participants or offer small-sided formats such in a bid to increase participation and club memberships by providing a different hockey offer.

Increased demand from new participants will lead to a requirement for increased capacity on available artificial grass pitches at peak time, but also midweek and on Sundays to deliver other formats of hockey activity. At present, it is not necessarily clear as to what format this may take or when it is likely to take place, however, it is clear that there will be a requirement for access to increased capacity on artificial grass pitches across the area. This should be considered when assessing demand for artificial grass pitches in the future, as not only will they be needed for peak match play times and midweek training to accommodate increased participation within the formalised hockey environment, but also throughout the week and at non-peak times to offer wider opportunities for play.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Unlike other pitch sports, EH do not use team generation rates to determine future demand and instead likes to understand growth by participation, rather than dedicated teams. As such, team generation rates have not been used to calculate future growth for hockey in East Hertfordshire.

Bishop's Stortford HC recognises that it is at capacity with its current number of Saturday teams while Hertford HC is considering adding a fifth senior women's team but realises it might struggle for pitch space, umpires and people to run the team.

The Player Pathway (PP) is the junior talent development pathway. It encompasses the whole of the hockey landscape which includes club and school activity as well as the PP Development Centres (DCs). The purpose of the PP is to provide development opportunities for young people, which is fair, equitable and consistent. It is to ensure that a suitable level of coaching and competition is offered for people at the appropriate stage of their development and to maximise the chance they have of fulfilling their potential whether that potential is as a club or international player, coach or official. The PP can be accessed by playing at school, a local club or attending one of the local centres. There is one entry point into the PP centres which is at DC level. The first time a player accesses the player pathway they must enter at DC level.

To enter an Academy Centre (AC) players must be nominated by their DC coaches, school or must display a consistent high performance at club level. This is a PP into higher performance hockey.

DCs and ACs are local training centres for the U13 to U17 age groups. DCs are open to any hockey player who has been nominated by their club, school or coach, with ACs open to any player who has been nominated by a DC coach. After attending a DC, an AC is the next step on the player pathway. Included in the DCs/ACs are Goalkeeper (GK) Academies, which provide specific coaching sessions for goalkeepers.

There are no England Hockey DC or AC sites located within East Hertfordshire with the nearest talent academy located at Cambridge. Bishop's Stortford HC states it is hoping to become a Development Centre in 2025.

Most men's and women's hockey teams currently play matches on a Saturday which is therefore the peak time for use of artificial grass pitches for competitive play.

## 5.4: Supply and demand analysis

The PPS Guidance suggests that a sports lit pitch is able to accommodate four match equivalent sessions on a Saturday with teams playing in a home and away format, as such this equates to one artificial grass pitch being able to cater for eight "home" teams. Teams play matches on home v away formats and therefore one team requires 0.5 match sessions per week on its "home" artificial grass pitch. On this basis, a pitch can cater for eight teams from a home club (with four playing away on the home vs away rotation) with each pitch considered to have a total capacity equating to four MES in the peak period.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 5.7: Supply and demand analysis of peak time (Saturday) pitch access

| Site ID | Site name                        | Number of pitches | Site user             | Current use in peak period (MES) | Spare capacity? | Comments  |
|---------|----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| 56      | Herts & Essex Sports Centre      | 1                 | Bishop's Stortford HC | 5                                | No              | The site is open 09:00-18:00 with Bishop's Stortford HC using the pitch all day with the first push back at 10am.   |
| 58      | Hockerill Anglo-European College | 1                 | Bishop's Stortford HC | 4                                | No              | Hockerill Anglo-European College is open for community use 10:00 - 18:00 with Bishop's Stortford accessing it from 11:00 and the first push back at 11:30.                            |
| 89      | Simon Balle School               | 1                 | Hertford HC           | 4                                | No              | Hertford HC use this pitch 09:30 - 17:30 with the first push back at 10am. Three of its teams have to travel to Queenswood School in Welwyn Hatfield to fulfil its Saturday fixtures. |



## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Bishop's Stortford HC accesses two sites for its Saturday match play, Hockerill Anglo-European College and The Herts & Essex Sport Centre. The Club splits its teams between the two sites with 10 teams accessing The Herts & Essex Sport Centre on a home and away basis, allowing for five games. The other seven teams' access Hockerill Anglo-European College on a home and away basis meaning there is space for four games to be played. Consequently, there is no spare capacity at either site, the Club confirms it considers itself at capacity for its Saturday fixtures. It further uses both pitches on a Sunday morning 09:00-13:30 with youth fixtures taking place 13:30-17:30, however, no games are played at Herts & Essex at these times due to planning stipulations. It accesses Bishop's Stortford College 09:00-12:00 for master's and mixed training.

Hertford HC has 11 senior teams accessing pitches for Saturday fixtures, eight of which play at Simon Balle School with the remaining three travelling to Welwyn Hatfield to play at Queenswood School. The Club accesses Simon Balle School all day Saturday meaning there is no spare capacity at this site. It further uses both Simon Balle School and Haileybury School on Sunday mornings for training and youth games. It points out that Haileybury can be difficult to book due to other users, but this is not an issue as it has priority at Simon Balle School. Queenswood School has good access as no other clubs use it on a Saturday. It expresses a want to add a fifth women's team but realises that a lack of pitch space is an inhibiting factor.

### 5.5: Conclusion

Within East Hertfordshire there are seven full-size AGPs available for community use with the two clubs accessing three of these, Simon Balle School, The Herts & Essex Sport Centre and Hockerill Anglo-European College for weekend match play.

The two pitches at Haileybury College are used all day on Saturdays by its own borders so are not available for clubs to access. The last two pitches are at Bishop's Stortford College, one of which is used solely for school use on midweek evenings and Saturdays so is not available to hire. The second pitch is available to hire and is heavily used midweek with some spare capacity on Sunday's which is intermittently taken by Bishop's Stortford HC as and when it needs it.

Both Hertford HC and Bishop's Stortford state that to grow the clubs would require more pitch space. Currently there is sufficient provision to cater for hockey demand, however, if the clubs aspire to grow the number of teams, then new pitch space will have to be provided. It is also important to note here that Hertford HC already has three teams displaced and using the pitch at Queenswood School in Welwyn Hatfield for home games.

With the pitches at Simon Balle School and Bishop's Stortford School having surpassed the suggested lifespan of an AGP questions surrounding funds to replace the surfaces will arise. Should these pitches become unsafe and not be replaced then the current lack of weekend pitch space will be multiplied, and more teams will have to export to play games outside of East Hertfordshire.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Hockey summary

- ◀ There is no spare capacity at any of the pitches available for weekend match play and there are currently teams exporting to play home games.
- ◀ Regarding future demand, both Hertford HC and Bishop's Stortford HC realise that growth cannot happen without more pitch space. Despite this, Hertford HC is looking to add a fifth women's senior team.
- ◀ With the AGPs provided at the Simon Balle School and Bishop's Stortford College having surpassed end of life, there is the need to provide a pitch replacement at each site in order to accommodate existing and future hockey demand.
- ◀ There are eight full size hockey suitable AGPs in East Hertfordshire located across six sites. Seven of these pitches are open to community use on, with only three available to hire at peak time on weekends.
- ◀ The full-size pitch at Herts & Essex Sports Centre resembles the only good quality playing provision within the District, with the AGP being built in 2019.
- ◀ Provision found at Bishop's Stortford School and Simon Balle School is poor quality with both having surpassed the suggested lifespan of an AGP. The condition of the pitches is now at a point where a replacement surface shall be required during the lifespan of the PPS.
- ◀ Finally, the pitch at Hockerill Anglo-European College is standard, however, the accompanying ancillary facilities are poor and need enhancing to continue to host external bookings.
- ◀ There are two hockey clubs within East Hertfordshire, those being Hertford HC and Bishop's Stortford HC.
- ◀ Bishop's Stortford Hockey Club has seven adult men's teams, 10 adult women's teams, three junior girl's teams, three junior boy's teams, six mixed junior teams and one mini under eight team. Additionally, there are over 35s and over 45's men's and women's teams.
- ◀ Hertford Hockey Club currently has seven men's teams, four ladies' teams, seven junior boys' teams and 10 junior girls' teams. Alongside both a men's over 35 and over 45 team and women's over 35 team.
- ◀ Hertford HC would like to add a fifth women's team however both it and Bishop's Stortford HC raise that there is a lack of peak time pitch space and would struggle to add teams.
- ◀ Based on high levels of demand there is an insufficient supply of provision to accommodate existing demand and should pitch replacements not be undertaken, both clubs will struggle to field current number of teams.
- ◀ Future demand cannot be accommodated with existing provision and would require an additional pitch.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## PART 6: CRICKET PITCHES

### 6.1: Introduction

Hertfordshire County Cricket Club (HCCC) is the main governing and representative body for Cricket within East Hertfordshire. Working closely with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), HCCC is responsible for the management and development of every form of recreational cricket for men, women and children. HCCC is currently working with the ECB on delivering its recently refreshed Strategy, 'Inspiring Generations', which has been live since 2020. See Appendix One: Sporting Context for more details.

For adult cricket in East Hertfordshire there are three main offerings: Saturday, Sunday and midweek cricket. The youth league structure tends to be club-based matches which are played mid-week, although some matches are also played on Sundays.

### Consultation

In total, 23 cricket clubs are identified as playing within East Hertfordshire, of which, 19 responded to consultation requests, equating to an 83% response rate. Club responses are listed in the table below.

Table 6.1: Cricket club response rate

| Club name                                    | Club response? |
|--|----------------|
| Ardeley Walkern Cricket Club                 | Yes            |
| Albury Cricket Club                          | No             |
| Aston CC                                     | Yes            |
| Aspenden, Standon & Puckeridge CC            | Yes            |
| Allenburys & County Hall Cricket Club        | Yes            |
| Bayford & Hertford Nondescripts Cricket Club | Yes            |
| Bengeo Cricket Club                          | Yes            |
| Bishop's Stortford Cricket Club              | Yes            |
| Bramfield Cricket Club                       | No             |
| Braughing Cricket Club                       | Yes            |
| Buntingford Cricket Club                     | Yes            |
| Datchworth Cricket Club                      | Yes            |
| Hare Street and The Hormeads Cricket Club    | No             |
| Hertford Cricket Club                        | Yes            |
| Hertingfordbury Cricket Club                 | Yes            |
| Little Berkhamsted Sahibs Cricket Club       | No             |
| Little Munden Cricket Club                   | Yes            |
| Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club                  | Yes            |
| St Margaretsbury Cricket Club                | Yes            |
| Tewin Cricket Club                           | Yes            |
| Thorley Cricket Club                         | Yes            |
| Ware Cricket Club                            | Yes            |
| Watton-At-Stone Cricket Club                 | Yes            |

Thundridge CC has been discounted from the assessment, as since the last PPS was completed, the Club has folded.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## 6.2: Supply

In total, there are 46 natural turf cricket squares (across 30 sites). Hertford Cricket Club, Datchworth CC and The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust all have a non turf pitch (NTP) on their second squares. There are also standalone NTPs situated at Morgans Field and Haileybury Sports Complex.

Heath Mount School, Haileybury Sports Complex, Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields and St Edmunds College & Prep School do not currently offer community use for their cricket facilities. There are therefore 38 community accessible squares across 26 sites.

Table 6.2: Summary of grass wicket cricket sites

| Analysis area             | No. of sites | No. of squares |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Bishop's Stortford        | 6            | 15             |
| Buntingford               | 9            | 10             |
| Hertford, Ware            | 6            | 11             |
| Sawbridgeworth            | 4            | 5              |
| Watton-at-Stone           | 5            | 5              |
| <b>East Hertfordshire</b> | <b>30</b>    | <b>46</b>      |

Bishop's Stortford Area provides the highest number of squares with 15 (33% of all provision), whilst the Sawbridgeworth Analysis Area has the fewest squares with only four (11%).

### Non-turf pitches (NTPs)

There are 11 standalone NTPs across nine sites in East Hertfordshire as listed below. Each site contains one NTP each, other than Haileybury Sports Complex and St Edmunds College and Prep School which both have two. None of the schools are open to community use other than Avanti Grange Secondary School.

- ◀ Avanti Grange Secondary School.
- ◀ Edwinstree C Of E Middle School.
- ◀ Haileybury Sports Complex (x2).
- ◀ Hockerill Anglo-European College.
- ◀ Morgans Field.
- ◀ Presdales Recreation Ground.
- ◀ St Edmunds College & Prep School (x2).
- ◀ The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields.
- ◀ The Chauncy School.

There are also non-turf wickets accompanying natural turf cricket squares at six sites. All of which are available for community use, other than Heath Mount School.

- ◀ Heath Mount School.
- ◀ Hertford Cricket Club.
- ◀ Leventhorpe School.
- ◀ The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields.
- ◀ The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust.
- ◀ Datchworth Sports Club.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

NTPs, particularly when located at club sites, can also aid with training and practice, and can help reduce overplay on grass wickets when used for matches. The ECB highlights that NTPs which follow its TS6 guidance on performance standards are suitable for high level, senior play. NTPs are also frequently used for junior matches across the country, and there are some instances of this in East Hertfordshire.

From a school perspective, NTPs provide a reliable cricket offer, without the need for specific cricket preparation to be taken on natural turf playing field. In many instances, schools do not have the resource or expertise to prepare natural turf wickets so NTPs provide a resource to ensure cricket can remain a key element of curricular sport.

The map below shows the location of all cricket squares currently servicing East Hertfordshire. For a key to the map, see Table 6.4.

Figure 6.1: Location of grass cricket squares within East Hertfordshire



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Disused provision

Playing fields which have previously accommodated formal pitch provision are categorised as disused. A disused site is a playing field which is not being used at all by any users and is not available for community hire either. In East Hertfordshire there are both disused sites that are in an overgrown condition and unused cricket sites/provision that still actively accommodate alternative sporting provision (i.e., football is still played on the site).

Table 6.3: Summary of disused cricket provision within East Hertfordshire

| Site ID | Site                         | Postcode | Analysis area      | Disused/ unused site/ pitch | Comments   |
|---------|------------------------------|----------|--------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 1       | Albury Football Ground       | SG11 2JG | Bishop's Stortford | Disused pitch               | Site previously accommodated a grass cricket square now just has football pitches.   |
| 15      | Birchwood High School        | CM23 5BD | Bishop's Stortford | Disused NTP                 | Site previously accommodated an NTP.   |
| 31      | Cottered Playing Field       | SG9 9QW  | Buntingford        | Unused pitch                | Site previously accommodated a grass cricket square now just services football demand.   |
| 51      | Hertford Rugby Football Club | SG12 9NZ | Hertford, Ware     | Disused NTP                 | Site previously accommodated an NTP now just services rugby demand.  |
| 106     | The Meads (Lower Field)      | SG9 0DY  | Buntingford        | Unused pitch                | Site previously accommodated a grass cricket square although is now just a recreation space.   |
| 138     | County Hall                  | SG13 8DQ | Hertford, Ware     | Unused pitch                | Site previously accommodated a grass cricket square and an accompanying NTP. However, since the pavilion burned down 9 <sup>th</sup> August 2023 the site does not provide any sports provision. |
| 165     | Little Hadham CC             | SG11 2ED | Bishop's Stortford | Unused pitch                | Site previously accommodated a grass cricket square.   |

## Potential future supply changes

Bengeo CC has approached the District Council to potentially start using the disused County Hall site as a second ground due to its rapidly growing expansion. The Council has shown interest in the Club taking on the ground, however, given that there is no pavilion servicing the site (due to fire damage) it would mean the Club having no access to onsite ancillary facilities.

## **EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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Sawbridgeworth CC is loosely planning to partner with Sawbridgeworth Town FC to build a new purpose-built facility for both clubs to use. Both are seeking a new site to further growth ambitions. Sawbridgeworth CC states that it has experienced operational issues when accessing Leventhorpe School. The Club has an agreement to access the site until 2027 but states its preference is using its club site for home games.

The new, proposed Gilston development will include a central cricket hub containing multiple squares and service cricket demand for both new and existing residents in the area. The development will see 10,000 new homes built.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 6.4: Key to map of grass cricket squares

| Site ID | Site name                             | Analysis area      | Community use? | No. of squares | No. of wickets | No. of NTPs |
|---------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| 6       | Aston Cricket Club (Herts)            | Buntingford        | Yes            | 1              | 6              | -           |
| 12      | Bengeo Sports Ground                  | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | 1              | 8              | -           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College            | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | 8              | 10             | -           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College            | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | 8              | 7              | -           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College            | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | 8              | 5              | -           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College            | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | 8              | 2              | -           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College            | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | 8              | 4              | -           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College            | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | 8              | 1              | -           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College            | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | 8              | 1              | -           |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College            | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | 8              | 1              | -           |
| 21      | Bramfield Playing Field               | Watton-at-Stone    | Yes            | 1              | 6              | -           |
| 22      | Braughing Playing Fields              | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | 1              | 8              | -           |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club                | Buntingford        | Yes            | 2              | 14             | -           |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club                | Buntingford        | Yes            | 2              | 11             | -           |
| 40      | Freman College                        | Buntingford        | Yes            | 1              | 8              | -           |
| 43      | Haileybury Sports Complex             | Hertford, Ware     | No             | 4              | 13             | -           |
| 43      | Haileybury Sports Complex             | Hertford, Ware     | No             | 4              | 10             | -           |
| 43      | Haileybury Sports Complex             | Hertford, Ware     | No             | 4              | 8              | -           |
| 43      | Haileybury Sports Complex             | Hertford, Ware     | No             | 4              | 6              | -           |
| 46      | Heath Mount School                    | Watton-at-Stone    | No             | 1              | 3              | 1           |
| 48      | Hertford Cricket Club                 | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | 2              | 15             | -           |
| 48      | Hertford Cricket Club                 | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | 2              | 8              | 1           |
| 55      | Hertingfordbury Recreation Ground     | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | 1              | 9              | -           |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School                    | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | 1              | 9              | 1           |
| 63      | Little Berkhamsted Recreation Ground  | Watton-at-Stone    | Yes            | 1              | 8              | -           |
| 64      | Little Munden Cricket Club            | Buntingford        | Yes            | 1              | 4              | -           |
| 72      | Norfolk Road Playing Fields           | Buntingford        | Yes            | 1              | 8              | -           |
| 90      | St Edmunds College & Prep School      | Buntingford        | No             | 1              | 8              | -           |
| 97      | St Margaretsbury Sports & Social Club | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | 2              | 18             | -           |



## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site name  | Analysis area      | Community use? | No. of squares | No. of wickets | No. of NTPs |
|---------|--|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| 97      | St Margaretsbury Sports & Social Club              | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | 2              | 8              | -           |
| 100     | Tewin Recreation Ground                            | Watton-at-Stone    | Yes            | 1              | 10             | -           |
| 102     | The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields  | Sawbridgeworth     | No             | 2              | 9              | -           |
| 102     | The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields  | Sawbridgeworth     | No             | 2              | 4              | 1           |
| 103     | The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust                | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | 3              | 13             | -           |
| 103     | The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust                | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | 3              | 12             | 1           |
| 103     | The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust                | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | 3              | 6              | -           |
| 109     | Thorley Cricket Club                               | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | 1              | 15             | -           |
| 111     | Thundridge Sports Ground                           | Buntingford        | Yes            | 1              | 8              | -           |
| 112     | Town Fields  | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | 1              | 14             | -           |
| 115     | Ware CC  | Sawbridgeworth     | Yes            | 1              | 14             | -           |
| 126     | Allenburys Sport & Social Club                     | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | 1              | 11             | -           |
| 127     | Walkern Sports & Community Centre                  | Buntingford        | Yes            | 1              | 6              | -           |
| 128     | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Watton-at-Stone    | Yes            | 1              | 8              | -           |
| 129     | Aspenden Standon & Puckeridge Cricket Club         | Buntingford        | Yes            | 1              | 4              | -           |
| 130     | Bayford & Hertford CC                              | Watton-at-Stone    | Yes            | 1              | 10             | -           |
| 136     | Stocking Pelham CC                                 | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | 1              | 4              | -           |

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Security of tenure

Table 6.5 outlines the tenure agreement of cricket clubs across East Hertfordshire. Where provision is owned by the District Council or town/parish councils and either rented or leased to clubs, unless otherwise known, it is considered that this provision is secure and will be provided over the lifespan of the PPOSS.

The broad position is that most clubs have secure tenure and will therefore be able to service cricket for the foreseeable future (and as a minimum over the lifespan of the PPOSS). This is detailed club-by-club in the following table.

Table 6.5: Summary of club tenure arrangements (where known)

| Club  | Site   | Tenure  | Security of tenure | Management  |
|---|--|---|--------------------|---|
| Ardeley Walkern Cricket Club                  | Walkern Sports & Community Centre              | Rented from Walkern Parish Council.   | Unknown            | The Club maintain the playing provision.                                  |
| Aston CC                                      | Aston CC                                       | Rented from Aston Centre Field Trust.   | Unknown            | Aston CC  |
| Aspenden, Standon and Puckeridge Cricket Club | Aspenden, Standon & Puckeridge CC              | Leased from Aspenden Parish Council.  | Unknown            | Aspenden Parish Council manage the site, but the Club maintain the pitch. |
| Allenburys & County Hall Cricket Club         | Allenburys & County Hall Cricket Club          | Long term lease with GSK, which is in the process of being renewed.             | Secure             | Allenburys Sport & Social Club  |
| Bayford & Hertford Nondescripts Cricket Club  | Bayford & Hertford Nondescripts Cricket Club   | Leased from Bayford Parish Council (25 years).                                  | Secure             | Bayford & Hertford Nondescripts CC  |
| Bengeo Cricket Club                           | Bengeo Sports Ground                           | Freehold ownership by the Sports Association.                                   | Secure             | The Sports Association  |
| Bishop's Stortford Cricket Club               | The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust            | Tenure is a mix of freehold and on a lease depending on which part of the site. | Secure             | Bishop's Stortford Cricket CC   |
| Braughing Cricket Club                        | Braughing Playing Fields                       | Long term lease with community centre.  | Secure             | Braughing CC  |
| Buntingford Cricket Club                      | Norfolk Road Playing Fields (Buntingford MUGA) | Rented from Buntingford Town Council.   | Secure             | Buntingford CC  |
| Datchworth Cricket Club                       | Datchworth Sports Club                         | Leased from Datchworth Parish Council and Wallace Farms.                        | Secure             | Datchworth CC   |
| Hertford Cricket Club                         | Hertford Cricket Club                          | Long term lease with Hertfordshire County Council.                              | Unsecure           | Hertford CC   |
| Hertingfordbury Cricket Club                  | Hertingfordbury Recreation Ground              | Ground is in trust under a lease agreement (>40 years), paid annually.          | Secure             | The Club maintains field and the Trust maintains the building.            |

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Club                          | Site   | Tenure  | Security of tenure | Management                            |
|-------------------------------|--|---|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Little Munden Cricket Club    | Little Munden Cricket Club                         | Leased from a private landowner.  | Secure             | Little Munden CC                      |
| Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club   | Town Fields  | Freehold ownership by sports trust, for cricket tennis and bowls all on site. | Secure             | Sawbridgeworth CC                     |
| St Margaretsbury Cricket Club | St Margaretsbury Sports & Social Club              | Peppercorn long-term lease.   | Secure             | A Trust manage and maintain the site. |
| Tewin Cricket Club            | Tewin Recreation Ground                            | Rented from Tewin Parish Council.   | Unknown            | The Council                           |
| Thorley Cricket Club          | Thorley Cricket Club                               | Leased from Thorley Parish Council.   | Unknown            | Thorley CC                            |
| Ware Cricket Club             | Ware Cricket Club                                  | Rented from private landowner.  | Unsecure           | Private landowner                     |
| Watton-At-Stone Cricket Club  | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Leased from Watton-at-Stone Parish Council.                                   | Unknown            | Watton-At-Stone CC                    |

The position of the four unresponsive clubs is unknown.

As noted in the table above, Hertford CC has a lease agreement with Hertfordshire County Council. The Club is frustrated that it is being asked to maintain the trees and surrounding grass of the site rather than only maintaining the playing provision.

## Pitch quality

The quality of cricket pitches has been assessed via a combination of site visits undertaken in August 2024 (using non-technical assessments as determined by the ECB) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good.
- ◀ Standard.
- ◀ Poor.

The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments were as follows; Good (>80%), Standard (50-79%), Poor (<49%).

Maintaining high pitch quality is the most important aspect of cricket; if the wicket is poor, it can affect the quality of the game and can, in some instances, become dangerous. As an example, if a square is poor quality, a ball can bounce erratically on a wicket and become a danger to players.

The quality of a cricket square is assessed by considering factors such as evidence of the wicket being rolled, the wicket being correctly cut, evidence of cover usage, evidence of maintenance and the presence of line markings. Comparatively, an outfield is assessed on the provisions grass length, quantity of weeds, evenness of the surface, level of undulations, damage to the surface and evidence of dog fouling.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

With regards to maintenance of provision, most clubs consulted with confirm they have maintenance responsibility for their pitches. With the remaining clubs either having other arrangements or unknown.

Of the community available grass wicket cricket squares in East Hertfordshire (38 squares), 14 are assessed as good quality (37%), 20 standard quality (53%) and four poor quality (10%). The four poor quality squares are located at Bramfield Playing Field, Datchworth Sports Club, Leventhorpe School and Allenburys Sport and Social Club.

Table 6.6: Quality ratings for community available grass wicket squares

| Site ID | Site name  | Club accessing site                         | No. of pitches | Pitch quality |
|---------|--|---|----------------|---------------|
| 6       | Aston Cricket Club (Herts)                         | Aston CC                                    | 1              | Standard      |
| 12      | Bengeo Sports Ground                               | Bengeo CC                                   | 1              | Standard      |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College                         | -   | 8              | Good          |
| 21      | Bramfield Playing Field                            | Bramfield CC                                | 1              | Poor          |
| 22      | Braughing Playing Fields                           | Braughing CC                                | 1              | Standard      |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club                             | Datchworth CC                               | 1              | Poor          |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club                             | Datchworth CC                               | 1              | Standard      |
| 40      | Freman College                                     | Reed CC                                     | 1              | Standard      |
| 48      | Hertford Cricket Club                              | Hertford CC                                 | 1              | Good          |
| 48      | Hertford Cricket Club                              | Hertford CC                                 | 1              | Standard      |
| 55      | Hertingfordbury Recreation Ground                  | Hertingfordbury CC                          | 1              | Standard      |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School                                 | Sawbridgeworth CC                           | 1              | Poor          |
| 63      | Little Berkhamsted Recreation Ground               | Little Berkhamsted Sahibs CC                | 1              | Standard      |
| 64      | Little Munden Cricket Club                         | Little Munden CC                            | 1              | Standard      |
| 72      | Norfolk Road Playing Fields                        | Buntingford CC<br>Hare Street & Hormeads CC | 1              | Standard      |
| 97      | St. Margaretsbury Sport & Social Club              | St Margaretsbury CC                         | 2              | Good          |
| 100     | Tewin Recreation Ground                            | Tewin CC                                    | 1              | Standard      |
| 103     | The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust                | Bishop's Stortford CC                       | 2              | Good          |
| 103     | The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust                | Bishop's Stortford CC                       | 1              | Standard      |
| 109     | Thorley Cricket Club                               | Thorley CC                                  | 1              | Good          |
| 111     | Thundridge Sports Ground                           | -   | 1              | Standard      |
| 112     | Town Fields  | Sawbridgeworth CC                           | 1              | Standard      |
| 115     | Ware CC  | Ware CC                                     | 1              | Standard      |
| 126     | Allenburys Sport & Social Club                     | Allenburys & County Hall CC                 | 1              | Poor          |
| 127     | Walkern Sports & Community Centre                  | Ardeley Walkern CC                          | 1              | Standard      |
| 128     | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Watton-At-Stone CC                          | 1              | Standard      |
| 129     | Aspenden Standon & Puckeridge Cricket Club         | Aspenden, Standon & Puckeridge CC           | 1              | Standard      |
| 130     | Bayford & Hertford CC                              | Bayford & Hertford CC                       | 1              | Standard      |
| 136     | Stocking Pelham CC                                 | Albury CC                                   | 1              | Standard      |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Leventhorpe School provides a poorly rated cricket square, which is currently let out to Sawbridgeworth CC. The Club states there are no covers on the square and in recent years has taken it upon themselves to improve the square. Despite this the outfield is full of rabbit holes and has goalposts up. Further to this the school cuts the outfield grass to an incorrect length for cricket.

Allenburys Sport & Social Club highlights that the quality of its pitch has become much poorer due to a change in groundskeeper. It records the square as poor quality while the outfield is standard.

Bramfield Playing Field is an open space beside the village hall and as such is always open to the public. Consequently, the outfield suffers damage due to dog walkers and local children playing on it. Additionally, the outfield is used as a football pitch.

Datchworth CC's first and main square is currently rated as poor quality with the square having a low bounce. The outfield also has a paved walking track through it and is undulating on one side.

Table 6.7: Pitch quality club consultations findings

| Site ID | Site name                         | Club                       | Consultation feedback   |
|---------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| 6       | Aston Cricket Club (Herts)        | Aston Cricket Club (Herts) | The Club suggests that the pitch has improved in recent years due to good groundskeeping. In spite of this the ground does not have covers.   |
| 12      | Bengeo Sports Ground              | Bengeo CC                  | The Club expresses the fact that the space is open to public and tends to attract dog walkers and local residents who both may be not the most considerate to the space.  |
| 22      | Braughing Playing Fields          | Braughing CC               | The Club does not have any covers and use sheets instead which it would like to replace.  |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club            | Datchworth CC              | There are two squares at this site, one rated poor and one rated standard. The Club reports a low bounce, and that the outfield of its main square is relatively good although undulates a lot on one side as well as having a public walking track going through the edge of the outfield.               |
| 40      | Freman College                    | Reed CC (North Herts Club) | Reed CC reports that whilst the outfield is a good quality it does have a lot of weeds; despite the fact they were last weed picked in June. As this is the Club's second ground it struggles to keep up with the costs of doing the weeds on a more consistent basis.                                    |
| 48      | Hertford Cricket Club             | Hertford CC                | The first square is of good quality while the second square is of standard quality. The second square currently has no covers, and the Club has recently debated when an optimal time would be to relay it. It also expresses interest in acquiring a new roller as its current one is over 50 years old. |
| 55      | Hertingfordbury Recreation Ground | Hertingfordbury CC         | The pitch at this site is standard, however, the Club describes the outfield having weeds and suffering due to the wrong tractor being used. The site is also open to public and suffers from it.   |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School                | Sawbridgeworth CC          | Through consultation, Sawbridgeworth has voiced its frustrations with the pitch at Leventhorpe. Specifically, the lack of sight screens and covers at the site.   |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site name  | Club   | Consultation feedback   |
|---------|--|--|---|
|         |  |  | The Club goes into detail about a poor outfield, full of rabbit holes and goal posts being left there. It also reports that the school cut the outfield to the wrong length.  |
| 64      | Little Munden Cricket Club                         | Little Munden CC                               | The Club has an approved small grant coming in 2024 and plan to relay two of the wickets on the square.   |
| 72      | Norfolk Road Playing Fields                        | Buntingford CC Hare Street and the Hormeads CC | Buntingford CC points out that it is carrying out more maintenance work on the square. However, it is important to note that the square is also used by Hare Street & Hormeads CC.  |
| 97      | St. Margaretsbury Sport & Social Club              | St Margaretsbury CC                            | St Margaretsbury CC explains issues with being a recreation ground meaning it is open for public use as well as Club use. Potentially having adverse consequences for the square and outfield.  |
| 100     | Tewin Recreation Ground                            | Tewin CC                                       | Tewin CC reports its pitch to be of standard quality with the main problem it faces is "local youths".  |
| 103     | The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust                | Bishop's Stortford CC                          | The first and second square are both of good quality while the third square is standard. The third square was installed in 2022 making it relatively new and accommodates junior play only. The Third square has football pitches marked in the outfield and the Club is currently working to improve the third square. |
| 109     | Thorley Cricket Club                               | Thorley CC                                     | Thorley CC confirm that it has improved its groundwork and thus improved its ground quality.  |
| 112     | Town Fields  | Sawbridgeworth CC                              | Sawbridgeworth know that it's square is overused but would rather this and playing elsewhere. The Club bought a new roller and square mower just over a year ago although has no covers and uses a sheet. Despite this the site is on a slight hill and so water finds its way under the sheet.                         |
| 115     | Ware CC  | Ware CC  | The Club reports that the groundskeeper is working hard to improve the pitch and that the pitch has already become slightly better. It should be noted that there are no covers for this site.  |
| 126     | Allenburys Sport & Social Club                     | Allenburys & County Hall CC                    | The Club describes how its ground has declined in quality significantly over the last few years due to changing groundskeeper. It describes the square as poor but the outfield as standard.  |
| 127     | Walkern Sports & Community Centre                  | Ardeley Walkern CC                             | The cricket Club concur that the pitch is of a standard quality. It maintains the square whilst the sports Club cuts the outfield.  |
| 128     | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Watton-At-Stone CC                             | The Club reports that this year has seen more weeds, however, do not think quality has declined as such.  |
| 129     | Aspenden Standon & Puckeridge Cricket Club         | Aspenden, Standon & Puckeridge CC              | The Club describes no difference in pitch quality the last few years, however, did detail a poor outfield.  |
| 130     | Bayford & Hertford CC                              | Bayford & Hertford CC                          | The Club states that most aspects of its ground are good, including the square and outfield. However, it also highlights a lack of portable covers for the square.  |

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

In relation to the remaining squares across the District, quality is either standard or good. Of the NTPs all provision at club sites is in an adequate and useable condition.

## Ancillary facilities

Ancillary provision refers to the accompanying building to a site that is accessed as changing facilities and a social space, if applicable. All sites were assessed during non-technical site assessments and further evidenced was gained via consultation. Quality ratings were determined by assessing matters such as the condition of the building, the quantity and quality of changing rooms and the social space offering.

Table 6.8: Quality ratings for community available ancillary facilities

| Site ID | Site name  | Club accessing site                      | Analysis area      | Ancillary quality |
|---------|--|--|--------------------|-------------------|
| 6       | Aston Cricket Club (Herts)                         | Aston Cricket Club (Herts)               | Buntingford        | Poor              |
| 12      | Bengeo Sports Ground                               | Bengeo CC                                | Hertford, Ware     | Standard          |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College                         | -  | Bishop's Stortford | Good              |
| 21      | Bramfield Playing Field                            | Bramfield CC                             | Watton-at-Stone    | Good              |
| 22      | Braughing Playing Fields                           | Braughing CC                             | Bishop's Stortford | Standard          |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club                             | Datchworth CC                            | Buntingford        | Poor              |
| 40      | Freman College                                     | Reed CC                                  | Buntingford        | Standard          |
| 48      | Hertford Cricket Club                              | Hertford CC                              | Hertford, Ware     | Good              |
| 55      | Hertingfordbury Recreation Ground                  | Hertingfordbury CC                       | Hertford, Ware     | Standard          |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School                                 | Sawbridgeworth CC                        | Sawbridgeworth     | Standard          |
| 63      | Little Berkhamsted Recreation Ground               | Little Berkhamsted Sahibs CC             | Watton-at-Stone    | Poor              |
| 64      | Little Munden Cricket Club                         | Little Munden CC                         | Buntingford        | Poor              |
| 72      | Norfolk Road Playing Fields                        | Buntingford CC<br>Hare Street & Hormeads | Buntingford        | Good              |
| 97      | St. Margaretsbury Sport & Social Club              | St Margaretsbury CC                      | Hertford, Ware     | Standard          |
| 100     | Tewin Recreation Ground                            | Tewin CC                                 | Watton-at-Stone    | Standard          |
| 103     | The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust                | Bishop's Stortford CC                    | Bishop's Stortford | Good              |
| 109     | Thorley Cricket Club                               | Thorley CC                               | Bishop's Stortford | Poor              |
| 111     | Thundridge Sports Ground                           | -  | Buntingford        | Poor              |
| 112     | Town Fields  | Sawbridgeworth CC                        | Sawbridgeworth     | Good              |
| 115     | Ware CC  | Ware CC                                  | Sawbridgeworth     | Standard          |
| 126     | Allenburys Sport & Social Club                     | Allenburys & County Hall CC              | Hertford, Ware     | Standard          |
| 127     | Walkern Sports & Community Centre                  | Ardeley Walkern CC                       | Buntingford        | Standard          |
| 128     | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Watton-At-Stone CC                       | Watton-at-Stone    | Good              |
| 129     | Aspenden Standon & Puckeridge Cricket Club         | Aspenden, Standon & Puckeridge CC        | Buntingford        | Poor              |
| 130     | Bayford & Hertford CC                              | Bayford & Hertford CC                    | Watton-at-Stone    | Standard          |
| 136     | Stocking Pelham CC                                 | Albury CC                                | Bishop's Stortford | Standard          |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

All clubs in East Hertfordshire have access to ancillary provision, of which, there is a varying level of quality. Most provision is either good or standard quality; however, this is not the case at all sites. For example, Little Munden CC has a poor quality small wooden building that does not have electricity and as such is not fully utilised. Thorley CC states that the overall condition of its clubhouse is poor as well as its changing rooms and social area and needs replacement. Aston CC's provision is rated poor due to only offering a small building where both teams share the same shower area. Datchworth CC has had planning permission approved for extending and refurbishing its shared clubhouse, however, the Club is still fundraising to enable this project.

Table 6.9: Ancillary provision quality club consultation findings

| Site ID | Site name                         | Club                       | Consultation feedback   |
|---------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| 6       | Aston Cricket Club (Herts)        | Aston Cricket Club (Herts) | Aston is a small club which only play friendlies and has no need for anything more than basic ancillary facilities. These facilities are poor quality.  |
| 12      | Bengeo Sports Ground              | Bengeo CC                  | Bengeo CC access standard quality ancillary provision in the form of a medium sized brick building which also services the football team that also use the ground. The building provides standard, toilets, changing facilities and a social room.  |
| 22      | Braughing Playing Fields          | Braughing CC               | Braughing playing fields offers standard quality ancillary provision with a large brick building and ample parking on site. The building has a kitchen, changing rooms and showers. However, the Club highlights it would like to have a clubhouse with a bar.  |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club            | Datchworth CC              | The Club accesses poor quality provision at its home site, Datchworth Sports Club. It contains five changing rooms and an official's room, with a communal shower room to service all. Consultation with the Club confirms that the building is very dated and needs refurbishing and it has had planning permission accepted to do this. The Club is currently still fundraising to enable this project to go ahead. |
| 40      | Freman College                    | Reed CC (North Herts Club) | Reed CC has access to the common room which includes kitchen facilities and a sitting area as well as changing rooms and showers.   |
| 48      | Hertford Cricket Club             | Hertford CC                | During site assessment, work was being carried out on the pavilion, including painting and recladding. The facilities are of good quality and include plenty of parking, bar facilities with an outdoor patio and four changing rooms. Two of the changing rooms were only added 10 years ago.  |
| 55      | Hertingfordbury Recreation Ground | Hertingfordbury CC         | Hertingfordbury CC has standard facilities including a clubhouse with two changing rooms with very small showers, male and female toilets, a kitchen area, and a social room. The Club has no licence for a bar on the premises.  |



## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site name                             | Club   | Consultation feedback   |
|---------|---------------------------------------|--|---|
|         |                                       |  | It aspires to either build changing rooms at the back or develop the existing garage into a larger changing area and acquire a container for storage.   |
| 64      | Little Munden Cricket Club            | Little Munden CC                                     | During consultation with the Club, it was highlighted that the only ancillary access that is used is a small wooden structure with no electricity. This building is used for everything in terms of changing facilities as well as a social area.   |
| 72      | Norfolk Road Playing Fields           | Buntingford CC<br>Hare Street and the<br>Hormeads CC | Located at Norfolk Road Playing Fields is a good quality large brick building. The Club concurs that the facilities are good and confirmed it had, changing rooms, toilets, showers all in good condition. The building also has a social area as well as separate changing facilities for women and girls and umpires.   |
| 97      | St. Margaretsbury Sport & Social Club | St Margaretsbury CC                                  | St Margaretsbury CC confirms that out of its three sets of changing rooms changing rooms two are in poor condition due to being very old and the other is standard. The ladies' toilets and main changing room showers have recently been refurbished; however, the Club expresses that this is just papering over the cracks. The changing rooms are shared between the football and cricket so will get extra usage. The facilities also include a bar and social area. |
| 100     | Tewin Recreation Ground               | Tewin CC   | Tewin CC accesses standard ancillary facilities. Including, toilets, changing rooms, a clubroom and separate female changing rooms. Despite this there are not separate showers per team, communal only. There are also no officials changing rooms available.  |
| 103     | The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust   | Bishop's Stortford CC                                | Bishop's Stortford CC accesses good quality ancillary provision at the Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust site which is well maintained. The site has two pavilions, one for each adult square, both of which have basic home and away changing rooms.<br>Additionally, there is also a large brick building, encompassing a large bar, clubroom, outdoor patio, and squash courts.  |
| 109     | Thorley Cricket Club                  | Thorley CC   | Thorley CC currently has poor ancillary provision. The Club highlights poor changing and toilet facilities as well as the general condition of the pavilion. There are separate changing rooms for each team although communal showers only. There are no changing facilities for umpires or women and girls. It reaffirms the fact that its clubhouse is in major need of replacement.   |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site name  | Club                              | Consultation feedback   |
|---------|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| 112     | Town Fields  | Sawbridgeworth CC                 | The Club confirms it has two buildings, which includes two changing rooms, a club room, and showers. It aspires to replace the changing rooms with more inclusive spaces to include provision for umpires and women and girls. This plan would also include a new patio to allow for socialising. |
| 115     | Ware CC  | Ware CC                           | Ware CC has standard provision accessible to it. It provides basic changing and showering facilities as well as a kitchen. However, does not have separate facilities for women and girls.  |
| 126     | Allenburys Sport & Social Club                     | Allenburys & County Hall CC       | Allenburys Sports and Social Club provides standard ancillary provision. There is a large building on site which provides changing rooms and toilets but no club room or social area.   |
| 127     | Walkern Sports & Community Centre                  | Ardeley Walkern CC                | There is a large sports and community centre on the site that offers standard ancillary provision for Ardeley Walkern CC. It offers, toilets, changing rooms and a clubroom/social area. The building also has kitchen facilities and has a large car park.                                       |
| 128     | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Watton-At-Stone CC                | Standard ancillary facilities are provided via the community hall and contains changing rooms for both male and female players as well as officials. The Club states the above are all standard condition.  |
| 129     | Aspenden Standon & Puckeridge Cricket Club         | Aspenden, Standon & Puckeridge CC | The Club confirms that it provides poor ancillary facilities. There are no separate facilities for officials or for women and girls.  |
| 130     | Bayford & Hertford CC                              | Bayford & Hertford CC             | Although the Club describes the good condition of its facilities, it does not provide separate facilities for women and girls.  |

Currently only five clubs confirm they can accommodate separate men's and women's changing facilities within the peak period. Those clubs are, Tewin CC, Bengo CC, Buntingford CC, Allenburys & County Hall CC and Watton at Stone CC. Although Bishop's Stortford CC does not have separate facilities for women and girls'; it does have separate buildings for each square so separation can be arranged if needed.

Of all the clubs only five report vandalism in the last year, those clubs being, Thorley CC, Bengo CC, St Margaretsbury CC, Datchworth CC and Allenburys & County Hall CC. Across the five sites the most regular occurrence is attempted break ins and damage to buildings. Additionally, mobile nets and score huts were also damaged.

### Ball strike issues

During consultation only Sawbridgeworth CC and Braughing CC highlight ball striking issues at their respective sites. Braughing CC is seeking a grant to rectify this and erect a net should one become available. Sawbridgeworth CC also describes that neighbouring properties are at risk from stray cricket balls.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Training facilities

Most clubs in the District have their own fixed practice lanes at their respective sites ranging from two to four lanes. Details can be found in Table 6.10 below.

There are six clubs which state there is also demand for additional training facilities at their home sites, those being Allenburys & County Hall CC, Tewin CC, Thorley CC, Sawbridgeworth CC, St Margaretsbury CC and Ware CC.

Table 6.10: Current Club training facilities and future needs (consultation findings).

| Site ID | Site name                             | Club                        | Consultation findings   |
|---------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 6       | Aston CC                              | Aston CC                    | Aston CC reports having a net with a concrete base and a runner mat on it.  |
| 12      | Bengeo Sports Ground                  | Bengeo CC                   | There are two practice lanes at this site.  |
| 22      | Braughing Playing Fields              | Braughing CC                | Braughing CC has two fixed practice lanes and despite being quite old they are still used.  |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club                | Datchworth CC               | There are three high quality practice lanes currently on site.  |
| 48      | Hertford CC                           | Hertford CC                 | The Club has four practice lanes that were installed in 2015 that are playing okay but would still like to re level the surface. The nets were re done in 2024.                             |
| 55      | Hertingfordbury Recreation Ground     | Hertingfordbury CC          | The Club had a two-lane training net installed circa 12-15 years ago and recognise the batting area needs replaced. The Club also bought a second-hand roll-on net last summer.             |
| 64      | Little Munden CC                      | Little Munden CC            | The Club is in the process of renovating its single lane training net as it has issues with badgers biting the nets. It also has a roll on net.   |
| 72      | Norfolk Road Playing Fields           | Buntingford CC              | Buntingford CC has two fixed practice lanes.  |
| 97      | St. Margaretsbury Sport & Social Club | St Margaretsbury CC         | The Club currently has two lanes and reports the need for an additional permanent practice net.   |
| 100     | Tewin Recreation Ground               | Tewin CC                    | Tewin CC states it requires permanent fixed lane practice nets.   |
| 103     | The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust   | Bishop's Stortford CC       | The Club currently has a four-lane practice net   |
| 109     | Thorley Cricket Club                  | Thorley CC                  | The Club expresses the need for a permanent practice net at its site. It only has two mobile roll on net currently.   |
| 112     | Town Fields                           | Sawbridgeworth CC           | Sawbridgeworth CC currently has two lanes and a mobile net although highlights the need for extra pitches and is hoping to partner with Sawbridgeworth Town FC to obtain a site of its own. |
| 115     | Ware CC                               | Ware CC                     | Ware CC details needing a second net at its site and does not currently use any indoor facilities.  |
| 126     | Allenburys Sport & Social Club        | Allenburys & County Hall CC | Allenburys & County Hall CC has a mobile net and two-lane indoor nets at its facility. The Club desires to have a bowling machine on site.  |

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site name  | Club                         | Consultation findings  |
|---------|--|------------------------------|--|
| 6       | Aston CC   | Aston CC                     | Aston CC reports having a net with a concrete base and a runner mat on it. |
| 128     | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Watton-at-Stone Cricket Club | There are two practice lanes at this facility.                             |

## Indoor facilities

Whilst the PPOSS only considers outdoor playing pitches, a cricket training programme includes accessing indoor net facilities over winter months in preparation for the start of the season. As such indoor training facilities are discussed below.

In total, 11 clubs report accessing indoor provision for winter net pre-season training sessions, with sites such as Hertfordshire University, Nobel School, Chancellors school, Freman College, Herts and Essex Cricket Centre (HECC), Haileybury, Leventhorpe school and Hatfield Sports Village being accessed.

St Margaretsbury Cricket Club is the only club to state that it believes there to be a lack of indoor facilities with the other clubs seemingly happy with access options.

## 6.3: Demand

There are 23 clubs in East Hertfordshire which collectively provide 108 teams. When broken down this equates to 50 senior men's, four senior women's, 48 junior boys and six junior girls' team. Of the 22 clubs, eight include both senior and junior sections, whilst the remaining 15 clubs' range in size but have between one and three senior teams.

Table 6.11: Summary of teams by club

| Club                                | Analysis area      | No. of senior men's teams | No. of senior women's teams | No. of junior boys' teams | No. of junior girls' teams | Total |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| Albury CC                           | Bishop's Stortford | 1                         | -                           | -                         | -                          | 1     |
| Allenburys and County Hall CC       | Hertford, Ware     | 2                         | -                           | -                         | -                          | 2     |
| Ardeley Walkern CC                  | Buntingford        | 1                         | -                           | -                         | -                          | 1     |
| Aston CC                            | Buntingford        | 1                         | -                           | -                         | -                          | 1     |
| Aspenden, Standon and Puckeridge CC | Buntingford        | 1                         | -                           | -                         | -                          | 1     |
| Bayford and Hertford CC             | Watton-at-Stone    | 2                         | -                           | -                         | -                          | 2     |
| Bengeo CC                           | Hertford, Ware     | 3                         | -                           | 2                         | -                          | 5     |
| Bishop's Stortford CC               | Bishop's Stortford | 4                         | 2                           | 15                        | 4                          | 25    |
| Bramfield CC                        | Watton-at-Stone    | 1                         | -                           | -                         | -                          | 1     |
| Braughing CC                        | Watton-at-Stone    | 1                         | -                           | 2                         | -                          | 3     |
| Buntingford CC                      | Buntingford        | 2                         | -                           | 1                         | -                          | 3     |
| Datchworth CC                       | Buntingford        | 5                         | -                           | 6                         | -                          | 11    |
| Hare Street and Hormeads CC         | Buntingford        | 1                         | -                           | -                         | -                          | 1     |
| Hertford CC                         | Hertford, Ware     | 4                         | 1                           | 9                         | -                          | 14    |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Club                  | Analysis area      | No. of senior men's teams | No. of senior women's teams | No. of junior boys' teams | No. of junior girls' teams | Total      |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Hertingfordbury CC    | Hertford, Ware     | 1                         | -                           | -                         | -                          | 1          |
| Little Berkhamsted CC | Watton-at-Stone    | 2                         | -                           | -                         | -                          | 2          |
| Little Munden CC      | Buntingford        | 1                         | -                           | -                         | -                          | 1          |
| Sawbridgeworth CC     | Sawbridgeworth     | 3                         | -                           | 7                         | 1                          | 11         |
| St. Margaretsbury CC  | Hertford, Ware     | 4                         | 1                           | 6                         | 1                          | 12         |
| Tewin CC              | Watton-at-Stone    | 3                         | -                           | -                         | -                          | 3          |
| Thorley CC            | Bishop's Stortford | 3                         | -                           | -                         | -                          | 3          |
| Ware CC               | Sawbridgeworth     | 2                         | -                           | -                         | -                          | 2          |
| Watton-at-Stone CC    | Watton-at-Stone    | 2                         | -                           | -                         | -                          | 2          |
| <b>Total</b>          |                    | <b>50</b>                 | <b>4</b>                    | <b>48</b>                 | <b>6</b>                   | <b>108</b> |

As seen in the table below, the Hertford, Ware Analysis Area accommodates the most cricket demand with 34 teams (31%) identified. The areas with the least amount of cricket demand are the Sawbridgeworth and Watton-at-Stone with 13 teams (12%) each.

Table 6.12: Summary of number of competitive teams by analysis area

| Analysis area             | Senior men | Senior women | Junior boys | Junior girls | Total      |
|---------------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|------------|
| Bishop's Stortford        | 8          | 2            | 15          | 4            | 29         |
| Buntingford               | 12         | -            | 7           | -            | 19         |
| Hertford, Ware            | 14         | 2            | 17          | 1            | 34         |
| Sawbridgeworth            | 5          | -            | 7           | 1            | 13         |
| Watton-at-Stone           | 11         | -            | 2           | -            | 13         |
| <b>East Hertfordshire</b> | <b>50</b>  | <b>4</b>     | <b>48</b>   | <b>6</b>     | <b>108</b> |

### Participation trends

Throughout the District there are only two clubs that report some sort of increase in demand over the previous three years, Bengo CC, and Sawbridgeworth CC. Bengo CC has gained a second men's team two years ago and is taking on a new U9s team from its Dynamos and All-Stars sessions. It also details that it had its first all-girls colts' team despite only playing one game.

Sawbridgeworth CC has set up a separate girls' section which will require additional facilities for practical and safeguarding reasons. Its senior section is expanding to four teams (from three) on a Saturday in 2025 and due to the number of juniors coming through, expects that to further increase to five the following season. The Club is also looking to establish a women's team in the future to play league cricket. It explains how it is already struggling to accommodate all its training sessions at the Town Fields site.

At the other end of the scale Little Munden CC details how it nearly folded a few years ago but is managing to keep going with some new younger committee members helping. The Club did not express any future demand ambitions but confirm it has existed for over 100 years and does not want to fold.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Thorley CC, Tewin CC and Hertingfordbury CC have all experienced a decrease in membership with Thorley CC detailing a struggle particularly after COVID-19 to get junior players to return and gain new adult players. Hertingfordbury CC lost its seconds men's team two years ago due to low numbers and has not been able to renew the team since. Tewin CC experienced a decrease in its junior section although does not plan to try and increase membership.

## **Imported/exported demand**

Exported demand refers to teams that are currently accessing pitches for home fixtures outside of the study area, despite being registered in East Hertfordshire. Likewise, imported demand is demand from neighbouring authorities accessing pitches in East Hertfordshire to play competitive matches.

Regarding imported demand, Reed CC is accessing the pitch at Freman College every other Saturday from April through to September for its 3<sup>rd</sup> team. Reed CC is a North Hertfordshire team and has an agreement with the school where it can use the pitch and some ancillary facilities (when the school is not) in return for maintenance of the field.

Welwyn Garden City CC is also using the facilities at Aston CC on some Saturdays; however, the Club did not go into specifics about how often. It is based in Welwyn Hatfield.

There are several clubs from Uttlesford that currently travel into East Hertfordshire to access indoor cricket nets for training. Chrishall CC and Little Hallingbury CC access Leventhorpe School whilst Easton CC, Hatfield Broak Oak CC, Hockerill CC, Safron Walden CC and Stansted Hall & Elsenham CC access Herts & Essex Sports Centre and Farnham CC access Bishop's Stortford College.

It is important to note that while not in East Hertfordshire, Hockerill CC services some cricket demand from Bishop's Stortford. The Club lies on the border between Bishop's Stortford and Uttlesford and just falls into the latter's jurisdiction. The Club's site, which is in Uttlesford, has two cricket squares with 10 and seven wickets respectively and has seven teams playing currently, four men's and three boy's teams.

## **Additional activity**

The ECB run several initiatives across the Country which results in additional cricket demand and use of cricket facilities. Whilst these do not generally utilise grass wickets, they can impact upon availability when sessions are being held due to use of cricket outfield, making squares unusable during these periods. The most relevant initiatives currently being delivered are detailed below.

### **All Stars cricket**

In partnership with the ECB and Chance to Shine, cricket clubs can register to become an ECB All Stars Cricket Centre. Once registered, a club delivers programmes which introduce cricket to children aged from five to eight. Subsequently, this may lead to increased interest and demand for junior cricket at clubs. The programme seeks to achieve the following aims:

- ◀ Increase cricket activity for five- to eight-year-olds in the school and club environment.
- ◀ Develop consistency of message in both settings to aid transition.
- ◀ Improve generic movement skills for children, using cricket as the vehicle.
- ◀ Make it easier for new volunteers to support and deliver in the club environment.
- ◀ Use fun small-sided games to enthuse new children and volunteers to follow and play the game.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Dynamo's cricket

A key development area for the ECB in delivering on the outcomes of 'Inspiring Generations' will be the Dynamos programme for eight–11-year-olds. It plans on building on the significant growth of the All-Stars programme and will develop the pathway to retain juniors which progress.

Where All Stars seeks to engage children in cricket activity and learning the skills, Dynamo's seeks to engage children in learning how to play, introducing a modified softball format as competitive progression with a view to eventual transition through to hardball cricket.

The programme will be strongly linked to The Hundred, a short format competition which also launched in 2022. The table below details the 2023 participation figures.

Table 6.13: Summary of All Stars and Dynamos participation

| Club                  | All Stars participation figures (2023) | Dynamos participation figures (2023) |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Datchworth CC         | 50 participants                        | -                                    |
| Bengeo CC             | 65 participants                        | 35 participants                      |
| Ware CC               | 25 participants                        | 25 participants                      |
| St Margaretsbury CC   | 40 participants                        | -                                    |
| Buntingford CC        | 25 participants                        | 25 participants                      |
| Sawbridgeworth CC     | 80 participants                        | -                                    |
| Bishop's Stortford CC | 50 participants                        | -                                    |
| Hertford CC           | 70 participants                        | 50 participants                      |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>405 participants</b>                | <b>135 participants</b>              |

There are eight clubs currently delivering All Stars and four delivering Dynamos sessions. The highest level of All Stars and Dynamos participation can be seen at Hertford CC with a total of 70 All Stars participants and 50 Dynamos participants.

Braughing CC reports having delivered All Stars last year but has not continued this year.

## Softball cricket

Softball is an ECB initiative aimed at women and girls to increase female participation in cricket.

The aim of softball cricket sections is enjoyment and participation, without pads, a hardball, a heavy bat and limited rules. Sessions are generally played on the outfield of a square and follow a festival format with each session running for a maximum of two and half hours, shorter than traditional formats.

During consultation none of the responding clubs discussed running any women's softball sessions, as detailed above.

## Chance to Shine

Chance to Shine is a national charity that aims to give all children the opportunity to play, learn and develop through cricket. It believes that cricket can help to develop the personal, social and physical skills of the 500,000 children that are worked with every year.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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It works in schools to provide children with their first experience of cricket, whilst it has also developed Chance to Shine Street. This is a format of the sport played with a tapeball, targeting children and young adults in inner-city areas and with matches lasting just 20-minutes. The following seven schools have received a whole school chance to shine programme:

- ◀ Hertingfordbury Cowper Primary School.
- ◀ Hertford St Andrew CofE Primary School.
- ◀ Morgans Primary School & Nursery.
- ◀ Abel Smith School.
- ◀ Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School.
- ◀ St Mary's Voluntary Controlled Church of England Junior School.
- ◀ Wareside Church of England Primary School.

### Other usage

Little Hadham CC is currently only playing friendly games in East Hertfordshire. The Club used to have its own site but now uses Thorley CC as a main base.

Sawbridgeworth CC states that it hosts finals day and the occasional county game at its site. Whilst Datchworth CC host North Hertfordshire regional cup games on two Sunday afternoons and Herts over 60s spread over two or three Tuesday afternoons throughout the season.

St Margaretsbury CC rent a square to Comilla Warriors CC every Sunday. Whilst Bayford & Hertford Nondescripts CC host Hertfordshire Youth on Sundays, Hertfordshire over 60s midweek and Bayford veterans also midweek. The Club did not divulge specifics into how often each team used the facilities.

### Disability cricket

Cricket is an inclusive sport by its nature; a sport that many people play, follow, and have a passion for, for life. Across England and Wales, the ECB wish to support cricket clubs to open their gates and deliver cricket opportunities for those with disabilities. The Disability Cricket Champion Club Programme will support cricket clubs through guidance, resource, and equipment, enabling them to welcome individuals with additional needs and varying abilities to support them to play, follow, officiate, and volunteer. Creating a truly equitable club game and providing fantastic new opportunities for cricketers and for the Champion Clubs.

There are currently no disability champion clubs within East Hertfordshire, however, it should be noted that Bishop's Stortford CC used to be. Currently the nearest disability club champion is Hatfield Hyde which is in Welwyn Garden City.

### Future demand

Future demand can be defined in two ways, through club ambitions and using population forecasts.

#### Population growth

Based on population projections to 2043 (the period to which this assessment projects population based future demand), Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator (PPC) can estimate the likely additional demand for grass cricket pitches that will arise from any growth.



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Using the current and future populations in each of the relevant age groups together with the current team numbers, team generation rates (TGRs) have been established to understand how much growth is required to establish one new team.

For reference total current population in 2024 of 150,158 will increase to 162,871 by 2043. The table below shows the number of new teams generated by the new population and the requisite match equivalent sessions.

Table 6.14: Summary of population growth

| Age group        | Team generation rate | No. of new teams generated by the new population | No. of new teams generated by the new population | Peak time | Average games for age group | MES per season <sup>14</sup> |
|------------------|----------------------|--|--|-----------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Men (18-55yrs)   | 1:648                | 3.92   | 3  | Saturday  | 12                          | 36                           |
| Women (18-55yrs) | 1:9,020              | 0.30   | 0  | Sunday    | 12                          | 0                            |
| Boys (7-18yrs)   | 1:251                | 3.63   | 3  | Midweek   | 6                           | 18                           |
| Girls (7-18yrs)  | 1:3,810              | 0.22   | 0  | Midweek   | 6                           | 0                            |

The total amount of future growth is anticipated to equate to three senior men's and three junior boys' teams. Once the figures are broken down into analysis areas this potential growth in demand decreases to one junior boys' team in the Bishop's Stortford Analysis Area and one senior men's and one junior boys' team in the Hertford, Ware Analysis Area.

The population projection only accounts for ONS based projections of growth, it does not account for the significant additional growth associated with planned new developments such as Gilston.

## Participation growth

Through consultation, five clubs in East Hertfordshire have plans to increase the number of teams they currently provide, by a total of eight teams. To caveat this one of the clubs did not detail how many new teams it wishes to acquire. Details of a breakdown of this potential growth is listed in the table below.

Table 6.15: Future demand expressed by clubs (in teams)

| Club                  | Analysis area      | Senior men's | Senior women's | Junior boys | Junior girls |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| Bishop's Stortford CC | Bishop's Stortford | -            | -              | -           | -            |
| Braughing CC          | Bishop's Stortford | -            | -              | 1           | -            |
| Datchworth CC         | Buntingford        | 1            | -              | -           | -            |
| Hertford CC           | Hertford, Ware     | -            | -              | -           | 2            |
| Sawbridgeworth CC     | Sawbridgeworth     | 1            | -              | 3           | -            |
|                       | <b>Total</b>       | <b>2</b>     | <b>-</b>       | <b>4</b>    | <b>2</b>     |

St Margaretsbury CC reports aspiring to add another Sunday team but has not yet put anything in motion to see this happen.

<sup>14</sup> Two teams require one pitch to account for playing on a home and away basis; therefore, one team accounts to 0.5 match equivalent sessions on their relevant pitch type.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Future demand summary

In summary, future demand is calculated at this stage using ONS population forecasts and equates to one senior men's and two junior boys' teams. A scenario exploring how future demand through club ambitions will impact the supply and demand analysis will be included in the forthcoming Strategy.

### Peak time demand

An analysis of match play identifies that peak time demand for senior cricket in East Hertfordshire is Saturday, although several teams also play on a Sunday including senior women's teams. As such, both are considered within the supply and demand analysis later in the section. For junior cricket, peak time is midweek.

## 6.4: Capacity analysis

Capacity analysis for cricket is measured on a seasonal rather than a weekly basis. This is due to playability (as only one match is generally played per square per day at weekends or weekday evening) and because wickets are rotated throughout the season to reduce wear and tear and to allow for repair.

The capacity of a square to accommodate matches is driven by the number and quality of wickets. This section of the report therefore presents the current pitch stock available for cricket and illustrates the number of competitive match equivalent sessions per season per square that is available and that currently takes place.

For good quality squares, capacity is five matches per grass wicket per season, whilst for a standard quality square, capacity is four matches per wicket per season. For poor quality squares, no capacity is considered to exist as such provision is not deemed safe for play.

The number of matches played by each team has been derived from consultation with the clubs. Where consultation was not possible, or where the level of play was not made clear, an assumption has been made that all senior teams play between 10 and 12 home matches per year and all junior teams play between four and eight matches per year depending on their age and level of competition.

The above is used to allocate capacity ratings as follows:

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Potential capacity</b> | Play is below the level the site could sustain |
| <b>At capacity</b>        | Play matches the level the site can sustain    |
| <b>Overused</b>           | Play exceeds the level the site can sustain    |

The capacity analysis assumes that all clubs rotate their wickets evenly. However, this may not be the case at all sites, with central wickets potentially used more commonly than outer wickets that are closer to a boundary, especially for senior matches. The idea of this is to showcase what the capacity is or could be if best practice is followed for the whole square, rather than doing it on a wicket-by-wicket basis.

Please note that NTPs have been discounted from the analysis by means of not distorting the findings. This is because no NTPs are currently being used more than their recommended capacity, which is 60 match equivalent sessions per season (0 match equivalent sessions when poor quality). With no NTPs being overused, this translates to overall actual spare capacity for junior play.

However, this is not considered to be actual spare capacity for senior weekend cricket due to league requirements generally not allowing usage.

## **EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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Regarding midweek capacity, a maximum capacity rating of 36 match equivalent has been set for one square. This is calculated on the understanding that a square is to be rested at least two days during the week in order to enable necessary maintenance and reduce overplay. Therefore, on a home and away basis of three nights a week, a square has been set the capacity of six sessions per week for midweek play, multiplied by six (the average number of matches a junior team plays). Any square showing potential spare capacity for midweek demand shall be allocated six match equivalent sessions of actual spare capacity, due to the fewer number of fixtures within a junior calendar.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 6.16: Capacity analysis of community available grass cricket squares

| Site ID | Site name  | Analysis area    | Club users   | No. of squares | Square quality | No. of grass wickets | Capacity (MES per season) | Actual play (MES per season) | Capacity rating (MES per season) | Potential spare capacity for senior cricket? (Saturday) | Potential spare capacity for senior cricket? (Sunday) | Potential spare capacity for junior cricket? (Midweek) |
|---------|--|------------------|--|----------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 6       | Aston Cricket Club (Herts)                         | Buntingford      | Aston Cricket Club<br>Tewin Cricket Club                       | 1              | Standard       | 6                    | 24                        | 15                           | 9                                | No  | No  | Yes  |
| 12      | Bengeo Sports Ground                               | Hertford, Ware   | Bengeo Cricket Club  | 1              | Standard       | 8                    | 32                        | 31                           | 1                                | No  | No  | No   |
| 21      | Bramfield Playing Field                            | Watton-at-Stone  | Bramfield Cricket Club   | 1              | Poor           | 6                    | 0                         | 6                            | 6                                | No  | No  | No   |
| 22      | Braughing Playing Fields                           | Bishop Stortford | Braughing Cricket Club   | 1              | Standard       | 8                    | 32                        | 17                           | 15                               | Yes   | Yes   | Yes  |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club                             | Buntingford      | Datchworth Cricket Club  | 2              | Poor           | 14                   | 0                         | 46                           | 46                               | No  | No  | No   |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club                             | Buntingford      | Datchworth Cricket Club  | 2              | Standard       | 11                   | 44                        | 34                           | 10                               | No  | No  | No   |
| 40      | Freman College                                     | Buntingford      | Reed Cricket Club  | 1              | Standard       | 8                    | 32                        | 7                            | 25                               | Yes   | Yes   | Yes  |
| 48      | Hertford Cricket Club                              | Hertford, Ware   | Hertford Cricket Club  | 2              | Good           | 15                   | 75                        | 62                           | 13                               | No  | Yes   | Yes  |
| 48      | Hertford Cricket Club                              | Hertford, Ware   | Hertford Cricket Club  | 2              | Standard       | 8                    | 32                        | 38                           | 6                                | No  | No  | No   |
| 55      | Hertingfordbury Recreation Ground                  | Hertford, Ware   | Hertingfordbury Cricket Club                                   | 1              | Standard       | 9                    | 36                        | 8                            | 28                               | Yes   | Yes   | Yes  |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School                                 | Sawbridgeworth   | Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club                                    | 1              | Poor           | 9                    | 0                         | 28                           | 28                               | No  | No  | No   |
| 63      | Little Berkhamsted Recreation Ground               | Watton-at-Stone  | Little Berkhamsted Cricket Club                                | 1              | Standard       | 8                    | 32                        | 21                           | 11                               | No  | Yes   | Yes  |
| 64      | Little Munden Cricket Club                         | Buntingford      | Little Munden Cricket Club                                     | 1              | Standard       | 4                    | 16                        | 9                            | 7                                | No  | No  | Yes  |
| 72      | Norfolk Road Playing Fields (Buntingford MUGA)     | Buntingford      | Buntingford Cricket Club<br>Hare Street & Hormead Cricket Club | 1              | Standard       | 8                    | 32                        | 21                           | 11                               | No  | No  | No   |
| 97      | St. Margaretsbury Sport & Social Club              | Hertford, Ware   | St. Margaretsbury Cricket Club<br>Comilla Warriors             | 2              | Good           | 18                   | 90                        | 58                           | 32                               | No  | No  | Yes  |
| 97      | St. Margaretsbury Sport & Social Club              | Hertford, Ware   | St. Margaretsbury Cricket Club                                 | 2              | Good           | 8                    | 40                        | 34                           | 6                                | No  | No  | Yes  |
| 100     | Tewin Recreation Ground                            | Watton-at-Stone  | Tewin Cricket Club   | 1              | Standard       | 10                   | 40                        | 17                           | 23                               | No  | Yes   | Yes  |
| 103     | The Bishops Stortford Sports Trust                 | Bishop Stortford | Bishop's Stortford CC  | 3              | Standard       | 6                    | 24                        | 30                           | 6                                | No  | No  | No   |
| 103     | The Bishops Stortford Sports Trust                 | Bishop Stortford | Bishop's Stortford CC  | 3              | Good           | 13                   | 65                        | 70                           | 5                                | No  | No  | No   |
| 103     | The Bishops Stortford Sports Trust                 | Bishop Stortford | Bishop's Stortford CC  | 3              | Good           | 12                   | 60                        | 57                           | 3                                | No  | No  | No   |
| 109     | Thorley Cricket Club                               | Bishop Stortford | Thorley Cricket Club<br>Little Hadham Cricket Club             | 1              | Good           | 15                   | 75                        | 24                           | 51                               | No  | Yes   | Yes  |
| 111     | Thundridge Sports Ground                           | Buntingford      | Formerly Thundridge CC   | 1              | Standard       | 8                    | 32                        | 0                            | 32                               | Yes   | Yes   | Yes  |
| 112     | Town Fields  | Sawbridgeworth   | Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club                                    | 1              | Standard       | 14                   | 56                        | 54                           | 2                                | No  | No  | No   |
| 115     | Ware CC  | Sawbridgeworth   | Ware Cricket Club  | 1              | Standard       | 14                   | 56                        | 17                           | 39                               | No  | Yes   | Yes  |
| 126     | Allenburys Sport & Social Club                     | Hertford, Ware   | Allenburys and County Hall Cricket Club                        | 1              | Poor           | 11                   | 0                         | 16                           | 16                               | No  | No  | No   |
| 127     | Walkern Sports & Community Centre                  | Buntingford      | Ardeley Walkern Cricket Club                                   | 1              | Standard       | 6                    | 24                        | 8                            | 16                               | Yes   | Yes   | Yes  |
| 128     | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Watton-at-Stone  | Watton-at-Stone Cricket Club                                   | 1              | Standard       | 8                    | 32                        | 15                           | 17                               | Yes   | Yes   | Yes  |
| 129     | Aspenden Standon & Puckeridge Cricket Club         | Buntingford      | Aspenden, Standon and Puckeridge Cricket Club                  | 1              | Standard       | 4                    | 16                        | 6                            | 10                               | No  | No  | Yes  |

**EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL:  
PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT**

| Site ID | Site name             | Analysis area    | Club users                        | No. of squares | Square quality | No. of grass wickets | Capacity (MES per season) | Actual play (MES per season) | Capacity rating (MES per season) | Potential spare capacity for senior cricket? (Saturday) | Potential spare capacity for senior cricket? (Sunday) | Potential spare capacity for junior cricket? (Midweek) |
|---------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 130     | Bayford & Hertford CC | Watton-at-Stone  | Bayford and Hertford Cricket Club | 1              | Standard       | 10                   | 40                        | 15                           | 25                               | No  | Yes   | Yes  |
| 136     | Stocking Pelham CC    | Bishop Stortford | Albury Cricket Club               | 1              | Standard       | 4                    | 16                        | 7                            | 9                                | No  | No  | Yes  |

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Actual spare capacity

Although a large amount of spare capacity is identified, it is not as simple as to aggregate this into a general oversupply of cricket squares. Despite 22 squares displaying some form of spare capacity, only seven are available for further senior cricket activity on a Saturday, whilst 12 sites are available for further Sunday play, as shown below.

Table 6.17: Site by site breakdown of spare capacity (Saturday and Sunday demand)

| Site ID | Site name  | Analysis area    | Spare capacity (MES) | No. of teams that could be accommodated on Saturday | No. of teams that could be accommodated on Sunday |
|---------|--|------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| 22      | Braughing Playing Fields                           | Bishop Stortford | 15                   | 1   | 1   |
| 40      | Freman College                                     | Buntingford      | 25                   | 1   | 1   |
| 48      | Hertford Cricket Club                              | Hertford, Ware   | 13                   | -   | 1   |
| 55      | Hertingfordbury Recreation Ground                  | Hertford, Ware   | 28                   | 1   | 2   |
| 100     | Tewin Recreation Ground                            | Watton-at-Stone  | 23                   | -   | 1   |
| 109     | Thorley Cricket Club                               | Bishop Stortford | 51                   | -   | 1   |
| 111     | Thundridge Sports Ground                           | Buntingford      | 32                   | 2   | 2   |
| 115     | Ware CC  | Sawbridgeworth   | 39                   | -   | 2   |
| 127     | Walkern Sports & Community Centre                  | Buntingford      | 16                   | 1   | 1   |
| 128     | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Watton-at-Stone  | 17                   | 1   | 1   |
| 130     | Bayford & Hertford CC                              | Watton-at-Stone  | 25                   | -   | 2   |
| -       | -  | <b>Total</b>     | <b>284</b>           | <b>7 teams</b>                                      | <b>15 teams</b>                                   |

For both Saturday and Sunday demand, total spare capacity equates to 284 matches equivalent sessions per season. When applying this to Saturday peak time cricket, actual spare capacity totals 84 match equivalent sessions per season. This is calculated by using the average number of matches played per season by senior teams (12) multiplied by the number of additional teams that can be fielded at peak time (two teams per square that is available). The entirety of the spare capacity at each site is not used as this number of matches may not be able to be accommodated at peak time.

Actual spare capacity is identified across four of the five analysis areas, with the Buntingford Analysis Area accommodating most actual spare capacity each totalling 48 match equivalent sessions per season.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 6.18: Actual spare capacity for senior cricket (Saturday) by analysis area

| Analysis area             | Actual spare capacity (MES per season) |
|---------------------------|--|
| Bishop's Stortford        | 12                                     |
| Buntingford               | 48                                     |
| Hertford, Ware            | 12                                     |
| Sawbridgeworth            | -                                      |
| Watton-at-Stone           | 12                                     |
| <b>East Hertfordshire</b> | <b>84</b>                              |

All remaining squares are used to capacity on Saturdays, either because two teams are already assigned to them as a home venue or because the level of spare capacity is insufficient to accommodate an additional team without overplay being created or exacerbated (at least 12 match equivalent sessions per season of spare capacity is required).

For Sunday cricket, actual spare capacity is provided on 11 squares, as can be seen by Table 6.17, totalling 180 match equivalent sessions per season, with all five analysis areas showing some level of actual spare capacity. This is highest in the Buntingford Analysis Area as shown below.

Table 6.19: Actual spare capacity for senior cricket (Sunday) by analysis area

| Analysis area             | Actual spare capacity (MES per season) |
|---------------------------|--|
| Bishop's Stortford        | 24                                     |
| Buntingford               | 60                                     |
| Hertford, Ware            | 36                                     |
| Sawbridgeworth            | 24                                     |
| Watton-at-Stone           | 36                                     |
| <b>East Hertfordshire</b> | <b>180</b>                             |

Sunday capacity provides capacity for additional senior men's demand to be accommodated outside of the peak period but still within a competitive format. Moreover, it provides peak time availability for senior women's cricket (both hardball and softball) and for some junior demand, particularly older age groups.

For junior midweek cricket, 18 squares have actual spare capacity. Working on the basis that a square can accommodate six midweek teams, and where actual spare capacity is present, six match equivalent sessions per season is accounted for, using this methodology, it can be calculated that 368 match equivalent sessions if actual spare capacity is present which can accommodate the growth of a further 48 junior teams.

Table 6.20: Site by site breakdown of spare capacity (midweek demand)

| Site ID | Site name                         | Analysis area    | Spare capacity (MES) | No. of teams that could be accommodated midweek |
|---------|-----------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|---|
| 6       | Aston Cricket Club (Herts)        | Buntingford      | 9                    | 1 team  |
| 22      | Braughing Playing Fields          | Bishop Stortford | 15                   | 2 teams   |
| 40      | Freman College                    | Buntingford      | 25                   | 4 teams   |
| 48      | Hertford Cricket Club             | Hertford, Ware   | 13                   | 2 teams   |
| 55      | Hertingfordbury Recreation Ground | Hertford, Ware   | 28                   | 4 teams   |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site name  | Analysis area    | Spare capacity (MES) | No. of teams that could be accommodated midweek |
|---------|--|------------------|----------------------|---|
| 63      | Little Berkhamsted Recreation Ground               | Watton-at-Stone  | 11                   | 1 team  |
| 64      | Little Munden Cricket Club                         | Buntingford      | 7                    | 1 team  |
| 97      | St. Margaretsbury Sport & Social Club              | Hertford, Ware   | 32                   | 5 teams   |
| 100     | Tewin Recreation Ground                            | Watton-at-Stone  | 23                   | 3 teams   |
| 109     | Thorley Cricket Club                               | Bishop Stortford | 51                   | 6 teams   |
| 111     | Thundridge Sports Ground                           | Buntingford      | 32                   | 5 teams   |
| 115     | Ware CC  | Sawbridgeworth   | 39                   | 6 teams   |
| 127     | Walkern Sports & Community Centre                  | Buntingford      | 16                   | 2 teams   |
| 128     | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Watton-at-Stone  | 17                   | 2 teams   |
| 129     | Aspenden Standon & Puckeridge Cricket Club         | Buntingford      | 10                   | 1 team  |
| 130     | Bayford & Hertford CC                              | Watton-at-Stone  | 25                   | 2 teams   |
| 136     | Stocking Pelham CC                                 | Bishop Stortford | 9                    | 1 team  |
| -       | -  | <b>Total</b>     | <b>368</b>           | <b>48 teams</b>                                 |

Table 6.21: Actual spare capacity for junior cricket (midweek) by analysis area

| Analysis area             | Actual spare capacity (MES per season) |
|---------------------------|--|
| Bishop's Stortford        | 54                                     |
| Buntingford               | 84                                     |
| Hertford, Ware            | 66                                     |
| Sawbridgeworth            | 36                                     |
| Watton-at-Stone           | 48                                     |
| <b>East Hertfordshire</b> | <b>288</b>                             |

The reason for midweek capacity being higher than the capacity for weekend cricket is because fixtures can be split across numerous days. Actual spare capacity for midweek demand is calculated by using the average number of matches played per season by juniors' teams (six) multiplied by the number of additional teams that can be fielded at peak time (two teams per day for three days of play per square that is available).

The entirety of the spare capacity at each site is not used as this number of matches may not actually be able to be accommodated at peak time. Clubs with a significant junior membership base tend to struggle for capacity, such as Bishop's Stortford CC.

### Overplay

Overplay translates to a site accommodating more demand than it can sustain. While it is possible to sustain certain minimal levels of overplay providing that a regular, sufficient maintenance regime is in place, a resolution is recommended to ensure that there is no detrimental effect on quality over time.

There are seven squares across six sites identified as being overplayed in East Hertfordshire as detailed in the table overleaf.



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Overplay totals 113 match equivalent sessions per season. The highest amount of overplay is in the Buntingford Analysis Area with 46 match equivalent sessions per season and is all located at Datchworth Sports Club.

The identified overplay at Bramfield Playing Field, Datchworth Sports Club, Leventhorpe School and Allenburys Sport & Social Club is due to the sites having poor quality squares, meaning any demand taking place is immediately contributing towards overplay. The remaining sites are overplayed due to the quantity of demand being accommodated on the squares, with clubs such as Bishop's Stortford CC and Hertford CC having high demand.

Table 6.22: Summary of overplay

| Site ID | Site name                          | Club                                    | Analysis area    | Overplay (MES per season) |
|---------|------------------------------------|---|------------------|---------------------------|
| 21      | Bramfield Playing Field            | Bramfield Cricket Club                  | Watton-at-Stone  | 6                         |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club             | Datchworth Cricket Club                 | Buntingford      | 46                        |
| 48      | Hertford Cricket Club              | Hertford Cricket Club                   | Hertford, Ware   | 6                         |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School                 | Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club             | Sawbridgeworth   | 28                        |
| 103     | The Bishops Stortford Sports Trust | Bishop's Stortford CC                   | Bishop Stortford | 5                         |
| 103     | The Bishops Stortford Sports Trust | Bishop's Stortford CC                   | Bishop Stortford | 6                         |
| 126     | Allenburys Sport & Social Club     | Allenburys and County Hall Cricket Club | Hertford, Ware   | 16                        |
| -       | -                                  | -                                       | <b>Total</b>     | <b>113</b>                |

Table 6.23: Summary of overplay by analysis area

| Analysis area             | Overplay (MES per season) |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Bishop's Stortford        | 11                        |
| Buntingford               | 46                        |
| Hertford, Ware            | 22                        |
| Sawbridgeworth            | 28                        |
| Watton-at-Stone           | 6                         |
| <b>East Hertfordshire</b> | <b>113</b>                |

Although it is possible to sustain certain, minimal levels of overplay providing that a regular, sufficient maintenance regime is in place, a reduction in play is recommended on overplayed squares to ensure there is no detrimental effect on quality over time.

## 6.5: Supply and demand analysis

Consideration must be given to the extent to which current provision can accommodate current and future demand for both senior and junior cricket. This section therefore looks at actual spare capacity on grass wicket squares considered against overplay and identified future demand. Match equivalent sessions for future demand are calculated using the average number of matches played per season (12 matches for senior teams and six matches for junior teams).

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

As previously presented, future demand is calculated using population forecasts and team generation rates (using Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator). On this basis, it has been forecast that East Hertfordshire will see growth of one senior men's and two junior boys' teams between now and 2043.

When applied in match equivalent sessions, this equates to 12 per season for Saturday demand and 12 per season for midweek demand. As detailed earlier, total future demand has been equated to the entirety of East Hertfordshire.

### Senior cricket supply and demand analysis (Saturday)

The table below looks at the supply and demand balance during the peak period for senior men's cricket (Saturday). For actual spare capacity, please note that this is converted from the number of match equivalent sessions identified above to the number of match equivalent sessions that could feasibly be utilised by a growth in demand (shown in Table 6.18). This is calculated by using the average number of matches played per season by senior teams (12) multiplied by the number of additional teams that can be fielded at peak time (two teams per square that is available).

Table 6.24: Supply and demand analysis of cricket squares for senior cricket (Saturday) in match play equivalent sessions per season

| Analysis area             | Actual spare capacity | Overplay   | Current total | Future demand | Total     |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|
| Bishop's Stortford        | 12                    | 11         | 1             | -             | 1         |
| Buntingford               | 48                    | 46         | 2             | -             | 2         |
| Hertford, Ware            | 12                    | 22         | 10            | 12            | 22        |
| Sawbridgeworth            | -                     | 28         | 28            | -             | 28        |
| Watton-at-Stone           | 12                    | 6          | 6             | -             | 6         |
| <b>East Hertfordshire</b> | <b>84</b>             | <b>113</b> | <b>29</b>     | <b>12</b>     | <b>41</b> |

As seen in the table above, there is current overplay equating to 29 match equivalent sessions per season. When considering future demand of one additional senior team by 2043, total actual spare capacity is exacerbated to 41 match equivalent sessions per season.

### Senior cricket supply and demand analysis (Sunday)

The table below looks at the supply and demand balance for Sunday cricket, which is peak time for senior women's demand but also relevant to some senior men's and junior teams.

Table 6.25: Supply and demand analysis of cricket squares for senior cricket (Sunday) in match play equivalent sessions per season

| Analysis area             | Actual spare capacity | Overplay   | Current total | Future demand | Total     |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|
| Bishop's Stortford        | 24                    | 11         | 13            | -             | 13        |
| Buntingford               | 60                    | 46         | 14            | -             | 14        |
| Hertford, Ware            | 36                    | 22         | 14            | -             | 14        |
| Sawbridgeworth            | 24                    | 28         | 4             | -             | 4         |
| Watton-at-Stone           | 36                    | 6          | 30            | -             | 30        |
| <b>East Hertfordshire</b> | <b>180</b>            | <b>113</b> | <b>67</b>     | <b>-</b>      | <b>67</b> |

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

There is overall current spare capacity amounting to 67 match equivalent sessions per season, with only the Sawbridgeworth Analysis Area showing a shortfall. No future demand is identified through population growth, meaning no change takes place to the future capacity analysis.

## Junior cricket supply and demand analysis (midweek)

For the junior supply and demand analysis, actual spare capacity equates to the total number of additional junior teams that could be fielded on each available square (on the assumption that one square can accommodate six midweek teams), multiplied by six (the average number of matches a junior team plays). This is because junior demand at peak time is not limited to one day, although some capacity should be reserved for activity such as All Stars and Dynamos cricket.

Table 6.26: Supply and demand analysis of cricket squares for junior cricket in match play equivalent sessions per season

| Analysis area             | Actual spare capacity | Overplay   | Current total | Future demand | Total      |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| Bishop's Stortford        | 54                    | 11         | 43            | 6             | 37         |
| Buntingford               | 84                    | 46         | 38            | -             | 38         |
| Hertford, Ware            | 66                    | 22         | 44            | 6             | 38         |
| Sawbridgeworth            | 36                    | 28         | 8             | -             | 8          |
| Watton-at-Stone           | 48                    | 6          | 42            | -             | 42         |
| <b>East Hertfordshire</b> | <b>288</b>            | <b>113</b> | <b>175</b>    | <b>12</b>     | <b>163</b> |

There is currently overall spare capacity for midweek cricket amounting to 175 match equivalent sessions per season, with most of the actual spare capacity being present in the Buntingford Analysis Area. When accommodating for future demand, the growth of two junior teams by 2043 reduces actual spare capacity to 163 match equivalent sessions per season.

## 6.6: Conclusion

In summary, the broad position in East Hertfordshire is there is insufficient capacity for current demand across Saturday peak time cricket. This is a consequence of the 29 match equivalent sessions per week of overplay identified across seven sites. Overplay is caused by a combination of poor quality provision at sites such as Bramfield CC, and sheer quantity of demand at clubs such as Bishop's Stortford CC.

There is, however, enough provision to accommodate all current Sunday and midweek demand, notwithstanding the isolated shortfalls in the Bishop's Stortford Analysis Area on a Sunday.

There is currently no future demand identified for Sunday cricket and future demand does not affect the capacity at East Hertfordshire sites midweek either.

The Strategy will consider the role in which disused provision could potentially play in accommodating demand and alleviating current/future shortfalls.

A scenario exploring how future demand, through club aspirations of two senior men's, four junior boys' and two junior girls' team will affect the future capacity analysis will be included in the proceeding Strategy document.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## **Cricket – supply and demand summary**

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

## **Cricket – supply summary**

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

## **Cricket – demand summary**

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

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## PART 7: TENNIS COURTS

### 7.1: Introduction

The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) is the organisation responsible for the governance of tennis. It has recently restructured its strategic approach to target several national focus areas, with a priority on developing the sport at park sites and removing key barriers to participation in park and club sites.

In East Hertfordshire, the LTA is working with East Hertfordshire District Council to improve access to provision in parks. More detailed information on the LTA's ClubSpark, Rally and Gate Access are set out later in the report.

### Consultation

In total, there are 13 tennis clubs in East Hertfordshire. Of these, 12 responded to consultation requests, resulting in a response rate of 92%. The table below outlines club responses.

Table 7.1: Consultation responses

| Club name                             | Club response? |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Allenburys Sports & Social Club       | Yes            |
| Aston Lawn Tennis Club                | Yes            |
| Bishop's Stortford Lawn Tennis Club   | Yes            |
| Braughing Tennis Club                 | Yes            |
| Datchworth Tennis Club                | Yes            |
| Hertford Lawn Tennis Club             | Yes            |
| Legends Tennis Centre                 | Yes            |
| Much Hadham Tennis Club               | Yes            |
| Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club            | Yes            |
| St Margaretsbury Tennis Club          | No             |
| Standon & Puckeridge Lawn Tennis Club | Yes            |
| Tewin Tennis Club                     | Yes            |
| Watton at Stone Tennis Club           | Yes            |

### 7.2: Supply

There are 135 tennis courts identified in East Hertfordshire across 31 sites. Of these, 116 courts are categorised as being available for community use, located at 28 sites and 19 courts are identified as unavailable for community use, located at three sites.

Note that courts are classified as being available for community use if they are deemed to be easily accessible to the general population, either via pay and play or through a membership at a club (or a combination of both). All remaining courts identified as being unavailable are located at school sites, Heath Mount School, Richard Hale School, or St Edmunds College & Prep School.

The Bishop's Stortford Analysis Area contains the highest number of courts available to the community (49). All courts located in Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth Analysis Areas are available for community use. A full breakdown can be seen in Table 7.2.

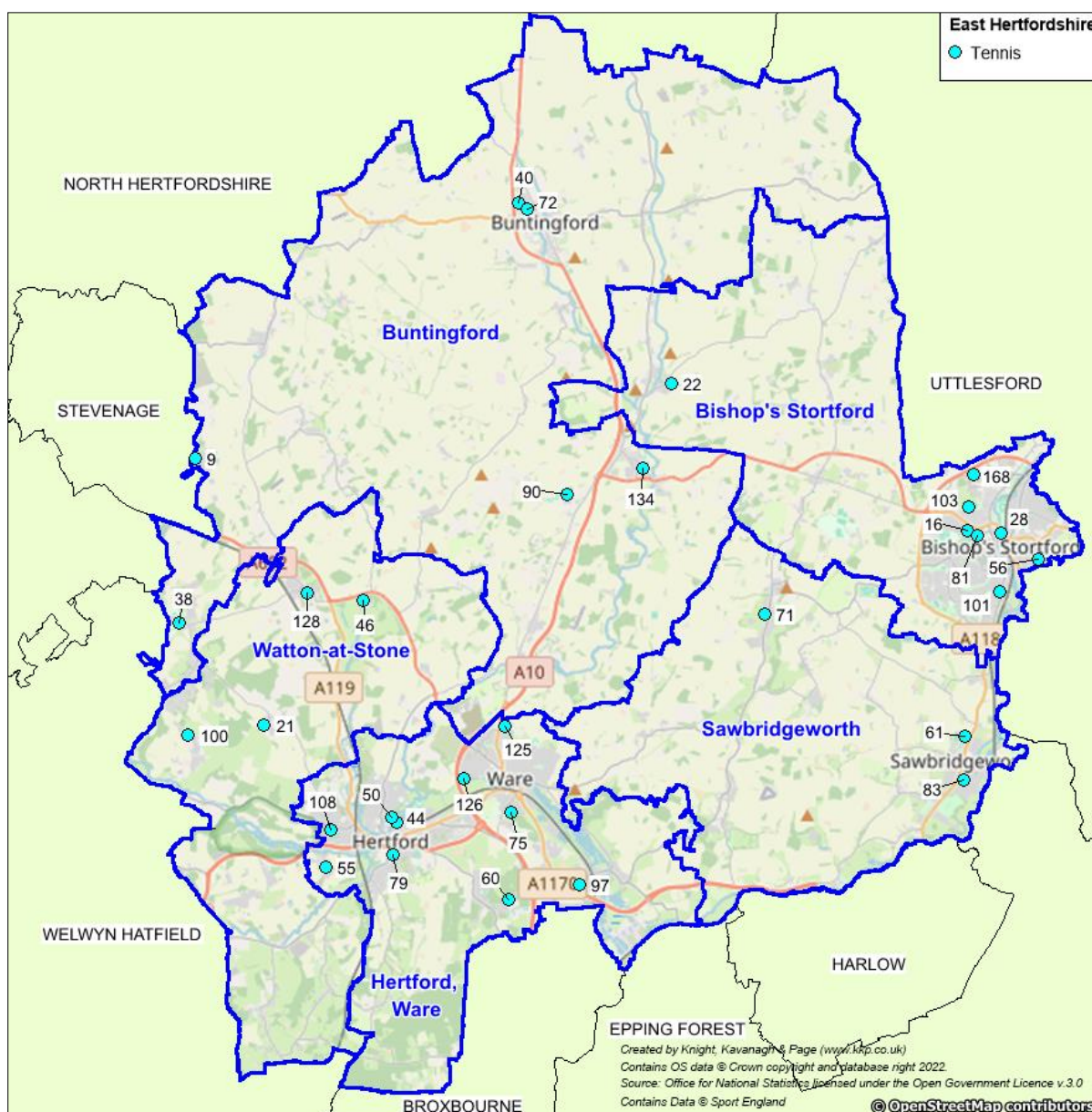
# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 7.2: Summary of the number of courts by analysis area

| Analysis area             | No. of courts available for community use | No. of courts unavailable for community use |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Bishop's Stortford        | 49  | 0   |
| Buntingford               | 13  | 6   |
| Hertford, Ware            | 30  | 7   |
| Sawbridgeworth            | 18  | 0   |
| Watton-at-Stone           | 6   | 6   |
| <b>East Hertfordshire</b> | <b>116</b>                                | <b>19</b>                                   |

Figure 7.1 below shows the location of the courts servicing East Hertfordshire, regardless of community use. For a key to the map, see Table 7.3.

Figure 7.1: Overview of tennis court locations



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## **Disused provision**

There is one site within the District accommodating three disused tennis courts, located at Marriot Leisure Centre (Hanbury Manor).

At the time of the site assessment at County Hall, the site was closed and was an active building site. Consequently, the courts have been discounted from total supply figures.

## **Potential future changes to supply**

Legends Tennis Centre has previously explored the idea of replacing one of its existing tennis courts with a padel court. It also states its plans to change current court surfaces to macadam to improve drainage.

Hartham Leisure Centre confirms that it plans to change its tennis court to a padel court in partnership with the operator of the site, Everyone Active. Additionally, the small sided football pitches are not well used, and one could also be converted to padel. However, no planning permission has been sought for this.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 7.3: Summary of tennis courts in East Hertfordshire

| Site ID | Site name                              | Analysis area      | Management     | Community use? | No. of courts | Sports lighting? | Court type      | Court quality |
|---------|--|--------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 9       | Aston Tennis Courts                    | Buntingford        | Sports Club    | Yes            | 2             | No               | Macadam         | Good          |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College             | Bishop's Stortford | Education      | Yes            | 8             | Yes (4)          | Macadam         | Good          |
| 21      | Bramfield Playing Field                | Watton-at-Stone    | Parish Council | Yes            | 1             | No               | Shale           | Poor          |
| 22      | Braughing Playing Fields               | Bishop's Stortford | Sports Club    | Yes            | 2             | Yes              | Macadam         | Good          |
| 28      | Castle Park Tennis Courts              | Bishop's Stortford | Sports Club    | Yes            | 3             | No               | Macadam         | Good          |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club                 | Buntingford        | Sports Club    | Yes            | 2             | No               | Macadam         | Good          |
| 40      | Freman College                         | Buntingford        | Education      | Yes            | 3             | No               | Shale           | Poor          |
| 44      | Hartham Leisure Centre                 | Hertford, Ware     | Other          | Yes            | 1             | Yes              | Macadam         | Poor          |
| 46      | Heath Mount School                     | Watton-at-Stone    | Education      | No             | 6             | Yes              | Artificial turf | Standard      |
| 50      | Hertford Lawn Tennis Club              | Hertford, Ware     | Sports Club    | Yes            | 3             | Yes              | Artificial turf | Good          |
| 50      | Hertford Lawn Tennis Club              | Hertford, Ware     | Sports Club    | Yes            | 3             | Yes              | Polymeric       | Good          |
| 55      | Hertingfordbury Recreation Ground      | Hertford, Ware     | Council        | Yes            | 1             | No               | Macadam         | Standard      |
| 56      | Herts & Essex Sports Centre            | Bishop's Stortford | Education      | Yes            | 6             | Yes              | Shale           | Standard      |
| 60      | Legends Tennis Centre                  | Hertford, Ware     | Education      | Yes            | 8             | No               | Polymeric       | Good          |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School                     | Sawbridgeworth     | Education      | Yes            | 5             | Yes              | Polymeric       | Good          |
| 71      | Much Hadham Tennis Club                | Sawbridgeworth     | Sports Club    | Yes            | 3             | Yes              | Macadam         | Good          |
| 72      | Norfolk Road Playing Fields            | Buntingford        | Town Council   | Yes            | 3             | Yes              | Artificial Turf | Good          |
| 75      | Presdales School                       | Hertford, Ware     | Education      | Yes            | 4             | Yes              | Macadam         | Good          |
| 79      | Richard Hale School                    | Hertford, Ware     | Education      | No             | 7             | No               | Shale           | Poor          |
| 81      | St Mary's Catholic School              | Bishop's Stortford | Education      | Yes            | 6             | No               | Shale           | Poor          |
| 83      | Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club             | Sawbridgeworth     | Sports Club    | Yes            | 3             | Yes              | Artificial turf | Standard      |
| 83      | Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club             | Sawbridgeworth     | Sports Club    | Yes            | 2             | Yes              | Clay            | Good          |
| 83      | Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club             | Sawbridgeworth     | Sports Club    | Yes            | 1             | No               | Clay            | Good          |
| 90      | St Edmunds College & Prep School       | Buntingford        | Education      | No             | 6             | No               | Macadam         | Standard      |
| 97      | St. Margaretsbury Sports & Social Club | Hertford, Ware     | Sports Club    | Yes            | 3             | Yes              | Artificial turf | Good          |



## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site name  | Analysis area      | Management     | Community use? | No. of courts | Sports lighting? | Court type      | Court quality |
|---------|--|--------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 100     | Tewin Recreation Ground                            | Watton-at-Stone    | Sports Club    | Yes            | 2             | No               | Artificial turf | Good          |
| 101     | The Bishop's Stortford High School                 | Bishop's Stortford | Education      | Yes            | 4             | Yes              | Shale           | Good          |
| 103     | The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust                | Bishop's Stortford | Sports Club    | Yes            | 2             | Yes              | Clay            | Good          |
| 103     | The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust                | Bishop's Stortford | Sports Club    | Yes            | 5             | Yes              | Artificial turf | Good          |
| 103     | The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust                | Bishop's Stortford | Sports Club    | Yes            | 3             | Yes              | Macadam         | Good          |
| 103     | The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust                | Bishop's Stortford | Sports Club    | Yes            | 6             | No               | Grass           | Standard      |
| 108     | The Sele School                                    | Hertford, Ware     | Education      | Yes            | 3             | Yes              | Shale           | Standard      |
| 125     | Wodson Park Sports Centre                          | Hertford, Ware     | Sports Club    | Yes            | 4             | Yes              | Macadam         | Good          |
| 126     | Allenburys Sports & Social Club                    | Hertford, Ware     | Sports Club    | Yes            | 4             | Yes              | Macadam         | Standard      |
| 128     | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Watton-at-Stone    | Parish Council | Yes            | 2             | Yes              | Macadam         | Good          |
| 128     | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Watton-at-Stone    | Parish Council | Yes            | 1             | Yes              | Macadam         | Standard      |
| 134     | Standon & Puckeridge Lawn Tennis Club              | Buntingford        | Sports Club    | Yes            | 3             | Yes              | Artificial turf | Good          |
| 168     | Avanti Grange Secondary School                     | Bishop's Stortford | Education      | Yes            | 4             | Yes              | Shale           | Standard      |

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Management

The table below highlights the management of tennis courts within East Hertfordshire.

Table 7.4: Tennis courts by management type (all courts)

| Community use? | No. of club | No. of town/parish council courts | No. of education courts | No. of other |
|----------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Available      | 56          | 8                                 | 51                      | 1            |
| Unavailable    | -           | -                                 | 19                      | -            |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>56</b>   | <b>8</b>                          | <b>70</b>               | <b>1</b>     |

Most community available tennis courts in East Hertfordshire are operated by sports clubs with 56 (41%) the rest are split between parish/town council sites with eight (6%), education sites, 51 (38%) or 'other' with one (1%). There are also 19 (14%) courts unavailable to use at education sites.

## Security of tenure

The table below outlines the current tenure position for the 13 tennis clubs across East Hertfordshire. This helps understand the long-term security of clubs and informs its ability to access various grants.

Table 7.5: Summary of club tenure arrangements

| Site ID | Site name                     | Club                          | Management  | Tenure  |
|---------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|---|
| 9       | Aston Tennis Courts           | Aston Lawn Tennis Club        | Sports Club | 25-year lease agreement from the Diocese of St Albans.  |
| 22      | Braughing Playing Fields      | Braughing Tennis Club         | Sports Club | The site is rented from the Village Trust.  |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club        | Datchworth Tennis Club        | Sports Club | Site owned by Datchworth Parish Council.  |
| 50      | Hertford Lawn Tennis Club     | Hertford Lawn Tennis Club     | Sports Club | Long term lease from East Hertfordshire District Council.   |
| 60      | Legends Tennis Centre         | Legends Tennis Centre         | Sports Club | 65-year lease with 55-years remaining. Leased from Haileybury College as an independent community benefit society.  |
| 71      | Much Hadham Tennis Club       | Much Hadham Tennis Club       | Sports Club | The Club belongs to a larger sports association trust which owns the site.  |
| 83      | Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club    | Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club    | Sports Club | Freehold owned.   |
| 97      | St. Margaretsbury Tennis Club | St. Margaretsbury Tennis Club | Sports Club | Club pays a long-term peppercorn lease for the land to the Trust as do the cricket and football teams at the site.  |
| 100     | Tewin Recreation Ground       | Tewin Tennis Club             | Sports Club | The site is owned by Tewin Parish Council and provided for the Club, with no cost to the club but they are required to provide money for upkeep of the pavilion close by. |

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site name  | Club                                  | Management  | Tenure   |
|---------|--|---------------------------------------|-------------|--|
| 103     | The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust                | Bishop's Stortford Lawn Tennis Club   | Sports Club | Grass courts are freehold but must be made public. The Sports Trust covers cricket, tennis and square. Tennis bought the clay and hard courts outright from the sports trust. Clubhouse is on a minimal lease with Bishop's Stortford Town Council. Secure tenure for whole site |
| 126     | Allenburys Sports & Social Club                    | Allenburys Sports & Social Club       | Sports Club | Lease agreement with a private landowner.  |
| 128     | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Watton at Stone Lawn Tennis Club      | Sports Club | The site is owned by the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council.   |
| 134     | Standon & Puckeridge Lawn Tennis Club              | Standon & Puckeridge Lawn Tennis Club | Sports Club | Site owned by the Parish Council.  |

## Court type

The most common outdoor tennis court surface in East Hertfordshire is macadam, with 42 courts (31%) identified across 13 sites. Artificial turf surfaces are the next most prominent surface with 31 courts (23%) across seven sites, followed by, shale surfaces, 34 (25%), polymeric, 20 (15%), grass, six (4%) and clay with two courts (1%) across 11 sites.

The estimated lifespan of a macadam court is 10 years, depending on the levels of use and maintenance regimes. To ensure courts can continue to be used beyond this time frame, it is recommended that a sinking fund is put into place for eventual refurbishment. This is also the case for artificial turf courts.

There are two air dome sites in East Hertfordshire located at Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust and Legends Tennis Centre. Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust cover its three polymeric courts in winter but take it down in summer. While Legends Tennis Centre has four polymeric courts under an air dome all year round. It is important to note that Legends Tennis Centre plan to convert its outdoor courts to macadam to improve drainage.

## Sports lighting

Courts with sports lighting enable use throughout the year and are identified by the LTA as being a key priority for growing participation nationally. The LTA reports that sports lighting allows for a 35% increase in available court time on an annual basis.

In East Hertfordshire, 79 of the 135 tennis courts are serviced by sports lighting, representing 59% of the provision. Of the 116 courts available for community use, 73 are sports lit (63%). The courts with sports lighting are located at:

- ◀ Allenburys Sports & Social Club.
- ◀ Avanti Grange Secondary School.
- ◀ Bishop's Stortford College.
- ◀ Braughing Playing Fields.
- ◀ Buntingford MUGA.
- ◀ Heath Mount School.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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- ◀ Hertford Lawn Tennis Club.
- ◀ Herts & Essex Sports Centre.
- ◀ Leventhorpe School.
- ◀ Much Hadham Tennis Club.
- ◀ Presdales School.
- ◀ Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club.
- ◀ St. Margaretsbury Tennis Club.
- ◀ Standon & Puckeridge Lawn Tennis Club.
- ◀ The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust.
- ◀ The Bishop's Stortford High School.
- ◀ The Sele School.
- ◀ Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground.
- ◀ Wodson Park Sports Centre.

Access to sports lighting enables clubs to accommodate more members and can therefore be beneficial. In East Hertfordshire nine of the 14 clubs have access to sports lit courts at each of the respective sites.

Legends Tennis Centre has LED lighting on its four courts in the air dome but no lights for the outdoor courts. The Club states it would like to have sports lighting for its outdoor courts.

At Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club there is sports lighting on five out of its six courts. However, it reports that the lighting is old, and it is the Club's priority to replace with LED lights.

Bishop's Stortford LTC has 10 out of its 16 courts sport lit, with the grass courts being the only ones not floodlit. There is also sports lighting on its two padel courts.

Two of the clubs without sports lighting, Datchworth Tennis Club and Aston Lawn Tennis Club, have expressed a demand for courts with sports lighting.

Tewin Tennis Club does not have permanent sports lighting although it states that it can erect temporary lighting should it need to. This is typically used for Datchworth games or coaching sessions.

## Overmarking

Tennis courts, particularly within schools, are often over marked by netball, basketball and/or football markings. Courts which are over marked tend to receive higher levels of use which can be detrimental to quality over time, as well as creating capacity issues if there is community demand from more than one sport.

Overmarking of tennis courts is identified at 17 sites, as seen below. When broken down there are 10 education sites showing overmarking. All overmarked courts are lined with netball markings, other than Legends Tennis Centre which is overmarked with pickleball on two of its courts and Bramfield Playing Field which is overmarked with basketball.

- ◀ Allenburys Sports & Social Club.
- ◀ Avanti Grange Secondary School.
- ◀ Bishop's Stortford College.
- ◀ Bramfield Playing Field.
- ◀ Buntingford MUGA.
- ◀ Freman College.
- ◀ Heath Mount School.
- ◀ Herts & Essex Sports Centre.
- ◀ Legends Tennis Centre.
- ◀ Leventhorpe School.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

- ◀ Presdales School.
- ◀ Richard Hale School.
- ◀ Saint Mary's Catholic School.
- ◀ St Edmunds College & Prep School.
- ◀ The Bishop's Stortford High School.
- ◀ The Sele School.
- ◀ Wodson Park Sports Centre.

## Quality

The quality of tennis courts has been informed through non-technical site assessments conducted in August 2024 and consultation with providers to assign each court a rating of good, standard or poor. Key aspects informing the findings include surface quality, grip underfoot, line marking quality, evenness, and evidence of any inappropriate use (e.g., vandalism and/or littering).

The table below outlines the quality of all tennis courts in East Hertfordshire, regardless of availability.

Table 7.6: Summary of quality of tennis courts

| Community use? | No. of good courts | No. of standard courts | No. poor of courts |
|----------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Available      | 77                 | 28                     | 11                 |
| Unavailable    | -                  | 12                     | 7                  |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>77</b>          | <b>40</b>              | <b>18</b>          |

In total, 77 courts are assessed as good quality (57% of all provision), 36 as standard quality (30%) and 18 as poor quality (13%).

As a further breakdown, quality at sites available for community use is presented on a site-by-site basis in the table overleaf.

Table 7.7: Summary of quality at sites available for community use

| Site ID | Site name                         | Analysis area      | No. of courts | Court type      | Court quality |
|---------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 9       | Aston Tennis Courts               | Buntingford        | 2             | Macadam         | Good          |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College        | Bishop's Stortford | 8             | Macadam         | Good          |
| 21      | Bramfield Playing Field           | Watton-at-Stone    | 1             | Shale           | Poor          |
| 22      | Braughing Playing Fields          | Bishop's Stortford | 2             | Macadam         | Good          |
| 28      | Castle Park Tennis Courts         | Bishop's Stortford | 3             | Macadam         | Good          |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club            | Buntingford        | 2             | Macadam         | Good          |
| 40      | Freman College                    | Buntingford        | 3             | Shale           | Poor          |
| 44      | Hartham Leisure Centre            | Hertford, Ware     | 1             | Macadam         | Poor          |
| 50      | Hertford Lawn Tennis Club         | Hertford, Ware     | 3             | Artificial turf | Good          |
| 50      | Hertford Lawn Tennis Club         | Hertford, Ware     | 3             | Polymeric       | Good          |
| 55      | Hertingfordbury Recreation Ground | Hertford, Ware     | 1             | Macadam         | Standard      |
| 56      | Herts & Essex Sports Centre       | Bishop's Stortford | 6             | Shale           | Standard      |
| 60      | Legends Tennis Centre             | Hertford, Ware     | 8             | Polymeric       | Good          |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School                | Sawbridgeworth     | 5             | Polymeric       | Good          |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site name  | Analysis area      | No. of courts | Court type      | Court quality |
|---------|--|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 71      | Much Hadham Tennis Club                            | Sawbridgeworth     | 3             | Macadam         | Good          |
| 72      | Norfolk Road Playing Fields                        | Buntingford        | 3             | Artificial Turf | Good          |
| 75      | Presdales School                                   | Hertford, Ware     | 4             | Macadam         | Good          |
| 81      | St Mary's Catholic School                          | Bishop's Stortford | 6             | Shale           | Poor          |
| 83      | Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club                         | Sawbridgeworth     | 3             | Artificial turf | Standard      |
| 83      | Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club                         | Sawbridgeworth     | 3             | Clay            | Good          |
| 97      | St. Margaretsbury Tennis Club                      | Hertford, Ware     | 3             | Artificial turf | Good          |
| 100     | Tewin Recreation Ground                            | Watton-at-Stone    | 2             | Artificial turf | Good          |
| 101     | The Bishop's Stortford High School                 | Bishop's Stortford | 4             | Shale           | Good          |
| 103     | The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust                | Bishop's Stortford | 2             | Clay            | Good          |
| 103     | The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust                | Bishop's Stortford | 5             | Artificial turf | Good          |
| 103     | The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust                | Bishop's Stortford | 3             | Macadam         | Good          |
| 103     | The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust                | Bishop's Stortford | 6             | Grass           | Standard      |
| 108     | The Sele School                                    | Hertford, Ware     | 3             | Shale           | Standard      |
| 125     | Wodson Park Sports Centre                          | Sawbridgeworth     | 4             | Macadam         | Good          |
| 126     | Allenburys Sports & Social Club                    | Hertford, Ware     | 4             | Macadam         | Standard      |
| 128     | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Watton-at-Stone    | 2             | Macadam         | Good          |
| 128     | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Watton-at-Stone    | 1             | Macadam         | Standard      |
| 134     | Standon & Puckeridge Lawn Tennis Club              | Buntingford        | 3             | Artificial turf | Good          |
| 168     | Avanti Grange Secondary School                     | Bishop's Stortford | 4             | Shale           | Standard      |

Of all community accessible courts, Bramfield Playing Field, St Mary's Catholic School, and Freman College provide poor quality provision. Issues recorded during site assessments include poor grip underfoot, the presence of moss, worn line markings, damaged nets, and loose gravel.

Hertingfordbury Recreation Ground, Herts & Essex Sports Centre, The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust (grass courts), The Sele School and Allenburys Sport & Social Club all provide standard tennis provision.

Despite being brand new, the courts at Avanti Grange Secondary School have been rated as standard. During consultation, the School highlights how unhappy it is with the new courts, stating how uneven the surface is, the lines being too thin and that the surface has already started to break up and crack.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Bramfield Playing Field, St Marys Catholic School and Freman College are assessed as poor quality. They all have shale courts and at the time of site assessment, Freman College and Bramfield Playing Field had faded lines as well as poor grip underfoot. Both these courts were overmarked with other sports meaning they would have more use, explaining the poorer conditions.

The court at Hartham Leisure Centre has also been rated poor. Consultation with the Leisure Centre confirms that the court is not currently being used as it is not in good condition. Specifically, underfoot grip was not great as the surface is worn down with faded lines.

Most of the sites provide good quality tennis provision across their courts. Ten of the courts at Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust are good quality largely due to having recently had its courts resurfaced in the last five years. The artificial grass was replaced in 2019, the polymeric was replaced in 2020 and the clay was replaced in 2023. Hertford LTC similarly have had its courts resurfaced in recent years and are consequently of good quality.

Datchworth Tennis Club and Watton at Stone Tennis Club both express plans to resurface its courts in its development plans to ensure that the good quality courts are maintained.

Improving park court sites is a current national priority for the LTA, with a focus on suitable sites that cater for high levels of recreational demand or that have the potential to do so. This is especially the case if the provision is serviced (or could be serviced) by changing facilities and sports lighting, whereby a sustainable tennis programme could be supported. Improving the quality, offer and experience of tennis in parks is a strategic priority for the LTA to open up tennis. It reports that the biggest barriers to participate in tennis are:

- ◀ Not knowing where the closest courts are.
- ◀ Not knowing how to book or play on the courts.
- ◀ Poor quality playing surfaces.

Park tennis courts can be opened in a variety of ways to ensure greater use by residents. This can range from booking courts to offering coaching programmes. The LTA has three products for local authorities to use to remove the barriers and open tennis up to all the residents in their area; ClubSpark, Rally and Gate Access (further explained in the demand section).

Renovation fund<sup>15</sup>

The LTA has secured a £22 million investment fund to be put into public tennis courts across Britain, together with an £8.5 million investment from the LTA. This will see thousands of public park tennis courts that are in poor or unplayable condition improved for the benefit of local communities.

The LTA's ambition is to drive participation across park tennis sites, as well as ensuring the future sustainability of these facilities. As well as paying for the refurbishment of public park courts, the new investment will also pay for the implementation of sustainable operating models for the facilities, with specialist programmes and support to ensure courts are both affordable and utilised.

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<sup>15</sup>[Link to investment plans](#)

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Ancillary provision

Ancillary provision refers to the accompanying building to a site that is accessed as changing facilities and a social space if applicable. All sites were assessed for its ancillary provision quality during non-technical site assessments and further evidenced by consultation responses. Quality ratings were determined by assessing matters such as the condition of the building, the quantity and quality of changing rooms and the social space offering.

Table 7.8: Ancillary quality breakdown

| Club                                  | Analysis area      | Facility as a whole | Changing facilities | Car parking |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Aston Lawn Tennis Club                | Buntingford        | Standard            | Standard            | Standard    |
| Braughing Tennis Club                 | Bishop's Stortford | Good                | Poor                | Poor        |
| Datchworth Tennis Club                | Buntingford        | Standard            | Standard            | Standard    |
| Hertford Lawn Tennis Club             | Hertford, Ware     | Good                | Good                | Good        |
| Legends Tennis Centre                 | Hertford, Ware     | Good                | Standard            | Standard    |
| Much Hadham Tennis Club               | Sawbridgeworth     | Good                | Standard            | Good        |
| Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club            | Sawbridgeworth     | Standard            | Poor                | Standard    |
| St Margaretsbury Tennis Club          | Hertford, Ware     | Good                | Standard            | Good        |
| Tewin Tennis Club                     | Watton-at-Stone    | Standard            | N/A                 | Standard    |
| Bishop's Stortford Lawn Tennis Club   | Bishop's Stortford | Good                | Good                | Good        |
| Allenburys Sports & Social Club       | Hertford, Ware     | Standard            | Standard            | Standard    |
| Watton at Stone Tennis Club           | Watton-at-Stone    | Standard            | Standard            | Poor        |
| Standon & Puckeridge Lawn Tennis Club | Buntingford        | Good                | N/A                 | Good        |

Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club currently has a standard facility consisting of a small building containing changing rooms and toilets. The Club highlights that it plans to insulate the clubhouse better and generally upgrade it as the toilet and changing facilities are poor.

Bishop's Stortford Tennis Club share a clubhouse with the cricket and squash sections which is good a quality pavilion with a bar, changing rooms and a social room. However, there is no changing near the artificial turf courts. The Club also has its own clubhouse with a kitchen and social room for tennis members only. It says it would prefer to have its own clubhouse at the top of the site despite the fact it has good ancillary facilities servicing all sports in place currently.

Datchworth Tennis Club share a clubhouse with the other sports at Datchworth Sports Club and there are plans to rebuild the shared clubhouse.

Hertford LTC has recently had its small wooden clubhouse refurbished, with newly added bifold doors, a new kitchen, toilets, and flooring. It also has a small social area for members to use.

Watton-at-Stone Tennis Club describes how it would like to build a clubhouse on site, though has not yet secured funding.

Braughing Tennis Club describe its changing facilities as poor, largely due to separate teams having to share changing rooms and showering facilities.



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

For non-club courts, ancillary provision is generally considered to be problematic. Whilst most of the other sites do provide changing facilities and/or toilets, they are not specific for tennis and are generally too far away from the courts to be used. Often, the facilities predominately service football/cricket pitch users and therefore are not readily available or suited to tennis court users. In some instances, quality is also poor.

Insight from the LTA indicates good quality ancillary facilities such as toilets, changing rooms and cafes encourage players to visit community available provision and stay for extended periods of time. Therefore, a potential way to increase usage of such provision would be to invest in suitable ancillary amenities nearby tennis courts.

## 7.3: Demand

### Competitive tennis

There are 13 tennis clubs in East Hertfordshire, with membership numbers only known for 12 of the clubs. Total known membership figures equate to 2,252, consisting of 1,432 senior and 820 junior members.

In terms of size, Bishop's Stortford LTC is the largest club, with 640 members, whilst Allenburys Sports & Social Club has the smallest membership figures with 15 members. This is summarised in the table below.

Table 7.9: Summary of tennis club demand

| Club                                  | Analysis area     | Senior       | Junior     |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|------------|
| Allenburys Sports & Social Club       | Hertford, Ware    | 15           | 0          |
| Aston Lawn Tennis Club                | Buntingford       | 78           | 45         |
| Bishops Stortford Lawn Tennis Club    | Bishops Stortford | 390          | 250        |
| Braughing Tennis Club                 | Bishops Stortford | 61           | 37         |
| Datchworth Tennis Club                | Buntingford       | 25           | 21         |
| Hertford Lawn Tennis Club             | Hertford, Ware    | 210          | 90         |
| Legends Tennis Centre                 | Hertford, Ware    | 100          | 150        |
| Much Hadham Tennis Club               | Sawbridgeworth    | 126          | 66         |
| Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club            | Sawbridgeworth    | 120          | 50         |
| St Margaretsbury Tennis Club          | Hertford, Ware    | -            | -          |
| Standon & Puckeridge Lawn Tennis Club | Buntingford       | 88           | 67         |
| Tewin Tennis Club                     | Watton-at-Stone   | 164          | 23         |
| Watton at Stone Tennis Club           | Watton-at-Stone   | 55           | 21         |
|                                       | <b>Totals</b>     | <b>1,432</b> | <b>820</b> |

No membership numbers could be gained for St Margaretsbury CC due to the Club not responding to consultation requests.

### Latent demand

Latent demand for tennis nationally is reported to be high by the LTA, which has an insight tool that suggests that 18% of the five million players that pick up a racket each year would play more often if key barriers such as poor promotion of opportunities to get on court, unclear booking journeys (especially those that are 'offline') and low-quality facilities were addressed.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

On this basis, there is a potential opportunity in East Hertfordshire for the District Council and other providers to understand if such barriers exist locally and if so, address such barriers, whilst also bettering understanding of court usage.

Sport England's Segmentation Tool<sup>16</sup> enables analysis of the percentage of adults that would like to participate in tennis but 'are not currently doing so'. The tool identifies latent demand of 2,848 people within East Hertfordshire resembling 1.1% of the District's population. As a comparison, the national average for people wanting to play tennis but are not currently doing so is 1.76%, putting East Hertfordshire directly in line with the national figures.

The highest latent demand is 'settling down males' which equates to 505 people wanting to play tennis that currently are not.

## Future demand

Four clubs report future growth aspirations, with total future demand amounting to 155 potential additional members (70 senior and 85 junior). All clubs hoping to increase in membership are outlined in future growth figures as seen in Table 7.10.

Table 7.10: Summary of future tennis club demand (in members)

| Club                       | Analysis area             | No. of senior members | No. of junior members |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Datchworth Tennis Club     | Buntingford               | 10                    | 20                    |
| Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club | Sawbridgeworth            | 30                    | 50                    |
| Braughing Tennis Club      | Bishop's Stortford        | 10                    | 15                    |
| Legends Tennis Centre      | Hertford, Ware            | 20                    | -                     |
| -                          | <b>East Hertfordshire</b> | <b>70</b>             | <b>85</b>             |

The tennis section at Allenburys Sports & Social Club states it would like to increase membership but does not have specific numbers like the above clubs.

The Sport England Sports Facility Calculator (SFC) is an interactive tool which allows its user to help quantify the additional demand for key community sports facilities created by a new population. The SFC has been used to quantify how many new tennis courts would be needed to account for ONS based population projection rather than the growth associated with new housing developments in the district and therefore will not fully account for housing growth. The calculation results show that there is a need for an extra 1.65 tennis courts in East Hertfordshire at a cost of £192,333.

## Informal tennis

It is considered that all local authority courts available for community use in East Hertfordshire have spare capacity for a growth in demand, although this is difficult to quantify as use is not always recorded due to the open access nature of many sites. Most of the current use is assumed to take place throughout the summer months although it is also accepted that many courts are accessed unofficially for activities unrelated to tennis.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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The LTA has developed a package of support for local authorities to grow the use of tennis courts by removing key barriers to participation. The three initiatives are ClubSpark, Rally and Gate Access, which are further detailed below. In East Hertfordshire, Standon & Puckeridge LTC use Big Tennis Weekend, Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club use Big Tennis Weekend and ClubSpark and Bishop's Stortford LTC, Aston Tennis Club, Datchworth Tennis Club and Watton at Stone Tennis Club are also on ClubSpark. Legends Tennis Centre are not currently using any LTA initiatives but plan to be on ClubSpark soon.

In relation to education providers, none report any regular demand from the community for tennis. It is believed by many that a lack of demand is a direct result of quality issues and/or a lack of sports lighting, as well as other courts being available for free. This results in the community being less likely to pay a hire charge for its provision.

ClubSpark – Improving the booking process

ClubSpark is a flexible and simple venue management platform with multiple products and applications to help venues, local authorities and coaches manage their sport. ClubSpark is a tool that is offered for free as part of LTA venue registration and allows administrators to manage all functions at their venue(s), including:

- ◆ Managed website - create and manage a mobile friendly website tailored to LA/club requirements to promote events and activities.
- ◆ Managed coaching – set up coaching lessons and courses online.
- ◆ Membership management - improve membership engagement by making it easier for the venue and for members to pay, renew and keep in touch (includes online payments, direct debits and the monitoring of revenue streams; membership modules can also be used to take season ticket payments for venues operating a non-traditional annual facility fee).
- ◆ Organise payments - set the way payments are taken, whether it's immediate pay and play, or bookable as part of a membership package.
- ◆ Court bookings – reduced administration for managing bookings; give staff, coaches, members and the general public access to book and pay for courts, classes or other resources online.
- ◆ Scheduling - set unique booking and price rules to suit the venue and enable lights to switch on/off automatically when linked to the LTA Premium Gate Access system.
- ◆ Book and pay remotely - customers can make bookings and payments for a venue anytime, anywhere via the real-time booking app.
- ◆ Reporting - ClubSpark allows administrators to view reports highlighting income, court usage, revenue and number of members and season ticket holders; this allows for identification of trends and patterns and evidence to demonstrate participation levels and impact.

## RALLY

Rally is an aggregator that collects all booking and coaching information via ClubSpark pages and displays it for participants in one easy to view page. It allows players to search for venues close to them and provides booking options, removing the barriers of not knowing where courts are or how to book.

Rally provides a helpful customer journey, with a personal profile to review and manage bookings, and helpful reminders. Courts can be set to book for free of charge or at a fee agreed by the provider. The LTA confirm that it has improved its Rally and ClubSpark book a court features, with it now being accessible on the LTA website thus being easier for users to book a court and tennis class.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## Gate Access

The LTA has developed two gate access systems that work in association with ClubSpark to secure courts and to allow access to booked customers only. Members of the public can book a court online (making payment if required) and receive a 4-digit access code via email to enter using a courtside keypad. The gate access system then allows entry for the time booked if a correct code is entered.

There are two gate options available: SmartAccess Premium and SmartAccess Lite. The demands and needs of users plus the setup of the venue determines the most appropriate system for each site.

Nationally, the LTA report that in the last three years, sites with a gate access system installed have attracted 64,841 unique players, leading to 609,671 courts being booked. This has generated income of over £1 million.

In East Hertfordshire, Braughing Tennis club, Much Hadham Tennis Club and Allenburys Sports & Social Club report currently having Gate Access technology.

## LTA Big Tennis Weekend

The LTA Big Tennis Weekend is an LTA initiative which all registered venues can access. Clubs and venues can sign up to host open days, which are free of charge, and create a relaxed and welcoming environment for those new to tennis to participate. This in turn can potentially lead to the clubs attracting new members.

The LTA hosts three dedicated weekends a year (in May, July and September) that are the UK's biggest public tennis events. Furthermore, venues can run additional events outside these dates and will benefit from their events being promoted on the national LTA campaign website. All clubs running an open day are asked to promote a follow-on offer to all attendees, such as a reduced rate introductory membership or several free coaching sessions, to encourage people to continue playing after the event.

Currently both Sawbridgeworth TC and Standon & Puckeridge LTC state they run LTA big tennis weekends.

## LTA Youth

LTA Youth has superseded the former initiative of Mini Tennis as the new LTA flagship delivery programme. The initiative is tailored towards delivering a fresh, fun approach to coaching tennis for kids aged 4-18.

The programme is made up of an LTA Youth Start introductory course, followed by five stages that give young players the chance to practice and develop at an appropriate level. The five stages can be seen below:

- ◆ Blue Stage: Children improve balance, agility and co-ordination through fun games. This stage teaches the fundamental basics of tennis.
- ◆ Red Stage: Children practice overarm serves, volleys and learn how to serve. Play takes place using soft ball and on small courts.
- ◆ Orange Stage: Children are taught tactics, problem solving and guides to sportsmanship and leadership.
- ◆ Green Stage: Children play on a full-sized court. Sessions are spent fine tuning and developing techniques.
- ◆ Yellow Stage: Children play on a full-sized court using regular tennis balls. Players are encouraged to explore different play styles allowing them to choose their own approach.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Mini tennis courts can be found at Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club (it has four) which has 143 senior and 48 junior members.

## **Padel tennis**

Padel is a form of tennis that is easy to play, fun and sociable. It is usually played 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 is not power dominant. The rules are broadly the same as tennis, although players 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, it has gained increasing popularity over recent years. As of 2021, there are around 6,000 active padel tennis players across Great Britain, with 107 courts provided at 52 clubs. This is predicted to grow substantially in future years. LTA mapping identifies a need for 12 courts within East Hertfordshire, which is relative to the current population. With two courts already available this would mean the creation of 10 new courts which potentially could increase padel play across the District, provided the courts are well located and advertised.

There are currently two padel courts in East Hertfordshire located at Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust and used by Bishop's Stortford LTC. The Club reports that it has 120 members currently using the courts and that they will cap capacity at 150.

During consultation with Hartham Leisure Centre the conversion of a tennis court and small sided 3G football pitches to padel courts was highlighted. However, there are no current plans identified to progress this.

## **7.4: Supply and demand analysis**

### **Club tennis**

The LTA suggests that a non- sport lit hard court can accommodate 40 members whereas a hard court with sports lighting can accommodate 60 members.

Using the above figures, the table below analyses whether courts currently in use by clubs are sufficient to meet current and future demand. However, it must be noted that this should only be used as a guide as capacity can vary from site to site depending on how the demand operates and the programmes of use in place. Some clubs can comfortably operate over capacity guidance, whilst others may have pressures without theoretically being over capacity.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 7.11: Capacity analysis (club courts)

| Site ID | Site   | Club users                            | Current demand (members) | Future demand (members) | No. of courts | Sports lighting? | Capacity (members) | Current capacity balance | Future capacity balance |
|---------|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 9       | Aston Tennis Courts                                | Aston Lawn Tennis Club                | 123                      | -                       | 2             | No               | 80                 | 43                       | 43                      |
| 22      | Braughing Playing Fields                           | Braughing Tennis Club                 | 98                       | 25                      | 2             | Yes              | 120                | 22                       | 3                       |
| 38      | Datchworth Sports Club                             | Datchworth Tennis Club                | 46                       | 30                      | 2             | No               | 80                 | 34                       | 4                       |
| 50      | Hertford Lawn Tennis Club                          | Hertford Lawn Tennis Club             | 300                      | -                       | 6             | Yes              | 360                | 60                       | 60                      |
| 60      | Legends Tennis Centre                              | Legends Tennis Centre                 | 250                      | 20                      | 8             | Yes (4)          | 560                | 310                      | 290                     |
| 71      | Much Hadham Tennis Club                            | Much Hadham Tennis Club               | 192                      | -                       | 3             | Yes              | 180                | 12                       | 12                      |
| 83      | Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club                         | Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club            | 170                      | 80                      | 6             | Yes (5)          | 340                | 170                      | 90                      |
| 100     | Tewin Recreation Ground                            | Tewin Tennis Club                     | 187                      | -                       | 2             | No               | 80                 | 107                      | 107                     |
| 103     | The Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust                | Bishop's Stortford Lawn Tennis Club   | 640                      | -                       | 16            | Yes (10)         | 840                | 200                      | 200                     |
| 126     | Allenburys Sports & Social Club                    | Allenburys Sports & Social Club       | 15                       | -                       | 4             | Yes (3)          | 220                | 205                      | 205                     |
| 128     | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Watton at Stone Tennis Club           | 76                       | -                       | 3             | Yes              | 180                | 104                      | 104                     |
| 134     | Standon & Puckeridge Lawn Tennis Club              | Standon & Puckeridge Lawn Tennis Club | 155                      | -                       | 3             | Yes              | 180                | 25                       | 25                      |

\*St Margaretsbury did not supply membership numbers, so a capacity analysis could not be conducted for the site.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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As identified in the above table, currently Aston Tennis Club, Much Hadham Tennis Club and Tewin Tennis Club have capacity issues with existing membership figures. Aston Tennis Club find itself over capacity by 43 members while Tewin Tennis Club is over capacity by 107 and Much Hadham Tennis Club is over by 12 members. The remaining clubs are all comfortably within the recommended LTA guidelines.

Allenburys Sports & Social Club, Tewin Tennis Club and Hertford LTC all state that intentions to grow club membership but were not willing to say by how much.

Braughing Tennis Club is currently operating within the guidelines and want to grow its membership by 25 members. Should the Club realise this potential, it would find itself operating over capacity by three members.

One caveat is that Legends Tennis Centre and Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust both have courts in an air dome which have a higher playing capacity (100) than outdoor courts as they can be used more often. This will also increase capacity at these sites.

Sawbridgeworth has six tennis courts although only five currently have sports lighting. The Club has plans to add sports lighting on the last court which would see its capacity increase by 20 members, in line with the LTA guidelines.

## 7.5: Conclusion

Three clubs are currently operating over LTA capacity guidelines, Tewin Tennis Club, Much Hadham Tennis Club and Aston Tennis Club. Tewin Tennis Club states it has temporary lights it can put up if it has a Datchworth League match or for coaching which helps manage demand. Much Hadham Tennis Club has no interest in increasing its membership but does state it requires an additional floodlit court to help service demand. Aston LTC also states a desire to acquire sports lighting for both its courts. Should these clubs acquire sports lighting it would help alleviate capacity issues, allowing the clubs to operate during the evenings and increase court capacity from 40 to 60.

However, there are several sites that are comfortably operating within the LTA recommended guidelines and would continue to do so should they see future demand ambitions realised. Three clubs have space for over 200 new members should they be successful in recruiting. The clubs at these sites are, Legends Tennis Club, Bishop's Stortford LTC and Allenburys Sports & Social Club.

The quality of tennis courts across East Hertfordshire is generally good with only four sites being ranked as poor, equating to 17 courts. Three of these sites are education sites and unavailable for community use, however, Bramfield Playing Field is used by Braughing Tennis Club and as such should be a priority for investment.

Bishop's Stortford LTC is the only site in East Hertfordshire offering padel, with two courts and is currently close to capacity, with space for 30 more members. LTA PPS guidance for Padel provision suggests that East Hertfordshire has the need for 12 courts, meaning there is a need to develop additional Padel courts to meet this unmet demand.

Taking into consideration both club and non-club demand at the current cohort of community available tennis courts across the District it would be a fair assessment that East Hertfordshire is serviced by sufficient provision to accommodate both the current and future demand.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## **Tennis – supply and demand summary**

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

## **Tennis – supply summary**

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

## **Tennis – demand summary**

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



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## PART 8: NETBALL COURTS

### 8.1: Introduction

England Netball is the governing body for the sport across England. Levels of participation are quickly increasing, with over 100,000 affiliated members and at least 1 million women and girls playing during a typical week. Its aim is to provide its members and partners with the best possible service and experience in sport.

### Consultation

There are two leagues currently offering competitive netball demand within East Hertfordshire, the Bishop's Stortford District Netball League and the Hertford and District Netball League catering for 30 teams collectively. However, neither league has responded to consultation requests. Consultation has taken place with England Netball alongside desk-based research to inform this section of the report.

### 8.2: Supply

In total, there are 81 outdoor netball courts located across 32 sites in East Hertfordshire. Of these, 55 courts across 17 sites are open to community access, representing 68% of all outdoor courts. Tables 8.2 and 8.3 below, outline the total supply of provision within East Hertfordshire with these mapped in Figure 8.1.

The Bishop's Stortford analysis area provides the most community available courts in the region whilst Watton-at-stone provides the least with only one community accessible court.

Table 8.1: Summary of the number of courts by analysis area

| Analysis area             | No. of courts available for community use | No. of courts unavailable for community use |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Bishop's Stortford        | 28  | 9   |
| Buntingford               | 5   | 8   |
| Hertford, Ware            | 18  | 5   |
| Sawbridgeworth            | 3   | 1   |
| Watton-at-stone           | 1   | 3   |
| <b>East Hertfordshire</b> | <b>55</b>                                 | <b>26</b>                                   |

Table 8.2: Summary of supply

| Site ID | Site name                     | Analysis area      | Community use? | Management | No. of courts | Floodlit? | Court type |
|---------|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------|---------------|-----------|------------|
| 2       | All Saints CE Primary School  | Bishop's Stortford | No             | Education  | 1             | No        | Tarmac     |
| 8       | Aston St Mary's VA School     | Buntingford        | No             | Education  | 1             | No        | Tarmac     |
| 10      | Avanti Meadows Primary School | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education  | 1             | No        | Tarmac     |
| 15      | Birchwood High School         | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education  | 6             | No        | Tarmac     |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site name  | Analysis area      | Community use? | Management | No. of courts | Floodlit? | Court type                |
|---------|--|--------------------|----------------|------------|---------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College                           | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education  | 9             | Yes (4)   | Tarmac (1)<br>Macadam (8) |
| 29      | Christ Church C Of E (VA) Primary School and Nursery | Hertford, Ware     | No             | Education  | 2             | No        | Tarmac                    |
| 36      | Datchworth All Saints Primary School                 | Buntingford        | No             | Education  | 1             | No        | Tarmac                    |
| 39      | Edwinstree C Of E Middle School                      | Buntingford        | No             | Education  | 3             | No        | Tarmac                    |
| 40      | Freman College                                       | Buntingford        | Yes            | Education  | 3             | No        | Tarmac                    |
| 46      | Heath Mount School                                   | Watton-at-Stone    | No             | Education  | 2             | No        | Tarmac                    |
| 53      | Hertfordshire And Essex High School                  | Bishop's Stortford | No             | Education  | 3             | No        | Tarmac                    |
| 56      | Herts & Essex Sports Centre                          | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education  | 6             | Yes       | Tarmac                    |
| 57      | High Wych Ce Primary School                          | Sawbridge worth    | No             | Education  | 1             | No        | Tarmac                    |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School                                   | Sawbridge worth    | Yes            | Education  | 3             | Yes       | Polymeric                 |
| 73      | Northgate Primary School                             | Bishop's Stortford | No             | Education  | 2             | No        | Tarmac                    |
| 75      | Presdales School                                     | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education  | 4             | Yes       | Macadam                   |
| 76      | Ralph Sadleir School                                 | Buntingford        | Yes            | Education  | 2             | No        | Tarmac                    |
| 80      | Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School                 | Hertford, Ware     | No             | Education  | 1             | No        | Tarmac                    |
| 89      | Simon Balle School                                   | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education  | 2             | No        | Tarmac                    |
| 90      | St Edmunds College & Prep School                     | Buntingford        | No             | Education  | 3             | Yes       | Macadam                   |
| 91      | St Joseph's Catholic Primary School                  | Bishop's Stortford | No             | Education  | 2             | No        | Tarmac                    |
| 93      | St Joseph's In The Park                              | Hertford, Ware     | No             | Education  | 2             | No        | Tarmac                    |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site name                          | Analysis area      | Community use? | Management  | No. of courts | Floodlit? | Court type |
|---------|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|-----------|------------|
| 95      | St Marys Junior School             | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education   | 2             | No        | Tarmac     |
| 99      | Tewin Cowper Primary School        | Watton-at-Stone    | Yes            | Education   | 1             | No        | Tarmac     |
| 101     | The Bishop's Stortford High School | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education   | 3             | Yes       | Tarmac     |
| 105     | The Chauncy School                 | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education   | 2             | No        | Macadam    |
| 108     | The Sele School                    | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Education   | 3             | No        | Tarmac     |
| 120     | Watton-At-Stone Primary School     | Watton-at-Stone    | No             | Education   | 1             | No        | Tarmac     |
| 124     | Windhill 21 Primary School         | Bishop's Stortford | No             | Education   | 1             | No        | Tarmac     |
| 125     | Wodson Park Sports Centre          | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Other       | 4             | Yes       | Macadam    |
| 126     | Allenburys Sports & Social Club    | Hertford, Ware     | Yes            | Sports Club | 1             | Yes       | Macadam    |
| 168     | Avanti Grange Secondary School     | Bishop's Stortford | Yes            | Education   | 3             | Yes       | Tarmac     |

### Disused provision

During this study no disused netball courts have been identified within East Hertfordshire.

### Future supply

A new primary school has been built in Bishop's Stortford and has community use agreements for sports provision. Avanti Brook Primary School's will have netball courts available for community use for the 25/26 season.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Figure 8.1: Netball court locations



## Overmarking

Whilst it does help with usage levels and sustainability, an issue for netball nationally is that many of its courts are dual use tennis courts. This limits accessibility (especially during the summer when tennis nets are often permanently in place) and can impact on quality due to higher levels of wear and tear. However, in East Hertfordshire only 10 sites have courts that are overmarked with tennis markings and multi-use facilities. However, the courts provided at the following sites are overmarked:

- ◆ Allenburys Sports & Social Club.
- ◆ Avanti Grange Secondary School.
- ◆ Bishop's Stortford College.
- ◆ Freman College.
- ◆ Heath Mount School.
- ◆ Herts & Essex Sports Centre.
- ◆ Leventhorpe School.
- ◆ Presdales School.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

- ◀ St Edmunds College & Prep School.
- ◀ The Bishop's Stortford High School.
- ◀ The Sele School.
- ◀ Wodson Park Sports Centre.

## Surface type

Across East Hertfordshire, 56 netball courts (69%) have a tarmac surface, 22 courts (27%) have a macadam surface and three courts (4%) have a polymeric surface.

The estimated lifespan of a macadam court and a polymeric court is 10 years, depending on levels of use and maintenance levels.

## Management

The table below highlights the management of netball courts within East Hertfordshire.

Table 8.3: Netball courts by management type (all courts)

| Community use? | No. of club courts | No. of EHDC, town/parish council courts | No. of education courts | No. of 'other' courts |
|----------------|--------------------|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Available      | 1                  | -                                       | 50                      | 4                     |
| Unavailable    | -                  | -                                       | 26                      | -                     |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>1</b>           | <b>0</b>                                | <b>76</b>               | <b>4</b>              |

Most netball courts in the District are operated by education sites, with 76 (94%) although only 50 (62%) are available for community use. There are four courts (5%) operated privately and one court (1%) operated by a sports club all of which are available for community use.

## Security of tenure

Tenure is currently unclear as consultation requests are still pending a response. However, it is known that leagues based at education or local authority sites, generally do not operate with any security of tenure and block book fixtures on an annual basis.

## Quality

The quality of netball courts across East Hertfordshire has been assessed via a combination of site visits in August and September 2024 (using non-technical assessments) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good.
- ◀ Standard.
- ◀ Poor.

The percentage parameters used for the non-technical assessments are as follows: Good (>80%), Standard (70-80%), Poor (<70%).

Maintaining high court quality is an important aspect of netball and therefore the non-technical assessment (and consultation agreements) assesses several factors which evidence court quality. The criteria for the non-technical assessment consists of; court surface grip underfoot, damage to a court surface, line markings, evidence of moss/lichen, slope of courts, disability access, fencing and courts being of an appropriate size.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

As can be seen in the table below, most netball provision in East Hertfordshire is poor quality. However, of the 49 accessible courts, 23 are good quality (42%), 23 are standard quality (42%) and nine are poor quality (16%). The poor-quality courts provided are deemed so due to issues such as poor grip underfoot, damaged surfaces and a general need for surface replacements.

Table 8.4: Quality summary

| Site ID | Site name  | No. of courts | Community use? | Sports lighting? | Quality  |
|---------|--|---------------|----------------|------------------|----------|
| 2       | All Saints CE Primary School                         | 1             | No             | No               | Poor     |
| 8       | Aston St Mary's VA School                            | 1             | No             | No               | Poor     |
| 10      | Avanti Meadows Primary School                        | 1             | Yes            | No               | Poor     |
| 15      | Birchwood High School                                | 6             | Yes            | No               | Standard |
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College                           | 9             | Yes            | Yes (4)          | Good     |
| 29      | Christ Church C Of E (VA) Primary School and Nursery | 2             | No             | No               | Poor     |
| 36      | Datchworth All Saints C Of Primary School            | 1             | No             | No               | Poor     |
| 39      | Edwinstree C Of E Middle School                      | 3             | No             | No               | Poor     |
| 40      | Freman College                                       | 3             | Yes            | No               | Poor     |
| 46      | Heath Mount School                                   | 2             | No             | No               | Standard |
| 53      | Hertfordshire And Essex High School                  | 3             | No             | No               | Poor     |
| 56      | Herts & Essex Sports Centre                          | 6             | Yes            | Yes              | Standard |
| 57      | High Wych Ce Primary School                          | 1             | No             | No               | Poor     |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School                                   | 3             | Yes            | Yes              | Good     |
| 73      | Northgate Primary School                             | 2             | No             | No               | Poor     |
| 75      | Presdales School                                     | 4             | Yes            | Yes              | Good     |
| 76      | Ralph Sadleir School                                 | 2             | Yes            | No               | Standard |
| 80      | Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School                 | 1             | No             | No               | Poor     |
| 89      | Simon Balle School                                   | 2             | Yes            | No               | Poor     |
| 90      | St Edmunds College & Prep School                     | 3             | No             | Yes              | Standard |
| 91      | St Joseph's Catholic Primary School                  | 2             | No             | No               | Poor     |
| 93      | St Joseph's In The Park                              | 2             | No             | No               | Poor     |
| 95      | St Marys Junior School                               | 2             | Yes            | No               | Poor     |
| 99      | Tewin Cowper Primary School                          | 1             | Yes            | No               | Poor     |
| 101     | The Bishop's Stortford High School                   | 3             | Yes            | Yes              | Good     |
| 105     | The Chauncy School                                   | 2             | Yes            | No               | Standard |
| 108     | The Sele School                                      | 3             | Yes            | No               | Standard |
| 120     | Watton-At-Stone Primary School                       | 1             | No             | No               | Poor     |
| 124     | Windhill 21 Primary School                           | 1             | No             | No               | Poor     |
| 125     | Wodson Park Sports Centre                            | 4             | Yes            | Yes              | Good     |
| 126     | Allenburys Sports & Social Club                      | 1             | Yes            | Yes              | Standard |
| 168     | Avanti Grange Secondary School                       | 3             | Yes            | Yes              | Standard |

The courts at Wodson Park have recently been resurfaced offering better underfoot grip for its users. The courts are also serviced by sports lighting enabling use in the evening as well as the day.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Many of the poorly rated sites are in schools, mostly primary, where the courts are mainly used as a playground meaning more wear and tear and faded lines. Usually, in these instances maintenance of the court is not a priority for a school, and a maintenance scheme would not be as rigorous as at a club site.

Despite the courts being brand new, Avanti Grange Secondary School highlights that it has several issues with its courts. Consultation with the School confirms the surface is very uneven, line markings are too thin and the surface has started to crack and break up.

## 8.3: Demand

There are currently 30 netball clubs identified as competing within East Hertfordshire leagues, highlighted in tables 8.5 and 8.6. The teams compete across two outdoor netball leagues, the Bishop's Stortford District Netball League and the Hertford and District League.

### Leagues

The Bishop's Stortford District Netball League runs on a Sunday morning from 09.30 until 12.30 and is based at the Herts and Essex Sports Centre. The centre offers six outdoor netball courts with ample parking and use of the indoor facilities for the league. The courts were built in 2019 and are currently rated as standard. The league has four separate divisions ranging from six to eight teams per league with 29 teams overall.

The Hertford and District League currently takes place Presdales School using all four outdoor courts. There are three leagues falling under this umbrella, a summer league on a Wednesday and two winter leagues taking place on a Wednesday and Saturday. The leagues have eight to 12 teams involved. The courts are of good quality and have recently had floodlights put in. The school also has one indoor netball court.

To clarify, details regarding indoor netball will be included in the Indoor Built Facility Report for East Hertfordshire.

### Club demand

Tables 8.5 and 8.6 below outline the Bishop's Stortford District Netball League and Hertford and District Netball League Structure for each division.

Table 8.5: Bishop's Stortford District Netball League Structure

| Division 1  | Division 2   | Division 3  | Division 4  |
|---|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Swan 2 Black</li> <li>◀ Sparks 2</li> <li>◀ Saffron Walden 2 Lions</li> <li>◀ Swan 3 Pink</li> <li>◀ Richmond</li> <li>◀ Saffron Walden 1 Jaguars</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Infinity Reds</li> <li>◀ Swan 4 Purple</li> <li>◀ Crosskeys 5</li> <li>◀ Sparks 3</li> <li>◀ Pinks 1</li> <li>◀ Bishop's Stortford 2</li> <li>◀ Swan 5 White</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Mystix</li> <li>◀ Bishop's Stortford 3</li> <li>◀ Royston 2</li> <li>◀ Swan 6 Spirit 1</li> <li>◀ Saffron Walden 3 Leopards</li> <li>◀ Crosskeys 6</li> <li>◀ Wodson Ladies 5</li> <li>◀ Corkers Allstars</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Pinks 2</li> <li>◀ Crosskeys 7</li> <li>◀ Tegate</li> <li>◀ Wodson ladies 6</li> <li>◀ Crosskeys 8</li> <li>◀ Swan 8 spirit 2</li> <li>◀ Swan 7 Orange</li> <li>◀ Saffron Walden 4 Panthers</li> </ul> |

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 8.6: Hertford and District Netball League Structure

| Wednesday Winter League Division 1  | Wednesday Winter League Division 2   | Saturday Winter League   |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Swan</li> <li>◀ Hertford Heath Rangers</li> <li>◀ Wodson Park Ladies</li> <li>◀ Bury</li> <li>◀ Ice</li> <li>◀ Crystal Phoenix</li> <li>◀ Hornets 1</li> <li>◀ Turnford</li> <li>◀ Bluebelles</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Issi</li> <li>◀ Panthers</li> <li>◀ Hertford Heath Rangers 2</li> <li>◀ Oasis</li> <li>◀ Hornets 2</li> <li>◀ Wodson Park Ladies 5</li> <li>◀ Neons</li> <li>◀ Omega</li> <li>◀ Bengeo Tornadoes</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Wodson Park Ladies 3</li> <li>◀ Ice</li> <li>◀ Bury</li> <li>◀ Pace</li> <li>◀ Oasis</li> <li>◀ Wodson Park Ladies 0</li> <li>◀ Hertford Heath Rangers</li> <li>◀ Hertford Hornets Topaz</li> <li>◀ Cheshunt</li> <li>◀ Crosskeys</li> <li>◀ Allenburys</li> <li>◀ Royston</li> </ul> |

Several of the above clubs are not based in East Hertfordshire, however, access East Hertfordshire netball leagues. The bigger clubs typically field many teams across the divisions and can often have multiple teams in the same division. Across both leagues there are 30 clubs competing and fielding 60 teams.

## Play Netball

Play Netball is Britain’s largest social netball league provider and arranges fixtures, league tables, umpires, netballs, and bibs so players can focus on playing. People can join as individuals to find a team, a group to join the same team or produce their own team of seven or 10 people.

In East Hertfordshire, Play Netball fixtures take place at Leventhorpe school on the outdoor courts on Wednesdays 7pm – 9pm forming part of the Harlow Wednesday league. The league currently has six teams competing meaning it only takes one of the four courts available at the venue and can have all six teams play on the same night. The league accommodates senior demand and will last 10 weeks (six teams play each other twice).

## Back to Netball and walking netball

Back to Netball sessions are running across England and provide women of all ages a welcoming re-introduction to the sport. Sessions cover the basics of the game including passing, footwork and shooting and finish with a friendly game. Since its creation in 2010, over 60,000 women have taken part.

Back to Netball sessions in East Hertfordshire are currently delivered at the Sele School in Hertford on Monday evenings from 7pm -8pm. The programme services adult demand and runs weekly priced from £2.

Walking netball has evolved from a growing demand of walking sports such as walking football. It is a slower version of the game and has been designed so that anyone can play regardless of age and fitness level and therefore offers opportunities for older adults to participate and enjoy. There are currently no walking netball sessions running in East Hertfordshire. Although there are sessions in North Hertfordshire located at North Herts Leisure Centre on Thursday afternoons from 1pm-2pm and at Royston Leisure Centre on Tuesday afternoons from 1pm-2pm.



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Unmet/latent demand

Unmet demand is existing demand that is not getting access to courts. It is usually expressed, for example, when a team is already training but is unable to access a match court, or when a league has a waiting list due to a lack of court provision, which in turn is hindering the growth of the league.

Sport England's Segmentation Tool enables analysis of 'the percentage of adults that would like to participate in netball but 'are not currently doing so'. The tool identifies significant latent demand amounting to 437 people (0.29%) within East Hertfordshire. As a comparison, the national average shows 0.28% of the population would like to participate in netball but is not currently doing so, making East Hertfordshire just above the national average.

England Netball identify that there is a high demand for netball within Hertfordshire which is congruent with the District being above the national average. Outside of the Sport England segmentation tool, there is no other applicable way to quantify perceived latent demand by clubs or England Netball.

## Imported/exported demand

Imported demand is teams entering East Hertfordshire to access facilities for netball, whilst exported demand is clubs choosing to access provision outside the area. Locally, there are no known examples of imported demand for netball.

England Netball confirm that there is little exported demand from residents within East Hertfordshire accessing established leagues outside of the District but accepts it may still happen.

## Future demand

England Netball states that there is not much future demand for netball in the area. However, since consultations with leagues are yet to be successful, this cannot be completely confirmed.

## 8.4: Supply and demand analysis

Table 8.7: Summary of existing sports lit community use supply

| Site ID | Site name                          | No. of courts | Community use? | Sports lighting? | Quality  |
|---------|------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|----------|
| 16      | Bishop's Stortford College         | 9             | Yes            | Yes (4)          | Good     |
| 56      | Herts & Essex Sports Centre        | 6             | Yes            | Yes              | Standard |
| 62      | Leventhorpe School                 | 3             | Yes            | Yes              | Good     |
| 75      | Presdales School                   | 4             | Yes            | Yes              | Good     |
| 101     | The Bishop's Stortford High School | 3             | Yes            | Yes              | Good     |
| 125     | Wodson Park Sports Centre          | 4             | Yes            | Yes              | Good     |
| 126     | Allenburys Sports & Social Club    | 1             | Yes            | Yes              | Standard |
| 168     | Avanti Grange Secondary School     | 3             | Yes            | Yes              | Standard |

As can be seen in Table 8.7 there are 33 sports lit, community available netball courts within East Hertfordshire accounting for 40% of the total supply stock. Of these, there are 23 good quality courts and 10 are standard quality. This is a good level of supply for the District and seems to service the demand well.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## 8.5: Conclusion

England Netball identify a high demand for netball across Hertfordshire. East Hertfordshire currently has 33 sports lit, community available outdoor netball courts, 23 of which are rated good quality. It can therefore be determined that 40% of netball courts within East Hertfordshire are open to community use and sports lit.

Most netball courts are commonly found at schools and East Hertfordshire is no different with 94% of courts located at education sites. The remaining courts are located at Wodson Park Sports Centre and Allenburys Sports & Social Club and are both sports lit and available for community use.

### **Netball – supply and demand summary**

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

### **Netball – Supply summary:**

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

### **Netball – Demand summary:**

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

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## PART 9: ATHLETICS

### 9.1: Introduction

As a Governing Body, UK Athletics is responsible for developing and implementing the rules and regulations of athletics, including everything from anti-doping, health and safety, facilities, and welfare, to training and education for coaches and officials as well as permitting and licensing.

England Athletics (EA) is the not-for-profit membership and development body responsible for grassroots athletics and running in England. EA supports 1,750 affiliated clubs and organisations (covering track and field, road running, fell, hill, trail and cross-country clubs), 147,000 registered athletes, 18,700 licensed coaches and leaders, 3,800 officials and 6.2m regular running participants. EA's Athletics purpose is to inspire more athletes and runners of all abilities and backgrounds to fulfil their potential and to have a lifelong love for the sport. Their vision is for athletics and running to become an inclusive sport where everyone belongs and can flourish.

### Consultation

There are three affiliated athletics clubs within East Hertfordshire, Herts Phoenix AC, Hawcs AC and Ware Joggers. Both Herts Phoenix and Hawcs AC have been consulted with, resulting in a 67% response rate.

### 9.2: Supply

There is one formal athletics track provided in East Hertfordshire; the Stuart Storey athletics track located at Wodson Park Sports Centre. It is a community accessible eight lane 400-metre track. The track is provided with sports lighting to support activities on both the track and infield as well as all accompanying field event facilities including a throws cage (hammer, discus & club), javelin, high jump, long/triple jump, and shot-put area. Wodson Park replaced its hammer cage in late 2022, early 2023 which was reportedly much needed as it previously was not safe for use.

There is also a four lane 40 metre compact track at Hockerill Anglo-European College with associated long/triple jump runways/pit, High Jump fan and throws circle. This is located at a school and services curricular demand. The track is not floodlit and is not currently open for community use.

Both The Hawcs and Herts Phoenix AC train out of Wodson park sports centre. However, Herts Phoenix AC also train out of Gosling Sports Park, which is based in Welwyn Garden City, outside of East Hertfordshire.

Table 9.2: Summary of athletics tracks in East Hertfordshire

| Site ID | Site                             | Surface   | Analysis area      | Length     | Sports lighting? | Community use? |
|---------|----------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|------------|------------------|----------------|
| 58      | Hockerill Anglo-European College | Synthetic | Bishop's Stortford | 40 metres  | No               | No             |
| 125     | Wodson Park Sports Centre        | Synthetic | Hertford, Ware     | 400 metres | Yes              | Yes            |

Please see figure 9.1 for a map highlighting the location of the provision within East Hertfordshire.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Figure 9.1: Location of athletics tracks in East Hertfordshire



## Management

The athletics provision located at Wodson Park Sports Centre is managed by the Wodson Park Trust which is, a registered charity.

## Quality

Key factors impacting upon the quality ratings include the condition and age of the track surface, the prominence of the line markings and any signs of wear and tear or unofficial use.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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The non-technical assessment identified the Stuart Storey track at Wodson Park Sports Centre as standard quality, and it should be noted that the track at Wodson Park was built in 2003 and last resurfaced in 2005. Consultation confirms the track is maintained by Wodson Park and Hawcs AC deem the track to be of good quality. However, it was observed during the site audits that the track looked old and was patched up in places. The sports lighting is also not LED and requires reinspection, it is, track circuit (class 2=club standard), while infield throws is class 3 = recreation.

The ANOG report completed by England Athletics in January 2025 details how the track would benefit from professional cleaning and minor repairs in the short term, before reaccreditation. Field events such as jumps and throws passed inspection. The venue is TrackMark accredited until the end of March 2026 and will likely need respraying in 2026.

The track at Hockerill Anglo-European College was identified during site audit standard. It is relatively new and has good line markings, although it was noted that the track had looked like it hadn't been maintained. The school confirms that the track is solely used for circular use.

## TrackMark

TrackMark is UK Athletics' quality assurance scheme for outdoor track and field athletics facilities. A venue that achieves TrackMark is recognised by UK Athletics as having well managed, compliant facilities that are accessible to participants of all abilities. From 2021, venues that actively choose not to pursue accreditation are not eligible to apply host UKA licenced competitions at any level.

The Stuart Storey track at Wodson Park Sport Centre is TrackMark accredited, having passed an assessment of the track, field, ancillary, operations, sports lighting, and competition grading criteria.

## Ancillary facilities

Wodson Park Sports Centre provides good level ancillary facilities for its users, including, changing rooms, toilets, and showers. The site also has a large car park and offers spectators covered seating beside the track. As well as athletics the site also has a 3G and grass football pitches, a gym, tennis and netball courts and badminton provision as part of two large multi-purpose sports halls.

## Future provision

England Athletics strategic position is that in most areas of the country there is a sufficient supply of traditional synthetic outdoor 400m tracks to meet club and competition needs and that there should focus on protecting and maintaining this provision. In addition to traditional facilities, EA is keen to support the development of a new generation of innovative athletics & running facilities (NewGen), as well as a country-wide network of indoor athletics facilities developed as part of future indoor multisport projects.

Priority for both NewGen and indoor developments will be given to those areas that sit outside EAs recommended drivetime catchment of existing facilities or where there is additional, demonstrable demand.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## NewGen facility concepts

Track and Field (run/jump/throw)

- ▶ **Play Track:** The simple animation of dated playground surfaces using colourful painted lines and markings to (KS1 & KS2) – encouraging participation in run/jump/throw activities by creating challenging and inspiring environments.
- ▶ **Compact Track:** A sports-lit, multiple lane, synthetic sprint straight with optional jumps and throws provision.
- ▶ **MiniTrack:** A sports-lit synthetic “mini” running oval, with sprint straight, multi-sport “infield” and optional jumps and throws provision.

Recreational running/endurance running/multi-sport:

- ▶ **Active Track:** A free to access, macadam running / cycling circuit designed to be sympathetic to the local environment and support the recreational needs of local communities.
- ▶ Ideally lit by low level lighting / solar columns, ActiveTracks can be introduced to existing parks, open spaces and playing fields or integrated into the master planning of new housing developments.
- ▶ Sport England Case Study: ActiveTrack: [Sowerby Sports Village](#)

There is currently one compact track in East Hertfordshire located at Hockerill Anglo-European College.

## 9.3: Demand

For the purposes of this study, athletics demand is considered to come in various forms, rather than just traditional track and field activity. As such, running clubs are also considered, as are organised running events and various running initiatives, some of which are governed by England Athletics. It is also acknowledged that recreational running forms a large part of demand, although this is difficult to measure.

### Hawcs Athletics Club

Hawcs AC train out of Wodson Park Sports Centre, using the Stuart Storey athletics track. The Club caters for all athletic disciplines offering throwing and jumping as well as sprints, hurdles and middle distance. It competes in local and regional leagues. The Club currently has 86 junior members and one senior female member and confirms that its senior membership has decreased due to a falling out between coaches.

### Herts Phoenix Athletics Club

The Club offers track and field from spring through summer and then switches its focus to road running through autumn and winter cross country and indoor competitions. It trains out of two sites, Wodson Park Sports Centre and Gosling Park, the latter being in neighbouring Welwyn Garden City. The main training takes place on Tuesdays and Thursdays at both venues each week. The Club also runs various other sessions throughout the week for the different sections, disciplines, and age groups. Across all sections it has 270 members, 221 juniors, 21 female and 28 male. The Club is currently operating a waiting list with 25 people on it and wants to continue to increase its membership.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Other running clubs

### Ware Joggers

The Club is based out of the Stuart Storey Track at Wodson Park Sports Centre, and its current membership stands around 88 people. It runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7pm with the session lasting approximately two hours. There is also occasional Sunday morning runs if arrangements are made in good time.

### Allenburys Running Club

The Club does a variety of sessions throughout the week including a long runs, interval and circuit training. It caters for runners of all ability and can adjust runs accordingly to suit the group.

### Bishop's Stortford Running Club

Founded in 1983, the Club now has over 300 members and has includes triathlon, junior run and junior tri sub-sections. It runs every Wednesday evening starting at Bedlams Lane and can vary from three to 10 miles. There are also interval sessions on Tuesday and Saturday with ad hoc sessions being held on Friday evenings. The Club has access to ancillary facilities at Hockerill sports & social club including showers and changing rooms as well as a bar with food offerings. It also offers swimming and biking sessions to continue improving its triathlon section.

## Parkrun

Parkrun is a series of 5k runs held on Saturday mornings in areas of open space around the UK, with 1,300 events now operating across the Country. They are open to all, free, and are safe and easy to take part in. Runners must first register online to access a printed barcode which gives them access to all Parkrun events.

In East Hertfordshire, six Parkrun events are held each week. The events are known as Castle Park and Westmill Parkrun. Details of which are outlined in the table below.

Table 9.3: Summary of Parkrun and junior Parkrun in East Hertfordshire

| Location                            | Postcode | Event          | Number of events | Average attendance |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Castle Park Parkrun                 | CM23 2DL | Parkrun        | 298              | 37                 |
| Panshanger Parkrun                  | SG14 2NJ | Parkrun        | 472              | 31                 |
| Westmill Parkrun                    | SG12 0ES | Parkrun        | 318              | 24                 |
| Grange Paddocks Junior Parkrun      | CM23 3HH | Junior Parkrun | 243              | 7                  |
| Hertford Junior Parkrun             | SG14 1QR | Junior Parkrun | 285              | 9                  |
| Norfolk Road Playing Fields Parkrun | SG9 9TA  | Junior Parkrun | 37               | 5                  |

Castle Park Parkrun is the most popular, averaging 37 runners per event.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## Run Together<sup>17</sup>

Run Together is an official England Athletics recreational running project which aims to get the whole nation running. Its aim is to provide fun, friendly, supportive, and inclusive running opportunities for everyone, regardless of ability and availability. It believes that running is more fun and easier to become part of a lifestyle when shared with others.

In East Hertfordshire, there are three clubs forming part of the initiative, Herts Girls Can, Active East Herts and Hertford Running Club.

A key focus for England Athletics is increasing demand for participation in initiatives such as Run Together, meaning this could be further targeted moving forward, especially given the number of other clubs that could be involved.

## Other running events

The Bishop's Stortford Mitre 10k, 5k & 1K are a series of road racing events open to all, organised by Bishop's Stortford High school and beginning in Jobbers Wood. The races aim to fundraise for the Mitre Fund which in turn raises money for the school's sports facilities.

Many of the annual and bigger races within Hertfordshire take place in neighbouring districts and boroughs such as East Hertfordshire or North Hertfordshire.

## Couch to 5k

Couch to 5k is a national health initiative promoted by the National Health Service (NHS) to encourage absolute beginners get into running as part of establishing and maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle including regular exercise.

The plan consists of three runs per week and a day of rest in between, with a different schedule for each of the nine weeks to completion. It starts with a mix of running and walking, to gradually build up fitness and stamina, in order to create realistic expectations and a sense of achievability to encourage participants to stick with it. The end goal of the plan is for the participant to be able to run 5k.

Through the Couch to 5k plan the NHS particularly promotes the health benefits of running and regular exercise which underpin the initiative, such as improved heart and lung health, weight loss and possible increases in bone density which can help protect against bone diseases such as osteoporosis. This also includes mental benefits of running through goal setting and challenge setting, which can help boost confidence and self-belief. Furthermore, running regularly has been linked to combating depression.

It is believed that an increase in people running through the Couch to 5k plan may increase interest and possibly have a knock-on effect of leading to increased demand at running groups and clubs as people may wish to continue develop their running further.

## Latent demand

Sport England's Segmentation Tool enables analysis of 'the percentage of adults that would like to participate in athletics but 'are not currently doing so'. The tool identifies significant latent demand amounting to 3,211 people (1.26%) within East Hertfordshire. As a comparison, the national average shows 3.04% of the population would like to participate in athletics but is not currently doing so, making East Hertfordshire below the national average.



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Hawcs AC is not currently operating a waiting list and has no latent demand for athletics. The Club details how it has recently lost membership, therefore, is not at capacity.

## **Future demand**

Hawcs AC has plans to grow its membership, however, the Club did not specify by how many members.

## **9.4: Supply and demand analysis**

With one dedicated athletics facility in East Hertfordshire, that being the standard quality track at Wodson Park Sports Centre, supply is seemingly sufficient as to meet the identified demand in the District. Quality improvements such as respraying and cleaning the surface will be required in the future to ensure the quality of the Wodson Park track is sustained as long as possible.

However, when taking into consideration that clubs want to expand membership, coupled with other running clubs like Ware Joggers training on the track. Supply might become an issue in the future.

It is important to note that some clubs, such as Herts Phoenix AC, are using provision outside of the District, mainly Gosling in Welwyn Garden City.

## **9.5: Conclusion**

The track and field athletics facilities at Wodson Park Sports Centre requires protection and enhancement to ensure that the venue can continue to service the demand of its users and promote further usage. Furthermore, it is imperative that the track retains its UKA TrackMark accreditation thus should be monitored closely.

The compact track at Hockerill Anglo-European College should also be protected to allow for continued use of the track in addition to the track at Wodson Park to further offer athletics provision to the local community.

With one full-size athletics track and a compact track within East Hertfordshire, it can be determined that the area is adequately catered for to accommodate the existing levels of demand. However, it is likely that within the lifespan of this PPOSS the track at Wodson Park Sports Centre will decline in quality and will require maintenance, as it is already showing signs of wear and tear.

Away from the formal athletics track at Wodson Park, priority should also be placed on supporting activity being accommodated by the various running clubs in East Hertfordshire and the events that are being held. For instance, Bishop's Stortford Running Club accommodates significant demand within the District with over 300 members.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## **Athletics – supply and demand summary**

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

## **Athletics – supply summary**

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

## **Athletics – demand summary**

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

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## PART 10: LAWN BOWLS

### 10.1: Introduction

Outdoor bowls in East Hertfordshire is played almost entirely on flat greens, with a typical season running in the Summer from May until September. Bowls England is the NGB with overall responsibility for ensuring effective governance of the sport.

Crown green bowling is another version of bowls played in England, governed separately by The British Crown Green Bowling Association (BCGBA). This format of the sport is played predominately in the North of England and there is a no presence of this locally.

### Consultation

There are 14 bowls clubs identified as currently using outdoor bowling greens in East Hertfordshire. Of these, 11 responded to consultation requests, equating to a response rate of 79%. Unresponsive clubs have been contacted via email and telephone on several occasions.

Table 10.1: Summary of consultation

| Club name                          | Club response? |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Allenburys Sports & Social Club    | Yes            |
| Aston Bowls Club                   | No             |
| Bengeo Bowls Club                  | Yes            |
| Buntingford Bowls Club             | Yes            |
| Datchworth Bowls Club              | Yes            |
| Havers Park Bowls Club             | Yes            |
| Hertford Bowls Club                | Yes            |
| Hertford Castle Bowls Club         | Yes            |
| Much Hadham Bowls Club             | Yes            |
| Sawbridgeworth Bowling Club        | No             |
| Sele Farm Bowls Club               | Yes            |
| Shire Park Bowls Club              | Yes            |
| Standon & Puckeridge Bowling Green | Yes            |
| Ware Lawn Bowling Club             | No             |

Bishop's Stortford BC has been omitted from this report as its ground is in the Uttlesford District and as such is included in the Uttlesford PPOSS.

### 10.2: Supply

There are a total of 13 bowling greens identified in East Hertfordshire across 13 sites. Most provision is in the Hertford, Ware Analysis Area with five greens provided (38% of all provision) whilst both Bishop's Stortford and Watton-at-Stone analysis areas have the least provision with one green each (8% of provision, respectively totalling 16%).

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 10.2: Summary of the number of greens by analysis area

| Analysis area             | No. of greens |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| Bishop's Stortford        | 1             |
| Buntingford               | 4             |
| Hertford, Ware            | 5             |
| Sawbridgeworth            | 2             |
| Watton-at-Stone           | 1             |
| <b>East Hertfordshire</b> | <b>13</b>     |

Figure 10.1 shows the location of all bowling greens currently in East Hertfordshire. For a key to the map, see Table 10.3.

Figure 10.1: Location of bowling greens in East Hertfordshire



## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 10.3: Location of all bowling greens

| Site ID | Site name                          | Club using site                                  | Analysis area      | No. of greens |
|---------|------------------------------------|--|--------------------|---------------|
| 5       | Aston Bowls Club                   | Aston Bowls Club                                 | Buntingford        | 1             |
| 11      | Bengeo Bowls Club                  | Bengeo Bowls Club                                | Hertford, Ware     | 1             |
| 26      | Buntingford Bowls Club             | Buntingford Bowls Club                           | Buntingford        | 1             |
| 37      | Datchworth Bowls Club              | Datchworth Bowls Club                            | Buntingford        | 1             |
| 45      | Havers Park Bowls Club             | Havers Park Bowls Club                           | Bishop's Stortford | 1             |
| 47      | Hertford Castle Bowls Club         | Hertford Castle Bowls Club & Hertford Bowls Club | Hertford, Ware     | 1             |
| 69      | Much Hadham Bowls Club             | Much Hadham Bowls Club                           | Sawbridgeworth     | 1             |
| 82      | Sawbridgeworth Bowling Club        | Sawbridgeworth Bowling Club                      | Sawbridgeworth     | 1             |
| 85      | Sele Farm Bowls Club               | Sele Farm Bowls Club                             | Hertford, Ware     | 1             |
| 87      | Shire Park Bowls Club              | Shire Park Bowls Club                            | Watton-at-Stone    | 1             |
| 117     | Ware Lawn Bowling Club             | Ware Lawn Bowling Club                           | Hertford, Ware     | 1             |
| 126     | Allenburys Sports & Social Club    | Allenburys Sports & Social Club                  | Hertford, Ware     | 1             |
| 135     | Standon & Puckeridge Bowling Green | Standon & Puckeridge Bowling Green               | Buntingford        | 1             |

### Disused provision

There are no disused bowling greens in East Hertfordshire.

### Security of tenure

The table below highlights the tenure position of clubs which have responded to consultation. Mainly, clubs have secure tenure, with most having either long term lease arrangements in place with East Hertfordshire District Council, town and parish councils, or private landowners.

Table 10.4: Summary of club tenure arrangements

| Site ID | Site   | Club                       | Tenure   |
|---------|--|----------------------------|--|
| 11      | Bengeo Bowls Club                                | Bengeo Bowls Club          | The green is owned by Bengeo Club which the bowls Club are a part of.  |
| 26      | Buntingford Bowls Club                           | Buntingford Bowls Club     | Buntingford BC owns the site Freehold.   |
| 37      | Datchworth Bowls Club                            | Datchworth Bowls Club      | The Club rent the site from the Parish Council and pay annually.   |
| 45      | Havers Park Bowls Club                           | Havers Park Bowls Club     | The land is owned by Sawbridgeworth Masons and is in perpetuity until it is no longer used for bowling. Therefore, the Club do not pay anything towards the use of the land. |
| 47      | Hertford Castle Bowls Club & Hertford Bowls Club | Hertford Castle Bowls Club | Club is three to four years into a 20-year lease. Land is owned by East Hertfordshire District Council.  |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site                               | Club                               | Tenure   |
|---------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| 69      | Much Hadham Bowls Club             | Much Hadham Bowls Club             | The Club leases the land from Much Hadham Parish Council.  |
| 85      | Sele Farm Bowls Club               | Sele Farm Bowls Club               | The Club leases the site from East Hertfordshire District Council and pays annually.   |
| 87      | Shire Park Bowls Club              | Shire Park Bowls Club              | The Club owns the site.  |
| 126     | Allenburys Sports & Social Club    | Allenburys Sports & Social Club    | The green is associated with the Social Club who have an agreement with GSK, the private landowner. The Club has a long-term lease in place with the owner which is in the process of being renewed. |
| 135     | Standon & Puckeridge Bowling Green | Standon & Puckeridge Bowling Green | The Club owns the site.  |

The current tenure position is unknown for Aston Bowls Club, Sawbridgeworth Bowls Club, and Ware Lawn Bowling Club.

### Quality

The quality of bowling greens across East Hertfordshire have been assessed via a combination of site visits conducted in August 2024 (using non-technical assessments) and user consultation to reach and apply an agreed rating as follows:

- ◀ Good.
- ◀ Standard.
- ◀ Poor.

For bowling greens, the non-technical assessment considers several attributes of the site including the surrounding hard surfaces to the green, disability access, evenness, grass coverage and signs off unofficial use.

Table 10.5: Summary of bowling green quality

| Site ID | Site name                   | Club using site                                  | No. of greens | Quality  |
|---------|-----------------------------|--|---------------|----------|
| 5       | Aston Bowls Club            | Aston Bowls Club                                 | 1             | Good     |
| 11      | Bengeo Bowls Club           | Bengeo Bowls Club                                | 1             | Good     |
| 26      | Buntingford Bowls Club      | Buntingford Bowls Club                           | 1             | Good     |
| 37      | Datchworth Bowls Club       | Datchworth Bowls Club                            | 1             | Standard |
| 45      | Havers Park Bowls Club      | Havers Park Bowls Club                           | 1             | Standard |
| 47      | Hertford Castle Bowls Club  | Hertford Castle Bowls Club & Hertford Bowls Club | 1             | Standard |
| 69      | Much Hadham Bowls Club      | Much Hadham Bowls Club                           | 1             | Standard |
| 82      | Sawbridgeworth Bowling Club | Sawbridgeworth Bowling Club                      | 1             | Good     |
| 85      | Sele Farm Bowls Club        | Sele Farm Bowls Club                             | 1             | Standard |
| 87      | Shire Park Bowls Club       | Shire Park Bowls Club                            | 1             | Standard |
| 117     | Ware Lawn Bowling Club      | Ware Lawn Bowling Club                           | 1             | Standard |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Site ID | Site name                          | Club using site                    | No. of greens | Quality |
|---------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|---------|
| 126     | Allenburys Sports & Social Club    | Allenburys Sports & Social Club    | 1             | Good    |
| 135     | Standon & Puckeridge Bowling Green | Standon & Puckeridge Bowling Green | 1             | Good    |

Of the 13 bowling greens in East Hertfordshire six are deemed good quality (46%) and seven are deemed standard quality (54%), there are no poor quality greens identified. In the case of the standard quality provision, instances of highly worn patches and slight undulations were present.

Nine clubs state their greens are maintained by members as outlined below:

- ◀ Allenburys Sports & Social Club.
- ◀ Bengoe Bowling Club.
- ◀ Buntingford Bowls Club.
- ◀ Datchworth Bowling Club.
- ◀ Havers Park Bowling Club.
- ◀ Much Hadham Bowling Club.
- ◀ Sele Farm Bowling Club.
- ◀ Shire Park Bowls Club.
- ◀ Standon & Puckeridge Bowling Club.

Sawbridgeworth Bowling Club, Ware Lawn Bowling Club and Aston Bowling Club have not yet responded to consultation requests and therefore it cannot be stated how the respective greens are managed.

Hertford Castle Bowling Club and Hertford Bowling Club share a green and both pay into a joint account to pay a greenkeeper to maintain the green.

Standon & Puckeridge Bowling Club report its green quality is much better due to the members paying for professional advice.

Shire Park Bowls Club describes how its green quality is declining due to poor weather early in the year, encouraging fungus paired with machinery breaking down.

Buntingford Bowls Club and Havers Park Bowls Club both express that their respective greens have slightly improved since the last season, largely due to hard work and investment. Havers Park specifically describes the use of top dressing working particularly well in combination with rainfall.

### Ancillary provision

Most clubs which responded to consultation have access to some form of clubhouse/pavilion on site or through an adjoining public house. The quality of these facilities ranges from purpose-built brick pavilions to basic wooden huts and shelters. Nine sites are accompanied by good quality facilities, a further five sites have standard quality ancillary provision. With zero sites having poor quality ancillary provision.

The table below outlines the quality of ancillary provision for each club site.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 10.6: Summary of club ancillary provision

| Site ID | Site name                          | Club using site                                  | Analysis area      | Quality  |
|---------|------------------------------------|--|--------------------|----------|
| 5       | Aston Bowls Club                   | Aston Bowls Club                                 | Buntingford        | Good     |
| 11      | Bengeo Bowls Club                  | Bengeo Bowls Club                                | Hertford, Ware     | Standard |
| 26      | Buntingford Bowls Club             | Buntingford Bowls Club                           | Buntingford        | Good     |
| 37      | Datchworth Bowls Club              | Datchworth Bowls Club                            | Buntingford        | Good     |
| 45      | Havers Park Bowls Club             | Havers Park Bowls Club                           | Bishop's Stortford | Good     |
| 47      | Hertford Castle Bowls Club         | Hertford Castle Bowls Club & Hertford Bowls Club | Hertford, Ware     | Standard |
| 69      | Much Hadham Bowls Club             | Much Hadham Bowls Club                           | Sawbridgeworth     | Good     |
| 82      | Sawbridgeworth Bowling Club        | Sawbridgeworth Bowling Club                      | Sawbridgeworth     | Good     |
| 85      | Sele Farm Bowls Club               | Sele Farm Bowls Club                             | Hertford, Ware     | Standard |
| 87      | Shire Park Bowls Club              | Shire Park Bowls Club                            | Watton-at-Stone    | Standard |
| 117     | Ware Lawn Bowling Club             | Ware Lawn Bowling Club                           | Hertford, Ware     | Good     |
| 126     | Allenburys Sports & Social Club    | Allenburys Sports & Social Club                  | Hertford, Ware     | Standard |
| 135     | Standon & Puckeridge Bowling Green | Standon & Puckeridge Bowling Green               | Buntingford        | Good     |

Shire Park Bowls Club has a standard rating. The clubhouse is a medium size brick building which is in good condition. However, the Club reports that due to it being over 30 years old it requires some refurbishments. It currently carries out renovations whenever urgent or when funding becomes readily available.

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

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

During consultation, Bengeo Bowls Club confirms it has a standard large brick building serving as a clubhouse with changing facilities and adequate parking for its members.

## Sports lighting

Greens with sports lighting offer opportunities to access provision for training and matches during evenings outside of the summer months. However, they are relatively uncommon across the Country, meaning the levels identified in East Hertfordshire are comparative to the national picture of sports lighting supply and should not be of any particular concern.

Only Sawbridgeworth Bowling Club is serviced by sports lighting in East Hertfordshire.



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## 10.3: Demand

There are 14 bowls clubs in East Hertfordshire. Of the 11 clubs that have responded to the consultation, it was only possible to obtain membership numbers for ten clubs. The total membership equates to 560 members. This comprises 283 senior male, 153 senior female and four juniors (mixed gender) members.

The average membership across clubs is 56 members. The highest membership figures are at Buntingford Bowls Clubs with 141 members, whilst the lowest known figures are found at Standon & Puckeridge Bowls Club, and which has 23 members. Standon & Puckeridge Bowls Club does state its plans to increase membership in the future.

### Pay and play

Pay and play refers to the opportunity for residents to turn up to existing facilities and access them on a casual, commitment free basis. Locally, only Bengoe Bowls Club and Datchworth Bowls Club offer pay and play to residents and Havers Park Bowls Club offer pay and play on the basis that you come with an existing member. All remaining clubs (which were responsive to consultation) do not offer pay and play with the general rationale being that there is nobody on site able to collect fees.

### Play Bowls and Bowls Bash

Play Bowls<sup>18</sup> is a new product designed to assist clubs in attracting more casual, pay and play participants. Clubs are now able to sign up to the scheme, with booking slots for access then able to be secured and paid for via the Play Bowls website. The aim is for this to help the sport become much more accessible whilst making it easy for clubs to evolve and manage the demand from the casual audience. Bowls Bash<sup>19</sup> offers a shortened format normally played in teams of two, with players delivering 30 bowls each per match.

Both schemes are being delivered across the country as a means of growing participation for lawn bowls.

Table 10.7: Summary of club membership (where known)

| Club name                   | Site name  | Analysis area      | Men | Women | Juniors | Total |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------------|-----|-------|---------|-------|
| Bengoe Bowls Club           | Bengoe Bowls Club                                | Hertford, Ware     | 22  | 21    | 0       | 43    |
| Buntingford Bowls Club      | Buntingford Bowls Club                           | Buntingford        | 79  | 58    | 4       | 141   |
| Datchworth Bowls Club       | Datchworth Bowls Club                            | Buntingford        | 45  | 25    | 0       | 70    |
| Havers Park Bowls Club      | Havers Park Bowls Club                           | Bishop's Stortford | 23  | 9     | 0       | 32    |
| Hertford Bowls Club*        | Hertford Castle Bowls Club & Hertford Bowls Club | Hertford, Ware     | -   | -     | -       | 75    |
| Hertford Castle Bowls Club* | Hertford Castle Bowls Club & Hertford Bowls Club | Hertford, Ware     | -   | -     | -       | 45    |
| Much Hadham Bowls Club      | Much Hadham Bowls Club                           | Sawbridgeworth     | 26  | 7     | 0       | 33    |

<sup>18</sup> <https://play-bowls.com/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.bowlsengland.com/bowlsbash/>

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Club name                          | Site name                          | Analysis area   | Men        | Women      | Juniors  | Total      |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|------------|----------|------------|
| Sele Farm Bowls Club               | Sele Farm Bowls Club               | Hertford, Ware  | 20         | 14         | 0        | 34         |
| Shire Park Bowls Club              | Shire Park Bowls Club              | Watton-at-Stone | 52         | 12         | 0        | 64         |
| Standon & Puckeridge Bowling Green | Standon & Puckeridge Bowling Green | Buntingford     | 16         | 7          | 0        | 23         |
| <b>Total</b>                       |                                    |                 | <b>283</b> | <b>153</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>560</b> |

\*Specific membership breakdown was not known at time of consultation

### Latent demand

Latent demand refers to potential demand; clubs that would like to gain more members but currently do not do so. This can be for a variety of reasons including a lack of provision, appropriate facilities, and qualified coaches. Unmet demand is existing demand that is not getting access to provision. It is usually expressed, for example, when a team is already playing for a club but is unable to access a match green, or when a league has a waiting list due to a lack of pitch provision, which in turn is hindering the growth of the league.

Sport England's Segmentation Tool enables analysis of 'the percentage of adults that would like to participate in bowling' but 'are not currently doing so'. The tool identifies latent demand of 146 people or 0.06% within East Hertfordshire. As a comparison the national average shows that 0.15% of the population is looking to play lawn bowls but is not currently doing so.

Hertford BC confirms that it has recently turned away new members as it is at capacity because of having to share the site with Hertford Castle BC. If both clubs are playing at the same time, then the green is at capacity meaning that neither club can afford to accept new members.

### Future demand

For bowls it is more appropriate to consider population changes for persons aged 65 and over. Office of National Statistics population projections (2018-2043), identify that the number of persons aged 65 and over living in East Hertfordshire is likely to increase continuously from 26,528 in 2018 to 37,191 in 2043, representing an increase of 40.2%.

Due to this age band being the most likely to play bowls, it can be said that demand for bowling greens in East Hertfordshire is likely to increase with additional pressure placed on the existing stock of provision. In addition, consultation identifies six clubs which aspire to increase their existing memberships. Details of this are provided in the table below. Total future demand identified across six clubs equates to 54 new members.

Table 10.8: Future demand aspirations of clubs consulted with

| Club name              | Site name              | Analysis area  | Future demand aspiration (members) | Method to increase membership                            |
|------------------------|------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Bengeo Bowls Club      | Bengeo Bowls Club      | Hertford, Ware | Five members                       | Open days.   |
| Buntingford Bowls Club | Buntingford Bowls Club | Buntingford    | Did not specify                    | Coaching sessions for all ages in April & May each year. |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

| Club name                          | Site name  | Analysis area      | Future demand aspiration (members) | Method to increase membership  |
|------------------------------------|--|--------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Datchworth Bowls Club              | Datchworth Bowls Club                            | Buntingford        | Did not specify                    | The Club confirms that it would like to increase its membership but is finding it difficult.                 |
| Havers Park Bowls Club             | Havers Park Bowls Club                           | Bishop's Stortford | Seven members                      | Advertisement and through allowing scout and guide groups to play as well as open days.                      |
| Hertford Bowls Club                | Hertford Castle Bowls Club & Hertford Bowls Club | Hertford, Ware     | Did not specify                    | The Club would like to grow its membership, however, feels its capped as it shares a site with another club. |
| Hertford Castle Bowls Club         | Hertford Castle Bowls Club & Hertford Bowls Club | Hertford, Ware     | Did not specify                    | The Club holds recruiting days but does not attract many new players.  |
| Much Hadham Bowls Club             | Much Hadham Bowls Club                           | Sawbridgeworth     | 10 members                         | Through advertisement and open days.   |
| Sele Farm Bowls Club               | Sele Farm Bowls Club                             | Hertford, Ware     | No future demand expressed         | -  |
| Shire Park Bowls Club              | Shire Park Bowls Club                            | Watton-at-Stone    | 22 members                         | Open days and a reduced membership fee for newcomers.  |
| Standon & Puckeridge Bowling Green | Standon & Puckeridge Bowling Green               | Buntingford        | 10 members                         | The Club hopes to increase membership through word of mouth and local promotion.                             |

### 10.4: Supply and demand analysis

The capacity of a bowling green is very much dependent on the leagues and the day that they operate. A green may have no spare capacity in the afternoon or evening when a popular league operates but may be underused for the rest of the week.

However, in many cases, greens are used during the afternoons by club members which bowl socially, with access a potential issue during peak times if membership is particularly high.

Bowls England has no specific guidance on bowling green capacity, stating that it can vary from site-to-site and from club-to-club. However, as a guide, it states that any green used by at least 20 members is generally considered to be sustainable, whilst any green operating with a membership of over 60 may need additional resource to ensure that it is meeting its required level of demand.

Therefore, capacity ratings for bowling greens in East Hertfordshire are classified as follows:

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Within capacity range</b>  | Membership ensures green is sustainable without capacity issues |
| <b>Outside capacity range</b> | Membership is below or above the recommended capacity range     |

## **EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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Following this, the table below highlights the level of usage each green in East Hertfordshire receives, where the information is known. Where no membership information is known, further communication is required with clubs to fully understand their needs and any potential capacity or sustainability issues.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 10.9: Bowling green supply and demand analysis (where membership figures are known)

| Site ID | Site name                          | Club name   | No. of greens | Analysis area     | Total membership | Future Demand | Current capacity (members) | Future capacity (members) |
|---------|------------------------------------|---|---------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 11      | Bengeo Bowls Club                  | Bengeo Bowls Club                                 | 1             | Hertford, Ware    | 43               | 5             | 17                         | 12                        |
| 26      | Buntingford Bowls Club             | Buntingford Bowls Club                            | 1             | Buntingford       | 141              | -             | 81                         | 81                        |
| 37      | Datchworth Bowls Club              | Datchworth Bowls Club                             | 1             | Buntingford       | 70               | -             | 10                         | 10                        |
| 45      | Havers Park Bowls Club             | Havers Park Bowls Club                            | 1             | Bishops Stortford | 32               | 7             | 28                         | 21                        |
| 47      | Hertford Castle Bowls Club         | Hertford Bowls Club<br>Hertford Castle Bowls Club | 1             | Hertford, Ware    | 129              | -             | 69                         | 69                        |
| 69      | Much Hadham Bowls Club             | Much Hadham Bowls Club                            | 1             | Sawbridgeworth    | 33               | 10            | 27                         | 17                        |
| 85      | Sele Farm Bowls Club               | Sele Farm Bowls Club                              | 1             | Hertford, Ware    | 34               | -             | 26                         | 26                        |
| 87      | Shire Park Bowls Club              | Shire Park Bowls Club                             | 1             | Watton-at-Stone   | 64               | 22            | 4                          | 26                        |
| 135     | Standon & Puckeridge Bowling Green | Standon & Puckeridge Bowling Green                | 1             | Buntingford       | 23               | 10            | 37                         | 27                        |

\*Two clubs share this site, so the total membership number is for both clubs combined

The table above shows that five clubs are operating within a “sustainable” capacity range. While Buntingford BC, Datchworth BC, Hertford Castle BC and Hertford BC (both share a green) and Shire Park BC is operating above Bowls England guidelines. It is important to note that during consultation Hertford Bowls Club and Hertford Castle Bowls Club both express that capacity is capped as both clubs share the site. When factoring in future demand, Datchworth BC, and Shire Park BC are forecast to go further above its capacity threshold.

Standon & Puckeridge BC have the most capacity currently with space for 37 more potential members. With this however, the Club is dangerously close to having unsustainable membership levels and would benefit from increasing membership.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## 10.5: Conclusion

Despite Hertford Castle Bowls Club and Hertford Bowls Club expressing capacity issues due to sharing a green, there is spare capacity across the District to accommodate more bowls use. Furthermore, with most of the clubs having good quality greens, existing demand is being fully accommodated. Therefore, supply is deemed sufficient to meet the current level of demand.

A caveat to this finding is that the current supply of bowling greens across East Hertfordshire should be protected and monitored to ensure that they retain sufficient capacity in the future should there be an increase in demand in line with population projections for the typical bowling demographic.

For clubs which are operating over Bowls England sustainability guidelines, none note a need for increased access to provision.

All sites in East Hertfordshire, are rated standard or good regarding ancillary and bowling provision so there is limited scope for improvement work. However, many sites could have improved maintenance which may help to increase the standard rating to a good.

### **Bowls – supply and demand summary**

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

### **Bowls – supply summary**

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

### **Bowls – demand summary**

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

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## PART 11: RUGBY LEAGUE

### 11.1: Introduction

The Rugby Football League (RFL) is the governing body for rugby league in England. It administers the England national rugby league team, the Challenge Cup, Super League and the championships which form the professional and semi-professional structure of the game in the UK.

Most community club rugby league is played throughout the summer season (from February to October). However, rugby league is considered as a winter season sport within schools, colleges and universities and therefore pitch provision for matches and training is also required throughout the winter months.

### Consultation

Although there is no demand for rugby league within East Hertfordshire, consultation was undertaken with North Herts Crusaders, a team in the neighbouring Authority of North Hertfordshire to help inform this section of the report.

### 11.2: Supply

There are currently no rugby league pitches located within East Hertfordshire.

### 11.3: Demand

No demand has been identified for community rugby league in East Hertfordshire itself. In effect, any residual demand for the sport is unlikely to be sufficient for a club to be created, with individuals instead likely to travel to play at North Herts Crusaders which is based at Hitchin Rugby Club in North Hertfordshire or St Albans Centurions RLFC based in neighbouring St Albans.

North Herts Crusaders fields both senior and junior teams and currently has two senior men's, one senior women's and three junior boy's teams. The Club is based and plays in North Hertfordshire and reports that many of its players travel over five miles to access the sport.

With two established clubs in nearby local authorities, it can be determined that any residual demand is exported to play at either North Herts Crusaders or St Albans Centurions rugby league clubs.

### 11.4: Supply and demand analysis

As no formal demand is identified within East Hertfordshire, there is no need to suggest a rugby league pitch is required. However, there is clearly exported demand to neighbouring authorities so this should be observed closely as to ascertain whether the need for a pitch could become a possibility in the future.

### 11.5: Conclusion

With no demand for rugby league currently identified in East Hertfordshire, it can be concluded that there is no requirement for rugby league pitches to be provided. However, should any demand exist, if not already, should be signposted to North Herts Crusaders or St Albans Centurions in neighbouring authorities.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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### **Rugby league – supply and demand summary**

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

### **Rugby league – supply summary**

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

### **Rugby league – demand summary**

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



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## PART 12: GOLF

### 12.1: Introduction

Golf is the fifth largest participation sport in England, with around 730,000 members belonging to one of 1,800 affiliated clubs and a further two million people playing independently outside of club membership. There are an estimated 3,000 golf courses across the Country, with approximately 90 designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest because apart from the intensively managed trees and greens they have other habitats with high wildlife value. Many other courses also exist within designated Heritage Coast sites, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or listed Historic Parklands.

Nationally, the sport is governed by England Golf. Its role includes providing competitions for players of all ages and abilities, identifying and developing the most talented golfers, maintaining a uniform system of handicapping, administering and applying the rules, and introducing new golfers via its initiatives such as 'Get into Golf'.

### Consultation

The section was informed via consultation with England Golf, which has provided information relating to all facilities and clubs within East Hertfordshire.

### 12.2: Supply

There are three different types of golf facilities recognised by Sport England and governed by England Golf, as defined in the table below. Facilities such as pitch and putt courses and miniature/crazy golf courses are not included as these are not considered to be traditional formats of the game and are not comparable offerings.

Table 12.1: Definitions of golf facilities

| Facility type | Description  |
|---------------|--|
| Standard      | A standard par course, with a minimum of 9 holes but normally associated with 18-hole courses; many 9-hole courses have different tee boxes which allow the provision to be played as an 18-hole course. Some courses provide 27 holes, with any two loops of 9-holes played to make up an 18-hole round.  |
| Par 3         | Shorter length of holes than a standard course, with no hole longer than Par 3. Most likely to be a 9-hole course although 18-hole offerings do exist. Does not include pitch and putt courses, which are even shorter offerings and are not considered to be a traditional version of the sport.  |
| Driving Range | Includes covered and uncovered driving range bays but not practice areas within golf courses; ranges are based on the hiring of balls, with users not required to retrieve, whereas practice areas are generally for members to use with their own balls (although a growing number have dispensers). Does not include 'entertainment' ranges or virtual offerings, although some driving ranges have expanded to also provide these features. |

Within East Hertfordshire, there are nine golf venues that provide facilities conforming with the above definitions, as identified in Table 12.1 and Table 12.2 below.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

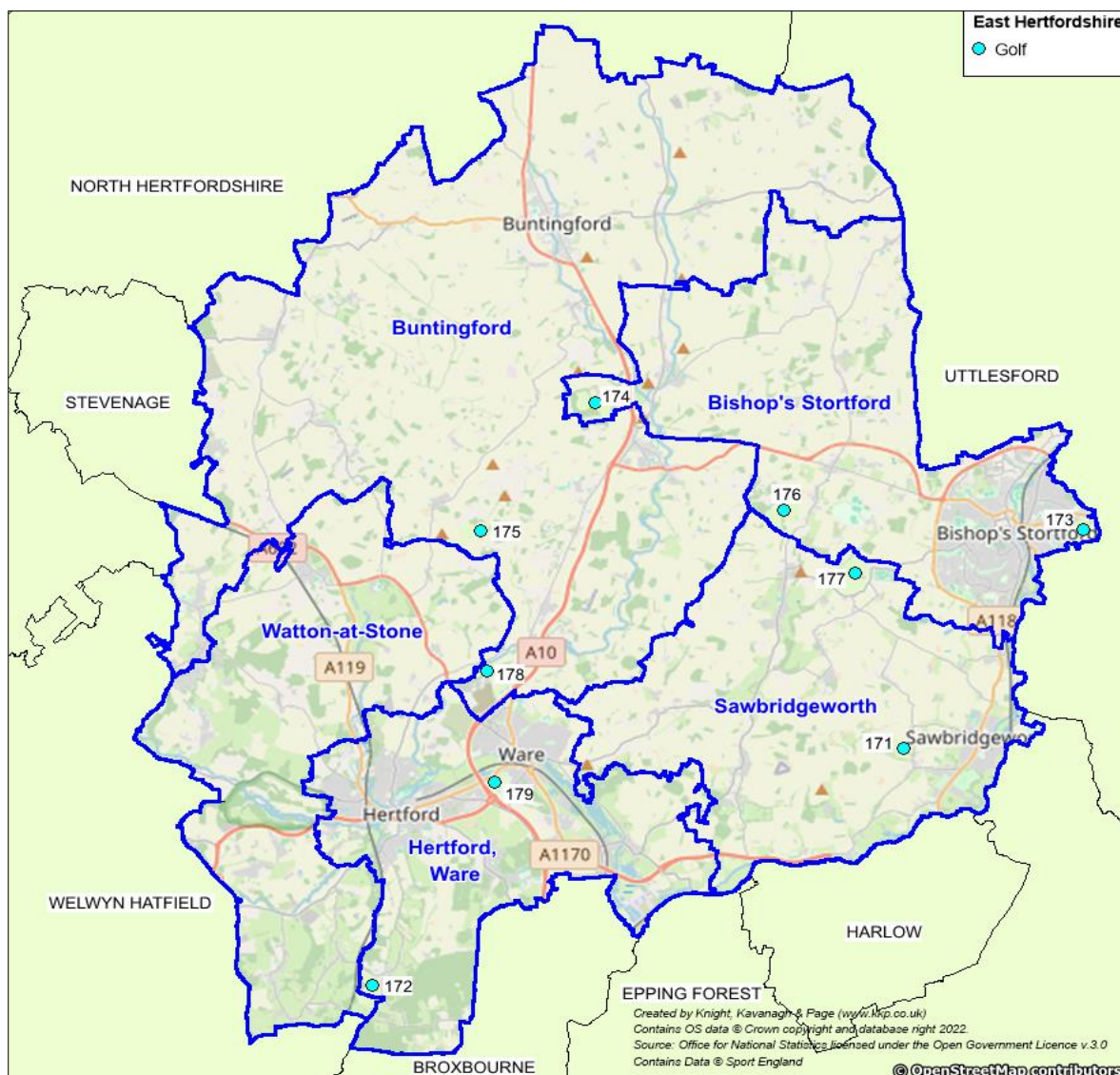
Table 12.2: Golf facilities within East Hertfordshire

| Site ID | Sitename                         | Postcode | Analysis area      |
|---------|----------------------------------|----------|--------------------|
| 171     | Manor Of Groves Golf Club        | CM21 0JY | Sawbridgeworth     |
| 172     | Brickendon Grange Golf Club      | SG13 8PD | Hertford, Ware     |
| 173     | Bishop's Stortford Golf Club     | CM23 5HP | Bishop's Stortford |
| 174     | East Herts Golf Club             | SG9 9NB  | Bishop's Stortford |
| 175     | Whitehill Golf Club              | SG12 0JS | Buntingford        |
| 176     | Ash Valley Golf Club             | SG10 6HD | Bishop's Stortford |
| 177     | Great Hadham Golf & Country Club | SG10 6JE | Sawbridgeworth     |
| 178     | Hanbury Manor Golf Club          | SG12 0SD | Buntingford        |
| 179     | Chadwell Springs Golf Centre     | SG12 9LE | Hertford, Ware     |

Within East Hertfordshire there are eight affiliated clubs operating from as many affiliated facilities, listed in Table 12.3. Each facility offers a standard 18-hole course with some further offering short courses and driving range provision also.

Figure 12.1 below highlights the location of all golf provision in East Hertfordshire.

Figure 12.1: Location of golf provision in East Hertfordshire



## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 12.3: Summary of standard hole provision in East Hertfordshire

| Site ID | Site name                        | Holes | Par   | Yardage <sup>20</sup> |       | Slope rating |         |
|---------|----------------------------------|-------|-------|-----------------------|-------|--------------|---------|
| 171     | Manor Of Groves Golf Club        | 18    | 71    | 6,126                 | 5,797 | 5,139        | 116-135 |
| 172     | Brickendon Grange Golf Club      | 18    | 71&73 | 6,483                 | 6,053 | 5,735        | 128-134 |
| 173     | Bishop's Stortford Golf Club     | 18    | 71    | 6,404                 | 6,161 | 5,757        | 113-136 |
| 174     | East Herts Golf Club             | 18    | 71    | 6,428                 | 6,186 | 5,520        | 116-131 |
| 175     | Whitehill Golf Club              | 18    | 72    | 6,802                 | 6,271 | 5,482        | 127-133 |
| 176     | Ash Valley Golf Club             | 18    | 71    | 6,661                 | 6,469 | 5,797        | 119-126 |
| 177     | Great Hadham Golf & Country Club | 18    | 72    | 6,854                 | 6,465 | 5,887        | 120-129 |
| 178     | Hanbury Manor Golf Club          | 18    | 72    | 7,052                 | 6,678 | 6,124        | 128-139 |

There are eight standard length golf courses within East Hertfordshire, all of which consist of 18 holes and are in excess of 6,000 yards. The longest course is provided by Hanbury Manor Golf Club spanning 7,052 yards. The smallest course is Manor of Groves Golf club which is 6,126 yards in total.

Slope ratings are new to golf across the World. The intention is for them to allow the handicap system to reflect course difficulty and the difference in difficulty for all players compared to scratch golfers. In effect, this enables each player to have a handicap that will vary from course-to-course, depending on difficulty, as well as a general handicap.

The maximum slope rating is 155, whereas the minimum is 55. The standard difficulty is considered to be 113.

Most commonly, Par 3 provision is used by beginner and casual players, although they are also frequented by more traditional golfers wanting to practice their short game. They offer a course for all ages to enjoy which is ideal for families whilst offering a great entry point for driving range users to transition to standard course use.

Ash Valley Golf Club and Chadwell Springs Golf Centre both provide a 9-hole, Par 3 short course. The courses are in Bishop's Stortford and Hertford, Ware analysis areas respectively, meaning residents outside these areas have limited access to these types of facilities.

Within East Hertfordshire there are five driving ranges with a total of 63 bays, which are listed in table 12.4 below.

<sup>20</sup> White denotes Championship tees, yellow denotes men's tees and red denotes ladies' tees. Page 251

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

The use of driving ranges was higher in 2021 than in any of the previous 10 years, no doubt impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic but also due to the rise in popularity of the gamification options available through the use of ball tracking technology. Driving Ranges provide the ideal location for those looking to start out in the sport and with the option of now accessing technology which helps to make the experience more fun, they are appealing to a new audience of future golfers. Nationally, many driving range providers are updating their facilities with such provision in a bid to increase demand. Others also seek the installation of automatic tees or entertainment systems such as TopTracer and FlightScope. These allow for users to simulate playing on courses across the world and provides ball tracking and statistical feedback. Such technology is offered at Bishop's Stortford Golf Club. Great Hadham Golf & Country Club offers the largest number of bays across the District with 18 as well as offering pay and play which can be more enticing for newcomers.

Table 12.4: Summary of driving range bays

| Site ID | Sitename                         | No. of bays provided | Covered? | Sports lighting? | Ball Tracking technology? | Access       |
|---------|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------|------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| 173     | Bishop's Stortford Golf Club     | 10                   | Yes      | No               | Yes                       | Members only |
| 175     | Whitehill Golf Club              | 12                   | Yes      | Yes              | No                        | Pay & play   |
| 177     | Great Hadham Golf & Country Club | 18                   | Yes      | Yes              | No                        | Pay & play   |
| 178     | Hanbury Manor Golf Club          | 6                    | No       | No               | No                        | Pay & play   |
| 179     | Chadwell Springs Golf Centre     | 17                   | Yes      | Yes              | Yes                       | Pay & play   |
| -       | <b>Total</b>                     | <b>63</b>            | -        | -                | -                         | -            |

There are three main types of ownership and management models of golf facilities in England: members clubs, proprietary clubs, and municipal facilities. Each of these is summarised in the table below.

Table 12.5: Types of ownership and management of golf facilities

| Management type    | Description  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Members</b>     | Traditionally owned by members and run by committees. They are likely to hire caterers and green staff. Most members' clubs offer some level of pay and play and encourage golf societies but are mostly focused on membership numbers.  |
| <b>Proprietary</b> | Owned or managed by businesses or individuals, these can include country club type facilities at the high end of the golfing market alongside more localised facilities. Many have clubs operating within them but can also take a much more relaxed attitude to dress and traditions of golf. Pay and play opportunities tend to be a key feature of the business plan. |
| <b>Municipal</b>   | These are generally owned by a local authority, although in a growing number of instances, management has been contracted and externalised to private companies. Due to a lack of financial viability, many have closed across the Country in recent years and many that remain are under threat.  |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

It is recognised that members clubs and visitors to such clubs are normally expected to dress appropriately, have a registered handicap certificate (a certificate issued by the Council of National Golf Unions (CONGU) and be familiar with the rules and etiquette of the game. This is not uncommon at some proprietary clubs, but municipal courses tend to be more relaxed with regard to dress codes and do not require people to have handicaps, making golf much more accessible.

Consequently, municipal courses are, in many instances, seen as entry level facilities, with players using them before having the confidence to move on to a members' or high-end proprietary club (although many people can and do stay attached to a particular course). They also tend to offer a more affordable golfing experience.

The business model for members clubs tends to rely heavily on income through membership subscriptions and use of ancillary facilities, rather than from pay and play usage, although attention has somewhat switched at many sites in recent years due to demand falling. The same can be said for some proprietary clubs, although, in general, more emphasis is placed on supplementing regular activity with green fee sales.

Conversely, municipal sites have always been heavily reliant on visitors even though membership packages are normally available (often in the shape of season tickets). On occasion, these can be linked to access to other local authority operated sports facilities, such as leisure centres and swimming pools.

Despite the above generalisations, each golf facility, regardless of management type, will have its own processes in terms of how much focus is placed on membership and pay and play usage, or whether it equally encourages both. There is no correct way to run a site. A club that focuses on members has guaranteed income, but this can often deter more casual players or nomadic golfers through, for example, a lack of peak time availability.

In contrast, a site that depends on visitors can struggle to be viable if there are spells of inclement weather during summer months and can discourage people that want to be part of a club environment. On the other hand, more income can be brought in through regular users compared to what would be the case had they been part of a membership scheme.

In East Hertfordshire there are six proprietary clubs and three members clubs with no municipal clubs, which Table 12.6 explores further.

Table 12.6: Summary of ownership/management in East Hertfordshire

| Site ID | Site name                        | Analysis area      | Management type |
|---------|----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 171     | Manor Of Groves Golf Club        | Sawbridgeworth     | Proprietary     |
| 172     | Brickendon Grange Golf Club      | Hertford, Ware     | Members         |
| 173     | Bishop's Stortford Golf Club     | Bishop's Stortford | Members         |
| 174     | East Herts Golf Club             | Bishop's Stortford | Members         |
| 175     | Whitehill Golf Club              | Buntingford        | Proprietary     |
| 176     | Ash Valley Golf Club             | Bishop's Stortford | Proprietary     |
| 177     | Great Hadham Golf & Country Club | Sawbridgeworth     | Proprietary     |
| 178     | Hanbury Manor Golf Club          | Buntingford        | Proprietary     |
| 179     | Chadwell Springs Golf Centre     | Hertford, Ware     | Proprietary     |

A key issue for the wider golf population is whether golf courses are available to the general population at a price point which is accessible to most residents. Better quality courses tend to cost more to use, whilst 18-hole provision is generally more expensive to access than 9-hole provision.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Nationally, over the past few years, many facilities have altered their pricing structures to allow for discounts following a previous decline in golf membership. England Golf has positively encouraged this as its view is that clubs are more likely to experience growth when flexible packages are available. For instance, some now offer five and/or six-day memberships (whereby members can access the course on specific days but not on one or both weekend days), whilst others provide discounts that are no longer limited solely to junior players (e.g. discounts for those aged 18-21 and 21-30 or for those aged 65 and over). In the past, it was common for clubs to have membership waiting lists, but this has become rarer. That being said, a rise in demand following the Covid-19 pandemic has tested this and resulted in capacity pressures, with a third of clubs now thought to have waiting times before new members can join.

England Golf reports that the average cost of a full adult membership across the Country is currently £1,071. None of the clubs in East Hertfordshire operate below this figure, with the cheapest being at Ash Valley Golf Club at £975. The average membership price for 18-hole courts is £1,656 which is 55% higher than the national average. Green fees are available at most Golf Club. Pricing for weekday access ranges from £20-£65, and weekend prices range from £30-£75.

Table 12.7: Pricing structures at golf facilities within East Hertfordshire

| Site ID | Sitename                         | Joining fee | Full membership (per year) | Green fee (per round) <sup>21</sup> |         |
|---------|----------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|
|         |                                  |             |                            | Weekday                             | Weekend |
| 171     | Manor Of Groves Golf Club        | Yes         | £1,315                     | £33.50                              | £37.50  |
| 172     | Brickendon Grange Golf Club      | Yes         | £1,980                     | £65                                 | Unknown |
| 173     | Bishop's Stortford Golf Club     | Yes         | £1,650                     | £65                                 | £70     |
| 174     | East Herts Golf Club             | Yes         | £1,895                     | £65                                 | £75     |
| 175     | Whitehill Golf Club              | No          | £1,542                     | £44                                 | £48     |
| 176     | Ash Valley Golf Club             | No          | £975                       | £20                                 | £30     |
| 177     | Great Hadham Golf & Country Club | No          | £1,210                     | £33                                 | £44     |
| 178     | Hanbury Manor Golf Club          | Yes         | £2,680                     | Unknown                             | Unknown |

There are no official national or county golf facility rankings. Generally, the better course quality and supporting infrastructure is, the higher the joining/membership and green fees are likely to be. Some sites gain status through hosting county, national and international golf events and some tend to feature in ranking articles put together by golf magazines.

In terms of golf course quality within East Hertfordshire, it is relatively good across the district, with no significant issues identified.

The ancillary facilities across clubs in East Hertfordshire are also generally good. Each of the aforementioned venues offer members a clubhouse offering a lounge that serves food and drinks, alongside a function room which is available for event hire, other than Ash Valley Golf Club that does not hire out space for functions/meetings. Alongside this, Manor of Groves, Great Hadham and Hanbury Manor provide additional leisure facilities.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Golf clubs often need such revenue sources to operate effectively and the provision of a good quality, well equipped clubhouse is a key opportunity to provide a secondary income stream. This emanates from a variety of sources including bar and catering income from members and visitors as well as venue hire for special occasions including weddings, christenings and funerals.

From a golfing perspective, given the current emphasis on increasing levels of female and junior golf membership across the Country, it is also imperative that ancillary provision can adequately cater for all types of members e.g. by providing gender specific changing facilities.

## 12.3: Demand

Around 2004, participation in golf began declining; however, recent signs show that the reduction has not only levelled off, but that demand has started to increase, especially following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, both in 2020 and 2021. As one of the first sports to be allowed on both occasions, people have been able to play whilst maintaining social distancing and England Golf has provided very clear guidance as to how this should manifest itself (e.g. by not allowing the flag to be taken out or rakes to be used). Some courses have reported a near doubling of usual demand compared to pre-pandemic levels, highlighting that a significant opportunity now exists to retain increased participation in the long-term. An opportunity now exists for this to represent a long-term increase in demand, although to what level is unclear as retention may in some instances be challenging as more and more users return to normal working/living conditions.

## Membership

The average member number of clubs in England for 2022 was 407 so this can be used as a benchmark to compare this data against. Given the nature of the affiliation fee collection process, this report cannot provide 2023 average membership numbers nationally, however, it is known from research performed by Club & County Support Officers that over 70% of clubs in the country had either grown or sustained their membership levels from 2022 levels, despite an on average 9% increase in subscription fees. To ensure consistency, all the membership number data used has also been considered factoring in the 18-hole equivalent value to help establish the averages. So, for 9-holes courses this has been doubled and 36-hole the number has been halved.

Table 12.8: Average Membership Numbers in eight affiliated facilities within East Hertfordshire

| Authority          | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024*<br>22 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------|
| East Hertfordshire | 362  | 359  | 389  | 376  | 496  | 502  | 529         |

Within the East Hertfordshire, membership numbers at affiliated clubs are significantly higher than the national average. The current average number of members is 30% above the national average.

It is also worth referencing that this also includes relatively low number from Ash Valley Golf Club. Membership numbers have also grown during the documented period above. Between 2015 and 2024 there has been an increase of 46% in the local authority.

<sup>22</sup> As of July 2024

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Pay and play

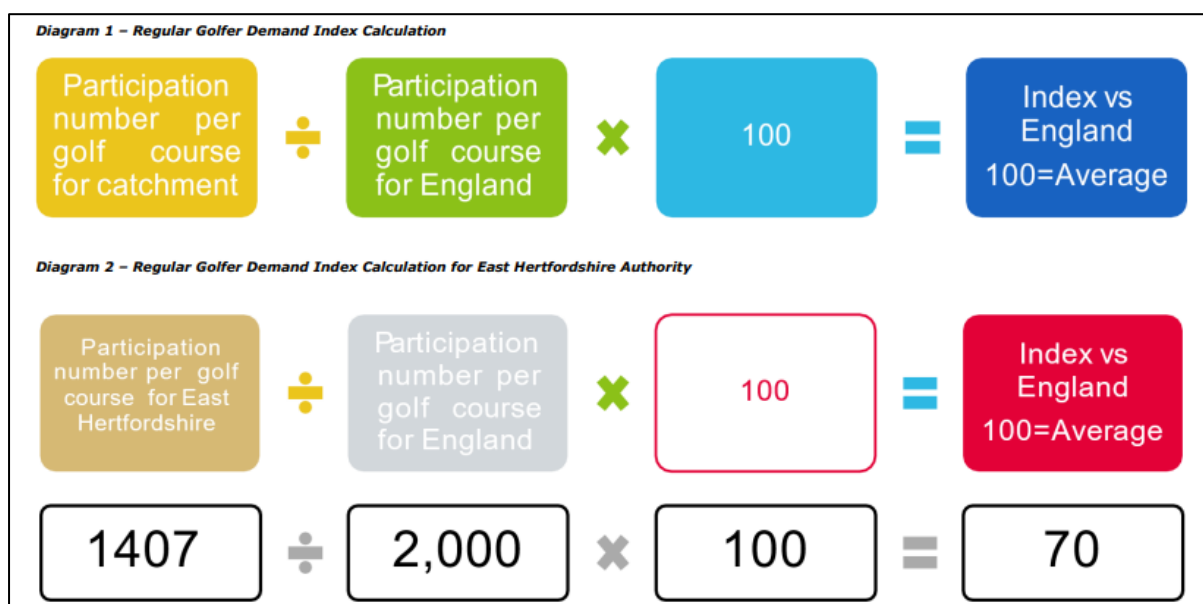
Whilst pay and play usage has generally increased across England in recent years, usage figures at the sites within East Hertfordshire are not known as it is not something that is tracked by England Golf. However, all clubs provide green fee rates.

Nationally, England Golf utilises a figure of 3.5 million people that are considered to be regular golfers, with this defined as those that have played on a standard-length course at least twice within the last 12 months. Using this, it is able to indicate how much demand exists per facility within a catchment area before then comparing this to a national benchmark.

Within the formula, it calculates the participation number in an area by establishing what proportion of the population is likely to be golfers, which can then be used to determine the number of participants per facility. This can then be compared to the national rate, with an index created for comparison purposes. Using 100 as the average, anything below this suggests that an area has either low demand or a high facility count, whereas anything above provides evidence that an area has high demand and/or a low level of provision.

The calculations for the catchment area for the East Hertfordshire area can be seen via the image below, as provided by England Golf.

Figure 12.2: Regular golfer demand index calculations for East Hertfordshire



As shown, the index rating for the catchment area (70) is below the national benchmark (100). Therefore, indicating East Hertfordshire provides enough facilities to meet the demand of those in the authority who play golf regularly.

## Unmet demand

Unmet demand is existing demand that is not getting access to golf facilities. This could be reflected via a waiting list at a club, although it is likely that people on a waiting list are still playing golf elsewhere, either via membership of another club or through pay and play access. Bishop's Stortford Golf Club is the only club that is currently operating a waiting list in East Hertfordshire.



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Latent demand

Latent demand is demand for golf that is not currently being realised. This could be for numerous reasons, such as time constraints, financial reasons and a lack of suitable, available provision.

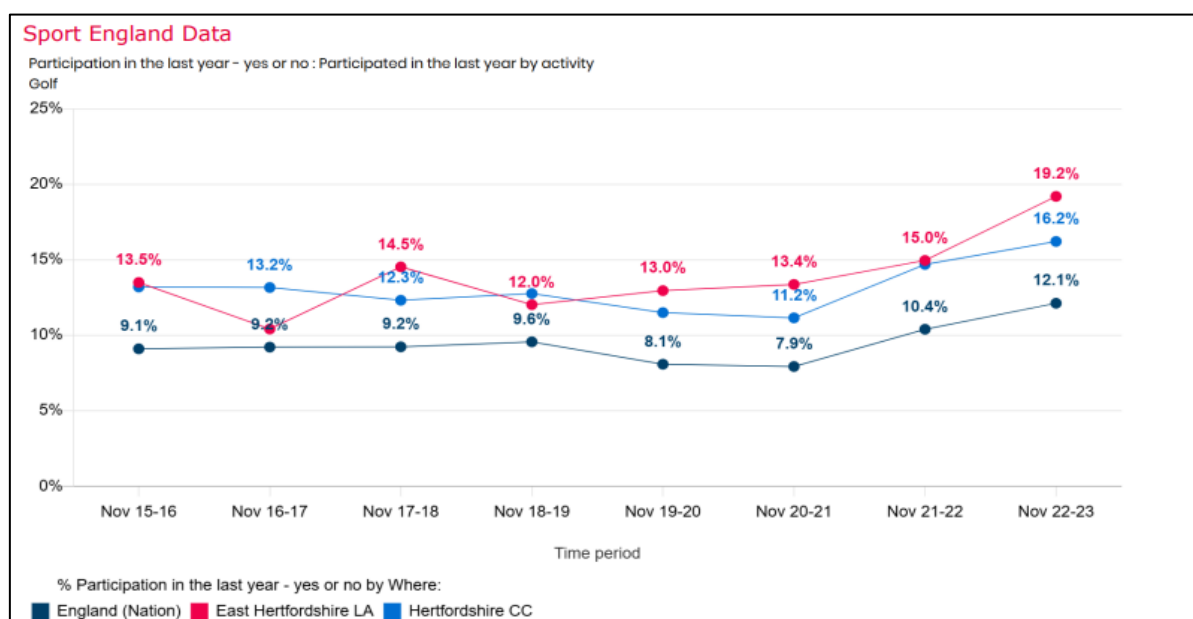
Whilst the reasoning for the latent demand is unknown and is likely to be varied, the data does show relatively high demand which would significantly increase membership and/or pay and play usage across facilities if realised. England Golf is supportive of clubs that proactively target new audiences in an attempt to tap into such demand i.e. through developing a variety of golfing offers, coaching programmes and a range of membership options.

In addition, England Golf has a mapping tool that enables an assessment of potential demand within a 20-minute drive time of each golf facility, with the population broken down into nine golfing segments. These segments are defined to help provide an indication as to what type of golfing offer each would be most likely to access. They are:

- ◀ Relaxed members.
- ◀ Older traditionalists.
- ◀ Younger traditionalists.
- ◀ Younger fanatics.
- ◀ Younger actives.
- ◀ Late enthusiasts.
- ◀ Occasional time pressed.
- ◀ Social couples.
- ◀ Casual fun.

In East Hertfordshire, demand from each of the segments is relatively evenly split across the nine segments; the highest demand is from “casual fun” (4,313 people), whilst the lowest is from “older traditionalists” (3,848 people).

Figure 12.3: Sport England participation data



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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As evidenced in the above chart, Sport England data suggests that participation in golf is the highest it has been since 2015 when data started being collected. Between 2021 and 2023 there has been an increase of over 4%, with circa 4.8 million people participating in the sport during that 12-month period.

When looking specifically at East Hertfordshire, the popularity of golf currently sits above the national average by 7.1% and is in line with the regional average. 19.2% of the population participated in golf during 2023 in East Hertfordshire, a growth of nearly 6% from the previous 24-month period, and similar to the national trend, the highest participation rate for the authority since 2015.

## Future demand

England Golf has an aim to increase membership of clubs nationally; however, after reaching its previous target, it no longer has a fixed goal in terms of growth. Nationally, many clubs, especially the most established ones, will be happy to retain current demand levels, whilst others will be open to growing and some considerably so. In that regard, England Golf reports that many providers are proactively targeting new audiences through coaching programmes and a wider range of membership and playing options.

### 12.4: Supply and demand analysis

With nine golf facilities in East Hertfordshire, there is a good level of supply to meet current and future demand with a variety of facilities on offer. With only one club operating a waiting list currently it can be suggested that the opportunity for newcomers to play golf is an option. Given the range of facilities and offerings, it can be said that all golfers are catered for with differing course lengths and driving ranges. Golf is clearly a popular sport in East Hertfordshire with an abundance of facilities and participation being 7.1% over the national average with 19.2% of the local population participating.

### 12.5: Conclusion

There is a good variety of golf provision within the area, with two par 3/short courses, and eight 18-hole courses offering standard length traditional golf. In addition to course access, four of the above-mentioned facilities offers a driving range, with one stand-alone driving range and short course facility available at Chadwell Springs Golf Centre.

Membership numbers in the authority are much higher compared with the national average of 407 members but has increased by 46% since 2015. Numbers have continued to increase steadily over the last 3 years. It is also worth noting that each club will have a different financial model in terms of income generation from membership vs green fees etc.

Participation and membership in golf has seen a large renaissance recently and particularly as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, as it was considered to be a much safer and more accessible sport when the Country emerged from the various periods of restrictions. England Golf know that clubs showing growth are developing new income streams and catering for a wide range of needs, so there is clearly scope for clubs to offer additional non-traditional and flexible playing opportunities wherever appropriate.

In summary, there is a good amount of provision in the authority, with a variety of facilities. The existing facilities are clearly servicing a demand as evidenced by the high membership numbers across the listed facilities. The Regular Golfer Demand figure shows that there are enough facilities to meet current demand but doesn't take into account the lack of shorter forms of golf or driving ranges. It is the view of England Golf that all current facilities should therefore be retained and protected to ensure no gaps in golf provision are created.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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To protect and support the facilities, England Golf offers assistance, primarily through a variety of tools that can be used to better understand the local market. There may also be opportunities for some clubs across the area to work more collaboratively in terms of creating pathways where appropriate to collectively cater for all types of players.

### **Golf – supply and demand summary**

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

### **Golf – supply summary**

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

### **Golf – demand summary**

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

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## PART 13: OUTDOOR WATER SPORTS

### 13.1: Introduction

East Hertfordshire is a landlocked authority providing somewhat limited space for outdoor water-based activities. Water sports in England are governed by various bodies, including:

- ◀ British Canoe Union.
- ◀ British Kite Surfing Association.
- ◀ British Rowing.
- ◀ British Sub-Aqua Club.
- ◀ British Swimming.
- ◀ British Water Ski.
- ◀ Royal Yachting Association.
- ◀ Surfing Great Britain.

### 13.2: Supply

Abbotts Lake is a 25-acre lake based in Stanstead Abbots in East Hertfordshire. The lake caters for various water sports including yachting and canoeing. The Lake forms part of the Lea Valley Regional Park.

The river Stort runs for 24 miles through Essex and Hertfordshire and offers another opportunity for those wishing to partake. The river takes its name from Bishop's Stortford, located in East Hertfordshire.

East Hertfordshire is also home to Ware Priory Lido, situated in Ware Priory. The site offers a 30m main pool as well as a 'teaching pool as ancillary provision for its users which includes changing facilities as well as food and drink offerings. The Lido was built in 1934 and last renovated in 2021 to be reopened to the public in 2023 after an investment of £1m. The funding came from Ware Town Council and the Public Work Loan Board. This was after a previous investment in 2016 from GSK to complete some 'extensive renovation work.

### 13.3: Demand

Abbotts Lake is home to Hertford County Yacht Club who use the lake for casual sailing, open and handicap racing and B Fleet which is aimed at novice racers who would like to compete. The Club describes itself as a grassroots Club with the main aim of getting people into or back into sailing. It is Royal Yachting Association (RYA) an accredited training centre and offers memberships for all ages. For juniors, the Club offers a more informal introduction to sailing based on the RYA onboard scheme.

Whoosh Explore Canoe Club (WECC) and Bishop's Stortford Canoe Club (BSCC) both use the River Stort for canoeing. BSCC, affiliated to Paddle UK, were founded in 1972 and owns its own land beside Southmill Lock enabling it to build ancillary provision. The Club's focus is flatwater sprints and marathon racing in kayaks and canoes. WECC is an amateur club offering paddling sessions for its users, with canoes, kayaks, and paddle boards able to hire or under a structured session. The Club also runs several club trips to the UK's best paddling venues.

Ware Priory Lido is open to local residents for community use all year round for heated swimming from May – September and cold-water swimming from October – April. The Pool is also available for private hire for different types of groups and is sometimes used by Ware Swimming Club although the Club is mainly based out of Fanshawe Pool which is an indoor pool.

## 13.4: Conclusion

### **Outdoor water sports – supply and demand summary**

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

### **Outdoor water sports – supply summary**

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

### **Outdoor water sports – demand summary**

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

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## APPENDIX 1: SPORTING CONTEXT

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

### National context

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

Department of Media Culture and Sport Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation (2015)

The Government published its strategy for sport in December 2015. This strategy confirms the recognition and understanding that sport makes a positive difference through broader means and that it will help the sector to deliver five simple but fundamental outcomes: physical health, mental health, individual development, social and community development and economic development. In order to measure its success in producing outputs which accord with these aims it has also adopted a series of 23 performance indicators under nine key headings, as follows:

- ◀ More people taking part in sport and physical activity.
- ◀ More people volunteering in sport.
- ◀ More people experiencing live sport.
- ◀ Maximising international sporting success.
- ◀ Maximising domestic sporting success.
- ◀ A more productive sport sector.
- ◀ A more financially and organisationally sustainable sport sector.
- ◀ A more responsible sport sector.

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

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

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

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

- ◀ **Being unapologetically ambitious in making the nation more active**
  - ◀ Ensuring everyone is focused on increasing physical activity, meaning fewer inactive children, and narrowing the gap on inactivity where groups are not being reached, with visible progress across the country by 2030

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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- ◀ Focusing on evidence, data and metrics
- ◀ Setting the future direction for facilities and spaces where people can be active
  
- ◀ **Making sport and physical activity more inclusive and welcoming for all that everyone can have confidence that there is a place for them in sport**
  - ◀ Helping the sector to be welcoming to all
  - ◀ Improving how issues and concerns are dealt within the sector
  
- ◀ **Moving towards a more sustainable sector that is more financially resilient and robust**
  - ◀ Supporting the sector to access additional, alternative forms of investment
  - ◀ Working towards a more environmentally sustainable sector

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

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

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

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

### **Tackling inequalities**

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

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

## **National Planning Policy Framework (2024)**

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

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

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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In relation to plan-making the NPPF sets out that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs.

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

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

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

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

## The FA National Football Facilities Strategy (2018-28)

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

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

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

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

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

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

- ◀ **Improve 20,000 Natural Turf pitches**, with a focus on addressing drop off due to a poor playing experience;
- ◀ **Deliver 1,000 3G AGP 'equivalents'** (mix of full size and small sided provision, including MUGAs - small sided facilities are likely to have a key role in smaller / rural



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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communities and encouraging multi-sport offers), enhancing the quality of playing experience and supporting a sustainable approach to grass roots provision;

- ◆ **Deliver 1,000 changing pavilions/clubhouses**, linked to multi-pitch or hub sites, supporting growth (particularly in women and girls football), sustainability and providing a facility infrastructure to underpin investment in coaching, officials and football development;  
**Support access to flexible indoor spaces**, including equipment and court markings, to support growth in futsal, walking football and to support the education and skills outcomes, exploiting opportunities for football to positively impact on personal and social outcomes for young people in particular;
- ◆ **Refurbish existing stock to maintain current provision**, recognising the need to address historic under-investment and issues with refurbishment of existing facilities;
- ◆ **Support testing of technology and innovation**, building on customer insight to deliver hubs for innovation, testing and development of the game.

## Local Football Facility Plans

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## Game Changers:

- ◀ Win tournaments
  - ◀ Develop pathways
  - ◀ Support elite players
  - ◀ Enhance environments
  - ◀ Collaborate and influence
- ◀ A game free from discrimination
  - ◀ Boost representation
  - ◀ Drive more inclusion
  - ◀ Tackle discrimination
- ◀ Equal opportunities for women & girls
  - ◀ Increase school participation
  - ◀ Increase club participation
  - ◀ Enhance women's competitions
  - ◀ Support female coaches and referees
- ◀ Transform the pitch landscape
  - ◀ Sustain and grow high-quality grass pitches
  - ◀ Deliver new 3G pitches
  - ◀ Support inclusivity accessibility and environmental sustainability of facilities

## Drivers:

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

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

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

1. **Build and Protect the Uniqueness of the Women's Game:** Continue to honour the history of women's football and recognise those who have contributed towards making it so unique, whilst ensuring the distinct qualities and unique culture of the women's game are valued and protected.
2. **Win a Major Tournament:** Continue to be world-leaders both on and off the pitch, developing players and building an inclusive talent pathway system to make football more equal and accessible at every level of the game, ensuring the England pathway and teams represent society.
3. **Build Robust, High-Quality Competition:** Create compelling competition structures and support clubs to develop to the appropriate level within the game, while enabling people to grow and develop within The FA's competition structures.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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4. **Deliver Equal Opportunities for Women and Girls to Play:** Sustain growth in schools whilst tackling inequalities. Continue to grow the number of female teams and deliver vibrant league offers whilst extending and enhancing the sessional football offer. The ambition is for 90% of schools to deliver equal access for girls to play football in key stages two and three.

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

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

## Inspiring Generations – Cricket's Game-wide Strategy (2025 – 28)<sup>[1]</sup>

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

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

It aims to obtain this vision through six key objectives

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

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

## The Rugby Football Union Strategic Plan 2021 onwards

The RFU has released its new strategic vision for rugby in England. The strategy is based on four main elements which are; Protect, Engage, Grow and Win. It covers all elements of rugby union ranging from elite rugby to grassroots, although the general relevancy to the PPS is centred around growing the game.

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

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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The RFU exists to promote and develop rugby union in England and ensure the long-term sustainability of clubs by growing player numbers and retaining them across all age groups. Responding to wider market influences, work will continue on developing new ways to take part in all forms of the game, without comprising the sports traditions. This will ensure a lasting legacy from elite success by attracting new players and encouraging current male and female adult players to play.

### England Hockey Strategy (2023 – 2028)

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

Aiming to make hockey more noticeable, relevant, and accessible to all, England Hockey have launched their new strategy 'Creating a Future for Our Game Together' on 3<sup>rd</sup> October. The new strategy is a continued effort to re-engage with the current hockey community and to reach out to potential newcomers to introduce them to hockey.

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

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

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

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

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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

The RFL has developed a new National Facilities Strategy which will guide investment into the game from 2024 through to 2030. The proposed investment package aligned to the Strategy will not only transform facilities, but also bolster the sport's social impact, reinforcing its position as a vital part of the nation's sporting and social fabric. The four focus areas of the Strategy are:

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

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

### ◀ **Focus community clubs**

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

### ◀ **Deliver positive social and environmental impact**

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

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

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

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## ◀ **Technological solutions**

- ◀ Ensure the RFL gathers greater levels of information from clubs via affiliation. To include (e.g.) security of tenure information and an integrated self-assessment audit of community facilities.
- ◀ Continue expanding the use and application of PitchPower so all clubs can self-assess provision and support clubs to make positive contributions to improving the quality of grass pitches.
- ◀ Promote technological solutions which progress clubs into being more sustainable, energy efficient and ensure their long-term viability as community assets.
- ◀ Create a platform or resource hub where clubs can access information on funding opportunities, facility management, and sustainable operational practices.

## ◀ **Working with Charitable Community Organisations and Wheelchair Rugby League**

- ◀ Develop an investment package to support the operational delivery of professional club foundation led wheelchair activity focusing on storage and logistical solutions.
- ◀ Prioritise capital investment into community club sites which also accommodate professional club foundations as tenants for community Rugby League activity.
- ◀ Begin work on the feasibility of developing a national wheelchair centre which includes exploring partnership opportunities with other sports to maximise multisport value and return on investment.
- ◀ Consult with professional club foundations, where possible, to understand the need for 3G access and work to ascertain sufficient access hours during peak times of need.

## **England Netball**

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

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

The 'Adventure Strategy' outlines the intention to:-

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

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

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

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

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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

## Facility Development

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

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

## Tennis in Britain - LTA Strategy

The LTA's vision for 2019 – 2023, Tennis Opened Up includes seven strategies relating to three objectives which are built around its mission 'to grow tennis by making it relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable'.

### Objectives

- ◀ Increase the number of fans on our database from [623,602] to [1,000,000] by 2023.
- ◀ More people playing more often;
  - Increase the number of adults playing tennis each year from [7.7% (4,018,600)] of the population to [8.5% (4,420,460)], and the frequency of adults playing tennis twice a month 2.5% 1,311,800 to 1.9% 1,500,000 by 2023.
  - The number of children playing tennis once a week from 550,000 to 700,000 (7.9% to 10% of the population) by 2023.
- ◀ Enable 5 new players to break into the top 100 by 2023 and inspire the tennis audience.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## Strategies

1. Visibility -Broaden relevance and increase visibility of tennis all year round to build engagement and participation with fans and players.
2. Innovation - Innovate in the delivery of tennis to widen its appeal.
3. Investment - Support community facilities and schools to increase the opportunities to play
4. Accessibility - Make the customer journey to playing tennis easier and more accessible for anyone
5. Engagement - Engage and collaborate with everyone involved in delivering tennis in Britain, particularly coaches and volunteers to attract and maintain more people in the game.
6. Performance - Create a pathway for British champions that nurtures a diverse team of players, people and leaders.
7. Leadership - Lead tennis in Britain to the highest standard so it is a safe, welcoming, well-run sport.

## British Crown Green Bowling Association

Please note there is no current facility guidance provided by British Crown Green Bowling Association responsible for crown green bowls in England.

<https://www.bcgba.org.uk/>

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

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

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

## England Athletics Strategic Plan – Athletics & Running: for everyone, forever – 2017 and beyond

This plan sets out England Athletics' mission, vision and strategic priorities that will direct how they work as an organisation during the coming years: what they do and how they will do it.

**Vision:** Make athletics and running the most inclusive and popular sport in England, led by a network of progressive clubs and organisations and supported by a sustainable, respected and trusted governing body.



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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For England Athletics to achieve this vision, they will focus on three values:

- Pride – taking pride in their work and demonstrating to athletes that they recognise the importance of their role in bettering athletics.
- Integrity – demonstrate integrity to earn respect and to build effective partnerships.
- Inclusivity – promote inclusivity in all their actions.

**Mission:** To grow opportunities for everyone to experience athletics and running, to enable them to reach their full potential.

In order to achieve their mission, England Athletics will have three strategic priorities.

1. To expand the capacity of the sport by supporting and developing its volunteers and other workforce. The target is to achieve a 6% increase every year of licensed leaders, coaches and officials.
2. To sustain and increase participation and performance levels in our sport. To achieve this, England Athletics' current targets are to increase the number of club registered athletes from (149,000 to 172,000), engage 135,000 people through the RunTogether programme and to increase athlete performance levels across all events and disciplines by 1% every year.
3. To influence participation in the wider athletics market. Their target here is to increase the number of regular athletes or runners by at least one million.

## England Athletics Facility Strategy (2018 – 2025)

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

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

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

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

England Golf has always had a mission to lead, support, inspire and deliver for its community of golfers, golf clubs and counties. To help enable this, its Course Planner forms the core of its strategy, with 18 guiding principles established that are designed to best position growth in the game:

- ◀ Strengthen governance in all aspects of the sport
- ◀ Deliver safeguarding throughout the golfing community
- ◀ Utilise data and technology to enhance decision making
- ◀ Drive equality and equity in everything it does

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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- ◀ Support golf clubs with member recruitment and retention
- ◀ Connect and engage with all golfers
- ◀ Inspire and educate golf's network of volunteers
- ◀ Increase golf's influence
- ◀ Advocate and inform on all elements of sustainability
- ◀ Drive diversity at all levels of golf
- ◀ Create more opportunities for junior and young adults
- ◀ Promote the health and wellbeing of golf
- ◀ Inspire more women and girls to play golf
- ◀ Develop greater access for disabled people
- ◀ Enthuse all golfers through relatable role models
- ◀ Communicate a positive perception change for golf
- ◀ Deliver an excellent talent development pathway
- ◀ Host best-in-class competitions for all golfers

<https://www.Englandgolf.org/Englandgolfstrategy/>



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY

## STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AUGUST 2025

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

**Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd**  
Company No: 9145032 (England)

MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

Registered Office: 1-2 Frecheville Court, off Knowsley Street, Bury BL9 0UF  
T: 0161 764 7040 E: [mail@kcp.co.uk](mailto:mail@kcp.co.uk) [www.kcp.co.uk](http://www.kcp.co.uk)



Cert Num: 6543 SMS-001

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

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## CONTENTS

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| ABBREVIATIONS .....  | 1   |
| PART 1: INTRODUCTION .....   | 2   |
| PART 2: VISION .....   | 12  |
| PART 3: AIMS.....  | 13  |
| PART 4: SPORT SPECIFIC ISSUES SCENARIOS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....    | 14  |
| PART 5: STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS .....                              | 62  |
| PART 6: ACTION PLAN.....   | 81  |
| ◀ HIGH PRIORITY SPORT RECOMMENDATIONS.....                           | 84  |
| ◀ BISHOP’S STORTFORD ANALYSIS AREA.....                              | 89  |
| ◀ BUNTINGFORD ANALYSIS AREA .....                                    | 99  |
| ◀ HERTFORD, WARE ANALYSIS AREA .....                                 | 107 |
| ◀ SAWBRIDGEWORTH ANALYSIS AREA .....                                 | 117 |
| ◀ WATTON-AT-STONE ANALYSIS AREA.....                                 | 122 |
| PART 7: DELIVER THE STRATEGY AND KEEP IT ROBUST AND UP-TO-DATE ..... | 127 |
| APPENDIX ONE: SPORTING CONTEXT .....                                 | 131 |

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

---

## ABBREVIATIONS

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

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

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## PART 1: INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Scope

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

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

## Study area

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

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

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

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

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

Figure 1.1: Analysis areas



## Local context

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

### **New District Plan**

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

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

### **Open Space, Sport and Recreation Supplementary Planning Document**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### National context

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Headline findings

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 1.1: Quantitative headline findings (pitch sports)

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

<sup>1</sup> Per week for rugby and football, per season for cricket

<sup>2</sup>Based on accommodating 38 teams on one full size pitch.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## Conclusions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## PART 2: VISION

### Vision

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

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

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

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



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

## PART 3: AIMS

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

### AIM 1

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

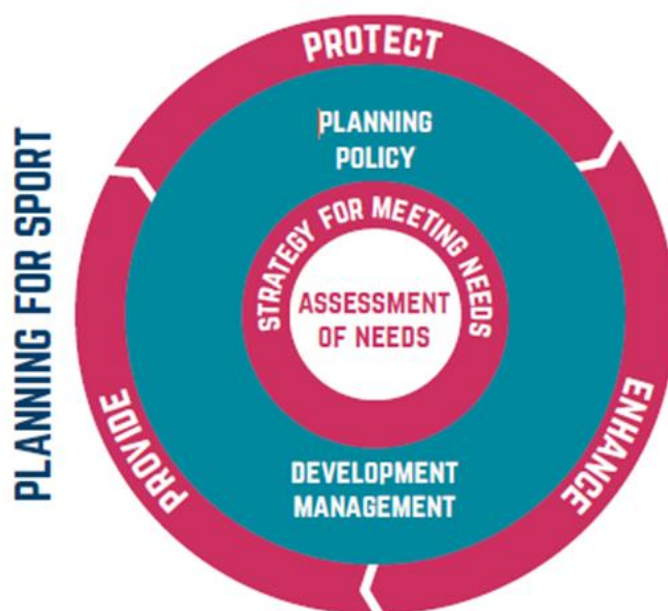
### AIM 2

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

### AIM 3

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

Figure 3.1: Sport England planning objectives



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

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

## PART 4: SPORT SPECIFIC ISSUES SCENARIOS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

### 4.1: Football – grass pitches

#### Assessment Report summary

##### Football – grass pitch summary

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

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

## Scenarios

### Alleviating overplay/improving pitch quality

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Future demand

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

Table 4.4: Summary of participation growth by analysis area

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

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

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

Table 4.5: Impact of future demand from club ambitions

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

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

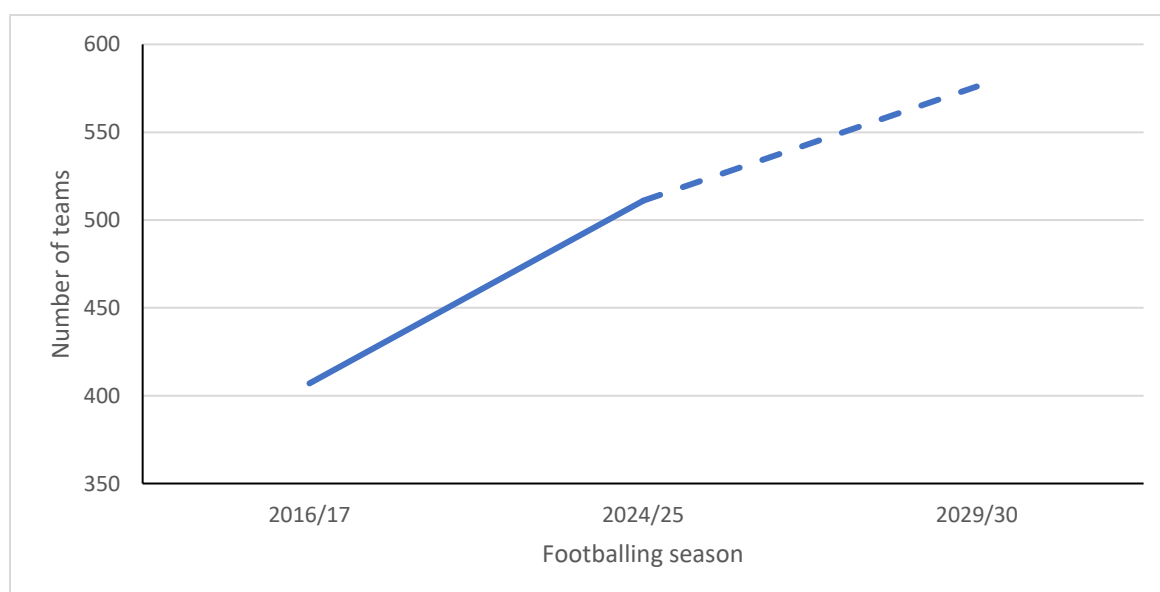
## Participation trends

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Table 4.6: Forecasted annual growth to 2030 by analysis area

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

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

Table 4.7: Forecasted annual growth to 2030 by pitch scale

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

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

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

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

<sup>5</sup> In match equivalent sessions

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

## Priority pitch improvement sites

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

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

Table 4.9: Impact of quality improvements

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Loss of tenure at education sites

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Improving ancillary provisions

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

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

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

## Re-introducing disused sites

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Recommendations

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

<sup>7</sup> In match equivalent sessions

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

## 4.2: Third generation turf (3G) pitches

### Assessment Report summary

#### 3G summary

##### Supply:

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

##### Quality:

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

##### Supply vs demand analysis:

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

## Scenarios

### Accommodating football training demand

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## New site options

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

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

Table 4.17: Additional site options for new 3G pitches

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Table 4.18: Moving all mini matches to 3G pitches

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

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

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

Below tests a similar scenario for youth 9v9 football.

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

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

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

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

### Future demand through club ambitions

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

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

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

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

| East Hertfordshire | Future number of teams <sup>8</sup> | 11v11 3G requirement <sup>9</sup> | Current number of 3G pitches | Theoretical shortfall |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Total</b>       | 564                                 | 15                                | 9.5                          | 5.5                   |

## Future demand from participation trends

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

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

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

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

## World Rugby (WR) compliant 3G pitches

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>9</sup> Figure rounded up to the nearest whole number.

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

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

### Recommendations

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

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

## 4.3: Cricket pitches

### Assessment Report summary

#### Cricket – supply and demand summary

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

#### Cricket – supply summary

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

#### Cricket – demand summary

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

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

## Scenarios

### Addressing overplay

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## Hybrid wickets

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

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

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

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

## Accommodating future demand

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Unused/disused sites

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Improving ancillary provision

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

Table 4.24: Ancillary provision development plans

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



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

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

### Accommodating girls' demand

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

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

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

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

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

### Recommendations

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

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

## 4.4: Rugby union - grass pitches

### Assessment Report summary

#### Rugby union summary

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

#### Pitch supply:

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

#### Pitch quality:

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

#### Ancillary provision quality:

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

#### Demand:

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

#### Supply and demand analysis:

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

### Scenarios

#### Improving pitch maintenance and drainage

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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## Providing additional sports lighting

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

## World Rugby (WR) 3G pitches in East Hertfordshire

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

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

## Use of provision at education sites

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

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

## Ancillary provision improvements

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

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

---

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

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

### Recommendations

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

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

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

### Assessment Report summary

#### Hockey summary

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

#### Pitch supply:

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

#### Pitch quality:

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

#### Affiliated demand:

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

#### Supply and demand analysis conclusions:

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

### Scenarios

#### Meeting demand for hockey suitable AGPs

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

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

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

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

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

Table 4.30: Hockey usage and spare capacity

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

Table 4.31: Quality of existing hockey suitable artificial grass pitches

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

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

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

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

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

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## Converting sand-based AGPs to 3G pitches

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

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

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

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

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

## Strategic need for additional hockey provision across the region

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Recommendations

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

## 4.6: Rugby league – grass pitches

### Assessment Report summary

#### Rugby league – supply and demand summary

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

#### Rugby league – supply summary

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

#### Rugby league – demand summary

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

## Recommendations

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

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

## 4.7: Tennis courts

### Assessment Report summary

#### Tennis – supply and demand summary

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

#### Tennis – supply summary

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

#### Tennis – demand summary

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

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

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## Scenarios

### Meeting demand for informal tennis

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

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

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

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

### Satisfying club demand

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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## Padel

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

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

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

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

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

## Recommendations

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

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

## 4.8: Lawn bowls

### Assessment Report summary

#### **Bowls – supply and demand summary**

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

#### **Bowls – supply summary**

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

#### **Bowls – demand summary**

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

### Scenarios

#### Security of tenure

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

#### Ancillary provision improvements

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

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

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

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

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

## Future demand

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

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

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

## Recommendations

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

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

## 4.9: Athletics

### Assessment Report summary

#### Athletics – supply and demand summary

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

#### Athletics – supply summary

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

#### Athletics – demand summary

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

## Scenarios

### Existing provision

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

England Athletics' latest approach to facility planning includes the play track, compact track, mini track and active track which present more affordable means of councils installing new athletics provision<sup>10</sup>. These facilities cater for a more recreational and informal offer for athletics and general health and wellbeing opportunities.

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

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

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

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

## Recommendations

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

## 4.10: Netball courts

### Assessment Report summary

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>Netball – supply and demand summary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Given the demand for netball and that there are 33 sport lit community accessible courts it is determined that there is an adequate supply of netball provision in East Hertfordshire.</li> </ul> <p><b>Netball – Supply summary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ In total, there are 81 outdoor netball courts located across 32 sites in East Hertfordshire. Of this total provision, 55 courts across 17 sites are community accessible.</li> <li>◀ Of the 55 community accessible courts, 23 are good quality, 23 are standard and nine are poor quality.</li> <li>◀ Good quality provision located at Leventhorpe school is accessed by the Play Netball League.</li> </ul> <p><b>Netball – Demand summary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Two leagues have been identified as offering competitive netball in East Hertfordshire, those being Bishop's Stortford District Netball League and the Hertford and District League.</li> <li>◀ England Netball, and Sport England's Segmentation Tool outlines that there are somewhat low levels of unmet demand for East Hertfordshire with only 0.29% of the district identified as wanting to participate but not currently doing so.</li> </ul> |
|---|

## Scenarios

### Increasing the number of sports lit community accessible courts

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

Table 4.33: Sports lit community accessible netball provision

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

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

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

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

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

### Recommendations

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

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

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## 4.11: Golf

### Assessment Report summary

#### Golf – supply and demand summary

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

#### Golf – supply summary

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

#### Golf – demand summary

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

### Scenarios

N/A

### Recommendations

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



## 4.12: Outdoor water sports

### Assessment Report summary

#### Outdoor water sports – supply and demand summary

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

#### Outdoor water sports – supply summary

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

#### Outdoor water sports – demand summary

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

### Recommendations

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

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

## PART 5: STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

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

### AIM 1

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

#### Recommendations:

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

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

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

When shortfalls are evident, provision can only be permanently lost when the current picture changes to the extent that the site in question is no longer needed as a result of no shortfalls existing, or unless replacement provision is provided and agreed upon by all stakeholders. NPPF paragraph 104 states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

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

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

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

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## Policy Exception E1:

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

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

## Policy Exception E2

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

## Policy Exception E3

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

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

## Policy Exception E4:

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

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

## Policy Exception E5

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 5.1: Known use of education sites

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 5.3: Non community accessible playing pitches:

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

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

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

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

## AIM 2

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

### Recommendations:

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

### Recommendation (d) – Improve quality

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

#### Ground Management Association (GMA) Pitch Advisory Service

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

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

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

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

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



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

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## Football Foundation PitchPower Assessment

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

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

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

## Football Foundation Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund (GPMF)

Eligible clubs and organisations can also utilise the report as an evidence base to acquire potential funding streams, for example, to obtain the required maintenance equipment. If a PitchPower assessment categorises pitches as 'poor' or 'basic' they are then eligible to apply for funding through the Football Foundation through the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund<sup>12</sup>, a fund offering six-year tapered grants to help clubs enhance or sustain the quality of their grass pitches. The fund is a key part of the Football Foundation's Grass Pitch Improvement Programme - an ambition to deliver 20,000 good quality grass pitches by 2030. Clubs with good or standard quality pitches can also apply for a lower level of funding to improve and sustain quality.

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

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

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

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

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

## Addressing overplay

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

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

Table 5.4: Capacity of pitches

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## Improving changing provision

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## **Recommendation (g) –Secure developer contributions**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

| Site allocation                | Location                   | Current status  | Playing pitches   |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|
| WARE2                          | North and East of Ware     | Planning application submitted, still to be determined. | Proposes two areas of playing pitches, includes new grass pitches and a new 3G pitch at the secondary school site (dual-use).   |
| EWEL1                          | East of Welwyn Garden City | Planning application submitted, still to be determined. | Proposes new playing pitches as part of education provision at primary and secondary school sites (dual use).   |
| Village 1<br>Gilston<br>Park   | Gilston                    | Outline planning permission granted (s106)              | Gilston Park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ 2 x U18 &amp; Adult Football pitches (one to meet the Village 1 Playing Field provision of 0.8ha).</li> <li>◀ 1 x cricket pitch and clubhouse.</li> <li>◀ Bowls club, to comprise of two six-rink bowls facilities and a club house (which may be combined with cricket facility).</li> <li>◀ 2km trim trail.</li> <li>◀ Space for informal sports e.g. frisbee, kite flying etc.</li> </ul> |
| Village 1<br>Schools           | Gilston                    | Outline planning permission granted (s106)              | Primary School to include: A MUGA, two mini 7v7 football pitches, two mini 5v5 pitches, one youth 9v9 pitch, a junior cricket pitch and a rounders pitch (which may be overlaid on the football pitches) and a grass athletics track.<br>Secondary School to include: Artificial cricket wicket, artificial grass pitch (7,480sqm), one U18 & Adult grass football pitch, 400m grass athletics track, MUGA.   |
| Village 2                      | Gilston                    | Outline planning permission granted (s106)              | Village 2 Playing Fields (0.8ha): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ 1 x U18 &amp; Adult football pitch.</li> </ul>   |
| Village 2<br>Primary<br>School | Gilston                    | Outline planning permission granted (s106)              | Village playing field. A primary school that will feature a three court MUGA, one mini 5v5 pitch, one mini 7v7 pitch, one youth 9v9 pitch, one junior cricket pitch and rounders pitch (which may be overlaid on the football pitches) and a grass athletics track.   |
| Village 3                      | Gilston                    | Outline planning permission granted (s106)              | Village 3 Playing Field (0.8ha) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ 1 x U18 &amp; Adult football pitch.</li> </ul>   |

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

| Site allocation           | Location | Current status                             | Playing pitches   |
|---------------------------|----------|--|---|
| Village 3 Primary School* | Gilston  | Outline planning permission granted (s106) | A primary school that will feature a three court MUGA, one mini 5v5 pitch, one mini 7v7 pitch, one youth 9v9 pitch, one junior cricket pitch and rounders pitch (which may be overlaid on the football pitches) and a grass athletics track.  |
| Village 3/4 Gilson Fields | Gilston  | Outline planning permission granted (s106) | Gilston Fields (CA4) Cricket Hub featuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ 2 x cricket pitches*.</li> <li>◀ 2 x U15 &amp; U16 football pitches*.</li> <li>◀ 2 x U13 &amp; U14 football pitches*.</li> <li>◀ Cricket nets.</li> <li>◀ Clubhouse.</li> </ul> *may be dual use football and cricket  |
| Village 4                 | Gilston  | Outline planning permission granted (s106) | Eastwick Valley Green Corridor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ 4 x U18 &amp; adult football pitches.</li> <li>◀ Village 4 playing field (1 x O18 &amp; adult football pitch).</li> <li>◀ Tennis facility, comprising of 8 senior pitches and may include a clubhouse.</li> </ul>  |
| Village 4 Primary School  | Gilston  | Outline planning permission granted (s106) | A primary school featuring a three court MUGA, one mini 5v5 pitch, one mini 7v7 pitch, one youth 9v9 pitch, one junior cricket pitch and rounders pitch (which may be overlaid on the football pitches) and a grass athletics track.  |
| Village 5                 | Gilston  | Outline planning permission granted (s106) | Village 5 Playing Fields (0.8ha located in CA14 V1-5 Corridor): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ 1 xU18 &amp; adult football pitch</li> </ul> Sports and Leisure Centre may be co-located with Eastwick Valley Green Corridor pitches.  |
| Village 5 Schools         | Gilston  | Outline planning permission granted (s106) | A primary school featuring a three court MUGA, one mini 7v7 football pitch, one mini 5v5 pitches, one youth 9v9 pitch, a junior cricket pitch and a rounders pitch (which may be overlaid on the football pitches) and a grass athletics track.<br>Secondary School to include: Artificial cricket wicket, artificial grass pitch (7,480sqm), one U18 & Adult grass football pitch, 400m grass athletics track, MUGA. An artificial hockey pitch (6,388.2sqm) which may be located within the school or co-located adjacent to the school as part of the Sports and Leisure Centre. |
| Village 6                 | Gilston  | Outline planning permission granted (s106) | Village 6 Playing Fields (0.8ha) - located in CA14): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ 1 x U18 &amp; adult football pitch.</li> </ul>  |
| Village 6 Primary School* | Gilston  | Outline planning permission granted (s106) | A primary school featuring a three court MUGA, one mini 5v5 pitch, one mini 7v7 pitch, one youth 9v9 pitch and a junior cricket pitch and a rounders pitch (which may be overlaid on the football pitches) and a grass athletics track.   |

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

| Site allocation          | Location | Current status                             | Playing pitches   |
|--------------------------|----------|--|---|
| Village 7 Playing Field  | Gilston  | Outline planning permission granted (s106) | Village 7 Playing Field: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ 1 x grass adult pitch (either rugby or football).</li> <li>◀ A sports pavilion (approximately 245sqm gross internal floor area).</li> </ul>   |
| Village 7                | Gilston  | Outline planning permission granted (s106) | Village 7 Football Hub: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ A building no more than 800 sqm GEA and appropriate car parking.</li> <li>◀ 2 x artificial grass pitches.</li> <li>◀ 1 x adult grass pitch with a shelter/dug-out.</li> <li>◀ 1 x adult grass pitch with 2 x U9/U10 pitches within.</li> <li>◀ 1 x U15/U16 grass pitch with 2 x U7/U8 pitches within.</li> </ul> |
| Village 7 Primary School | Gilston  | Outline planning permission granted (s106) | A primary school featuring a three court MUGA, one mini 7v7 football pitch, one mini 5v5 pitches, one youth 9v9 pitch, a junior cricket pitch and a rounders pitch (which may be overlaid on the football pitches) and a grass athletics track.   |

\*May not be required subject to education monitoring

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

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

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

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

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

## Developer contributions - step by step guide

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

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

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>Step 1</b> | <b>Determine the playing pitch requirement resulting from the development</b> |
|---------------|---|

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

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

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>Step 2</b> | <b>Determine whether new provision is required and whether this should be on or off site</b> |
|---------------|--|

For large-scale developments that generate high levels of demand, new pitch provision may be required to meet the population growth. This is particularly the case when the calculator identifies a need for multiple pitches and across multiple sports.

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

Other useful questions when deciding on new provision include:

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>Step 3</b> | <b>Determine the other pitch and non-pitch requirements resulting from the development</b> |
|---------------|--|

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

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

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

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

### **Step 4 Consider design principles for new provision**

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

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

### **Step 5 Calculate the financial contribution required**

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

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

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

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

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

## AIM 3

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

### Recommendations:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## PART 6: ACTION PLAN

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

### Site hierarchy

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

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

Table 6.1: Tiered site criteria

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Partners

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

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

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

## Priority

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

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

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

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

## Costs

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

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

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

## Timescales

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

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

## Aim

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

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

### HIGH PRIORITY SPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## BISHOP'S STORTFORD ANALYSIS AREA

### Summary pitch sports (Bishop's Stortford Analysis Area)

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

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

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

## Summary non-pitch sports

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

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

## Overarching recommendations

| Sport        | Priority recommendations  |
|--------------|---|
| Football     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Reintroduce community access at Albury Football Ground.</li> <li>◀ Improve pitch quality especially at key, poor quality and/or overplayed sites such as Bishop's Stortford College, Friedburg Playing Fields, Herts &amp; Essex Sports Centre and Pearce House Playing Fields.</li> <li>◀ Consider asset transfer of sites to clubs if appropriate.</li> <li>◀ Enable use of currently unavailable sites e.g., at school sites such as Manor Fields Primary School and Hillmead primary School through the use of a community use agreement.</li> <li>◀ Look to improve the ancillary provision at relevant sites such as Friedburg Playing Fields.</li> <li>◀ Support Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC with the clubs plans to relocate to a new site at Hoggates Park.</li> <li>◀ Support Bishop's Stortford Community YFC in operating from a new site in addition to Friedberg Playing Fields to support the large amount of demand within the Club.</li> <li>◀ Ensure clubs are made aware of two new primary schools sites with community use agreements with new grass pitches.</li> </ul> |
| 3G pitches   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Ensure the existing pitches at Birchwood High School and Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre both have sinking funds in place.</li> <li>◀ Ensure both pitches at Birchwood High School and Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre remain on the FA register to host competitive matches.</li> <li>◀ Ensure all future pitches have a sinking fund in place.</li> <li>◀ Ensure all future pitches look to be placed on the FA register to host competitive matches.</li> <li>◀ Consider installing additional provision to ensure adequate capacity for future demand and reduce the shortfall across East Hertfordshire.</li> <li>◀ Support the building of the new 3G WR complaint pitch at Bishop's Stortford High School and ensure clubs are signposted to it.</li> </ul>   |
| Cricket      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Utilise spare capacity at Braughing Playing Fields, Thorley CC and Stocking Pelham CC.</li> <li>◀ Sustain good and standard quality pitches across the Analysis Area.</li> <li>◀ Support clubs which need assistance with development plans or replacing sight screens and covers, such as Braughing Playing Fields.</li> <li>◀ Support Bishop's Stortford CC in fundraising for its new clubhouse build.</li> </ul>   |
| Rugby union  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Improve quality of existing provision.</li> <li>◀ Support Bishop's Stortford RFC in the building of its new ancillary provision.</li> <li>◀ Support building of a new footbridge to access new provision at Avanti Grange Secondary School.</li> <li>◀ Review the future use of Bishop's Stortford Swifts FC's current site to potentially convert the adult pitch into a senior rugby union pitch.</li> </ul>   |
| Rugby league | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ No action required.</li> </ul>   |
| Hockey       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Ensure there is an adequate sinking fund in place to replace the pitches when required.</li> <li>◀ The two pitches at Bishop's Stortford College need to be resurfaced within the lifespan of the PPOSS.</li> <li>◀ Support Hockerill Anglo-European College in refurbishing its changing rooms to allow Bishop's Stortford HC to continue using the site for hockey.</li> </ul>   |

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

| Sport        | Priority recommendations  |
|--------------|---|
|              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Explore new pitch access for Bishop's Stortford HC to allow the Club to continue growing. An initial suggestion would be to search for AGPs with no current access for community use on Saturdays to open up to the clubs to create spare capacity, such as the pitch at Hockerill Anglo-European College.</li> </ul>  |
| Bowls        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Sustain quality of existing provision at Havers Park Bowls Club.</li> </ul>  |
| Tennis/padel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Monitor the membership levels of Braughing Tennis Club and support the Club with its growth plans.</li> <li>◀ Look to build new padel provision in the Analysis Area to support the rapid growth of the sport. A potentially viable site to consider is RDA Stadium given the planning application placed by Bishop's Stortford FC to develop padel courts at the site.</li> </ul> |
| Netball      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Monitor levels of demand with the Bishop's Stortford District Netball League taking place at Herts &amp; Essex Sports Centre.</li> </ul>   |
| Athletics    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> </ul>  |
| Golf         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Monitor the waiting list at Bishop's Stortford Golf Club.</li> </ul>   |
| Water sports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> </ul>  |



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

### BISHOP'S STORTFORD ANALYSIS AREA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## BUNTINGFORD ANALYSIS AREA

### Summary pitch sports (Buntingford Analysis Area)

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

<sup>[1]</sup> MES – match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket)

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

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

## Summary non-pitch sports

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

## Overarching recommendations

| Sport    | Priority recommendations   |
|----------|--|
| Football | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Work with Buntingford Cougars and landowners to protect the pitch at London Road Playing Fields or to mitigate the loss.</li> <li>◀ Improve pitch quality especially at key, poor quality and/or overplayed sites such as London Road Playing Fields, Ware Lions FC (Thundridge) and Walkern Sports &amp; Community Centre.</li> <li>◀ Consider asset transfer of sites to clubs if appropriate, Thundridge sports Ground currently has no teams accessing it for formal demand and could be offered to a club.</li> <li>◀ Improve changing and other facilities where required, such as the ancillary provision at Thundridge Sports Ground.</li> <li>◀ Look to obtain more formal community use agreements for Watton YFC which are currently nomadic and access several sites in the analysis area, such as Aston Playing Field and Aston St Mary's VA School.</li> <li>◀ Explore more formal community use agreements at education sites to secure future use for football demand.</li> </ul> |



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

| Sport        | Priority recommendations  |
|--------------|---|
|              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Where possible look to develop new provision as a means of meeting the demand for football in the analysis area.</li> </ul>  |
| 3G pitches   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Support the development of the new 11v11 3G pitch being installed at Freman College.</li> <li>◀ Look to increase the number of 11v11 size 3G pitches as to address the current theoretical shortfall of 1.25 pitches, with The Bury as a potential suitable site.</li> <li>◀ Explore option to install the small sided 3G pitch at Norfolk Road Playing Field, highlighted by Buntingford Town Council, should the steering group all agree.</li> <li>◀ Ensure all future pitches have a sinking fund in place.</li> <li>◀ Ensure all future pitches look to be placed on the FA register to host competitive matches.</li> <li>◀ Given the size of the analysis area, consider accessing 3G provision in neighbouring analysis areas such as Watton-at-Stone and Hertford, Ware.</li> </ul> |
| Cricket      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Utilise spare capacity at sites such as Thundridge Sports Ground, Walkern Sports &amp; Community Centre and Freman College.</li> <li>◀ Improve existing provision at Datchworth CC to enhance square quality and reduce overplay.</li> <li>◀ Improve the ancillary provision of sites where necessary such as Aston CC.</li> <li>◀ Support Datchworth CC with the fundraising of its new clubhouse build.</li> </ul>   |
| Rugby union  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Improve quality of existing provision, with Datchworth RFC and Datchworth Village hall outlined as the priority sites.</li> <li>◀ Work with key stakeholders to help with fundraising ideas or other ways to support Datchworth RFC in the building of its new clubhouse.</li> </ul>   |
| Rugby league | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ No action required.</li> </ul>   |
| Hockey       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Discuss potential conversion of small sided AGP to 3G at Norfolk Road Playing Fields with key stakeholders.</li> <li>◀ Resurface the pitch at St Edmunds College &amp; Prep School within the lifespan of the PPOSS.</li> <li>◀ Explore opening the pitch at St Edmunds College &amp; Prep School for community use</li> </ul>   |
| Bowls        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Sustain good and standard quality of existing provision.</li> <li>◀ Ensure clubs such as Buntingford and Datchworth, with capacity issues manage access to its greens effectively.</li> <li>◀ Utilise actual spare capacity at Standon &amp; Puckeridge Bowling Green.</li> </ul>  |
| Tennis       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Ensure clubs with capacity issues manage access to its courts effectively, with Aston Tennis Club as a key site which is operating over the LTA recommended guidelines currently. This will be exacerbated if Club ambitions are achieved.</li> <li>◀ Discuss the conversion of Norfolk Road Playing Fields AGP to 3G as this would mean the loss of three tennis courts.</li> <li>◀ Support Datchworth Tennis Club and Aston Tennis Club ambitions for the installation of sports lighting on its courts.</li> </ul>  |
| Netball      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> </ul>  |
| Athletics    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Considerations should be made for the installation of play, mini, compact or active tracks as to provide the district with some form of athletics provision.</li> </ul>  |
| Golf         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> </ul>  |
| Water sports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ No action required.</li> </ul>   |

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

## BUNTINGFORD ANALYSIS AREA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## HERTFORD, WARE ANALYSIS AREA

### Summary pitch sports (Hertford, Ware Analysis Area)

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

<sup>[1]</sup> MES – match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket)

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

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

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

### Summary non-pitch sports

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



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

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

### Overarching recommendations

| Sport       | Priority recommendations   |
|-------------|--|
| Football    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Improve pitch quality especially at key, poor quality and/or overplayed sites such as Presdales School, Ware YFC and Hartham Common &amp; Kingsmead.</li> <li>◀ Utilise actual spare capacity.</li> <li>◀ Support Hertford Heath FC in improving its pitch to comply with ground grading regulations so it can use its home pitch for league games and not have to export to St Margaretsbury FC.</li> <li>◀ Explore potential conversion of St Margaretsbury FC main pitch to 3G 11v11 to reduce the shortfall in the Analysis Area.</li> <li>◀ Explore potentially handing over Presdales Recreation Ground to Bury Rangers FC to manage.</li> </ul>  |
| 3G pitches  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Look to increase the number of 3G pitches as to address the current theoretical shortfall of 2.25 pitches, with The Sele School, Ware YFC and The Chauncy School as potential suitable sites.</li> <li>◀ Ensure all future pitches have a sinking fund in place.</li> <li>◀ Ensure all future pitches look to be placed on the FA register to host competitive matches.</li> <li>◀ Discuss the potential loss of two small sided 3G pitch to padel conversion at Hartham Leisure Centre. If delivered mitigation towards an 11v11 3G pitch should look to be sourced given the shortfalls of 3G pitches in the Analysis Area.</li> <li>◀ The poor small sided 3G pitch at Allenburys Sport &amp; Social Club and the 11v11 poor 3G pitch at Wodson Park Sports Centre should be resurfaced within the lifespan of the PPOSS to ensure long-term usability.</li> </ul> |
| Cricket     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Given the current overplay in the analysis area discussions surrounding opening the provision at Haileybury Sports Complex to community use should be sought.</li> <li>◀ Improve existing provision at Allenburys Sport &amp; Social Club and Morgans Field.</li> <li>◀ Improve the ancillary provision of sites where necessary such as St Margaretsbury Sports &amp; Social Club and Hertford CC.</li> </ul>  |
| Rugby union | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Explore adding sports lighting to another pitch at Hertford RFC to help spread training demand better and reduce overplay.</li> </ul>   |

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

| Sport        | Priority recommendations   |
|--------------|--|
|              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Support Hertford RFC with the refurbishment of its clubhouse.</li> <li>◀ Given the current overplay in the Analysis Area discussions surrounding opening the provision at Haileybury Sports Complex to community use should be sought.</li> </ul>   |
| Rugby league | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ No action required.</li> </ul>  |
| Hockey       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Look to re-surface the small sided AGP at Amwell View School as well as the full size pitches at Simon Balle School and Haileybury College.</li> <li>◀ The resurface at Simon Balle should be a priority to ensure the future of Hertford HC.</li> </ul>  |
| Bowls        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Sustain quality of existing provision.</li> <li>◀ Monitor levels of demand and quality of green at Hertford Castle Bowls Club, with two clubs accessing one site which is already over capacity.</li> </ul>   |
| Tennis       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Key stakeholders to discuss the potential conversion of tennis court at Hartham Leisure Centre to padel, given the lack of tennis demand for this court, the shortfall of padel courts and the growing demand for padel in East Hertfordshire.</li> <li>◀ Utilise spare capacity at four tennis clubs in the analysis area and promote new membership initiatives.</li> </ul> |
| Netball      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Monitor levels of demand for the Hertford and District League to ensure the supply of courts at Presdales School is sufficient. Alternative good, sports lit provision, such as Wodson Park Sports Centre, is available in the Analysis Area should the league grow and need further courts.</li> </ul>   |
| Athletics    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ The track will need to be resprayed in 2026 to continue to service future demand.</li> <li>◀ The track could benefit from minor repairs and cleaning before reaccreditation.</li> <li>◀ Support athletics clubs, such as Herts Phoenix AC that are looking to grow membership.</li> </ul>   |
| Golf         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> </ul>   |
| Water sports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> </ul>   |

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

### HERTFORD, WARE ANALYSIS AREA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

## SAWBRIDGEWORTH ANALYSIS AREA

### Summary pitch sports (Sawbridgeworth Analysis Area)

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

<sup>[1]</sup> MES – match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket)

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

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

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

## Summary non-pitch sports

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

## Overarching recommendations

| Sport    | Priority recommendations  |
|----------|---|
| Football | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Improve pitch quality especially at key, poor quality sites such as Bullfields and St George's Playing Field both of which would create actual spare capacity if quality improved.</li> <li>◀ Enable use of currently unavailable sites.</li> <li>◀ Look to improve the ancillary provision at relevant poor-quality sites such as Crouchfields which is accessed by Wodson Park FC.</li> <li>◀ Explore the possibility of developing a new site to service Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club and Sawbridgeworth Town FC.</li> </ul> |

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

| Sport        | Priority recommendations  |
|--------------|---|
| 3G pitches   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Ensure the existing pitch at Leventhorpe School has a pitch replacement fund in place.</li> <li>◀ Ensure the Leventhorpe School pitch remains on the FA 3G pitch register after its retest in June 2027 to ensure it can continue to host competitive matches.</li> <li>◀ Consider installing additional provision at Sawbridgeworth Town FC to ensure adequate capacity for future demand and reduce the shortfall across East Hertfordshire.</li> </ul>  |
| Cricket      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Improve square quality at Town Fields and Leventhorpe School to reduce overplay and improve the user experience for Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club.</li> <li>◀ Explore the possibility of developing a new site to service Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club and Sawbridgeworth Town FC. This will provide Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club with the second site required if it does stop accessing Leventhorpe School in 2027.</li> <li>◀ Support Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club in enhancing the changing rooms for its clubhouse.</li> </ul> |
| Rugby union  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Improve quality of existing provision.</li> <li>◀ Consider formalising use of the two senior pitches at The Bishop's Stortford High School Playing Fields (Jobbers Wood) for Bishops Stortford RFC as a means of reducing the overplay identified at the site.</li> </ul>  |
| Rugby league | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ No action required.</li> </ul>   |
| Hockey       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Look to identify a site to potentially house a new full sized AGP to service the need in East Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire and Stevenage.</li> </ul>   |
| Bowls        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Sustain quality of existing provision at Sawbridgeworth Bowls Club.</li> <li>◀ Look to improve green quality at Much Hadham Bowls Club.</li> </ul>   |
| Tennis/padel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Monitor the membership levels of Much Hadham Tennis Club and ensure the Club can continue to operate above LTA capacity guidelines.</li> <li>◀ Consider developing an extra court at Much Hadham Tennis Club to support the Club with its high membership levels.</li> <li>◀ Look to enhance the sports lights at Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club.</li> </ul>   |
| Netball      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Look to increasingly use the courts at Leventhorpe School to grow the sport.</li> </ul>  |
| Athletics    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Consider installing play, mini, compact or active tracks as a means of increasing the amount of provision in the Authority.</li> </ul>   |
| Golf         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Ensure Manor of Groves Golf Club and Great Hadham Golf &amp; Country Club continue to operate sustainably and can balance current membership levels.</li> </ul>  |
| Water sports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ No action required.</li> </ul>   |

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

### SAWBRIDGEWORTH ANALYSIS AREA

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

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

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

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

## WATTON-AT-STONE ANALYSIS AREA

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

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

<sup>(1)</sup> MES – match equivalent sessions per week (per season for cricket)

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

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

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

### Summary non-pitch sports

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

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

## Overarching recommendations

| Sport        | Priority recommendations   |
|--------------|--|
| Football     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Improve pitch quality especially at key, poor quality and/or overplayed sites such as Crouchfields.</li> <li>◀ Look to improve the ancillary provision provided at Crouchfields to better support Wodson Park FC.</li> <li>◀ Support Watton at Stone YFC in developing a new site with grass football pitches, a small sided 3G pitch and new build ancillary provision. Explore any viable multi-sport opportunities within this project.</li> </ul> |
| 3G pitches   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Look to increase the number of 3G pitches as to address the current theoretical shortfall of 0.5 of a pitch, with the Watton at Stone YFC new site as the priority potential site.</li> <li>◀ Ensure all future pitches have a sinking fund in place.</li> <li>◀ Ensure all future pitches look to be placed on the FA register to host competitive matches.</li> </ul>   |
| Cricket      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Improve existing provision at Bramfield Playing Field to reduce overplay and support Bramfield CC.</li> <li>◀ Improve the poor-quality ancillary provision at Little Berkhamsted Recreation Ground to support Little Berkhamsted Sahibs CC.</li> </ul>  |
| Rugby union  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ No action required.</li> </ul>  |
| Rugby league | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ No action required.</li> </ul>  |
| Hockey       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Look to identify a site to potentially house a new full sized AGP to service the need in East Hertfordshire, North Hertfordshire and Stevenage.</li> </ul>  |
| Bowls        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Improve quality of existing provision at Shire Park BC.</li> <li>◀ Ensure Shire Park BC manages the access to its green effectively as the site is operating above Bowls England capacity guidelines.</li> </ul>  |
| Tennis       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Work with Tewin Tennis Club to install sports lighting to its courts to improve its capacity balance.</li> <li>◀ Look to resurface the courts at Watton at Stone Tennis Club during the lifespan of the PPOSS.</li> </ul>   |
| Netball      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Protect provision.</li> <li>◀ Consider opening the Heath Mount School courts to community use to provide the analysis area with accessible provision.</li> </ul>  |
| Athletics    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Consider the installation of play, mini, compact and active tracks as to increase the amount of athletics provision.</li> </ul>   |
| Golf         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ No action required.</li> </ul>  |
| Water sports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ No action required.</li> </ul>  |



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

### WATTON-AT-STONE ANALYSIS AREA

| Site ID | Site                                 | Sport    | Management                        | Current status   | Recommended actions  | Partners             | Site hierarchy tier | Priority | Timescales | Cost | Aim             |
|---------|--------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------|--|--|----------------------|---------------------|----------|------------|------|-----------------|
| 21      | Bramfield Playing Field              | Cricket  | Bramfield Parish Council          | One poor quality square that is accessed by Bramfield CC. Site is overplayed due to the poor-quality square.   | Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime to reduce overplay.   | The Council, HCCC    | Local Site          | H        | M          | L    | Protect Enhance |
| 21      | Bramfield Playing Field              | Football | Bramfield Parish Council          | One poor adult pitch accessed by Golden Griffin FC. Actual spare capacity discounted due to poor pitch quality.  | Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime as to create actual spare capacity.                                     | The Council, HFA, FF | Local Site          | M        | M          | L    | Protect Enhance |
| 21      | Bramfield Playing Field              | Tennis   | Bramfield Parish Council          | One poor non-sports lit shale tennis court overmarked with basketball. Site is accessed by Braughing Tennis Club which is operating within LTA capacity guidelines.                                    | Improve court quality to encourage further community use.  | The Council, LTA     | Local Site          | M        | M          | L    | Protect Enhance |
| 30      | Church Lane Playing Field            | Football | Stapleford Parish Council         | One poor 5v5 pitch that is open to community use but is un-used.   | Utilise un-used pitch.   | The Council, HFA, FF | Local Site          | M        | M          | L    | Protect Enhance |
| 35      | Crouchfields                         | Football | Sports Club                       | Site has one pitch of all five pitch scales and is accessed by Wodson Park FC. Ancillary provision is of a poor quality. Mini 5v5 pitch has actual spare capacity and youth 11v11 pitch is overplayed. | Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime. Look at improving ancillary facilities. Utilise actual spare capacity. | Sports Club, HFA, FF | Key Centre          | M        | M          | M    | Protect Enhance |
| 46      | Heath Mount School                   | AGP      | Education                         | One 70m x 44m pitch which is neither sports lit or community accessible.   | Consider opening provision to community use to better service hockey and football need.  | Education FA, FF, EH | Local Site          | M        | M          | M    | Protect Provide |
| 46      | Heath Mount School                   | Cricket  | Education                         | One standard cricket pitch with no community use.  | Protect for curricular use.  | The School, HCCC     | Local Site          | L        | S          | L    | Protect         |
| 46      | Heath Mount School                   | Tennis   | Education                         | Six standard artificial turf tennis courts overmarked on a small sided AGP which has no community use.   | Protect for curricular use.  | The School, LTA      | Local Site          | L        | S          | L    | Protect         |
| 46      | Heath Mount School                   | Netball  | Education                         | Two standard non-sports lit shale netball courts with no community use.  | Protect for curricular use.  | The School, EN       | Local Site          | L        | S          | L    | Protect         |
| 63      | Little Berkhamsted Recreation Ground | Cricket  | Little Berkhamsted Parish Council | One standard cricket pitch accessed by Little Berkhamsted Sahibs CC with actual spare capacity for Sunday and midweek cricket. Ancillary provision if of a poor quality.                               | Sustain pitch quality. Consider enhancing the ancillary provision to improve the user experience for Little Berkhamsted Sahibs CC.   | The Council, HCCC    | Local Site          | M        | S          | H    | Protect Enhance |
| 87      | Shire Park Bowls Club                | Bowls    | Sports Club                       | One standard bowling green with standard ancillary facilities. The Club is operating marginally above Bowls England capacity guidelines.   | Protect for community use and sustain green quality. Ensure the Club can continue to accommodate its current demand.                 | Sports Club, BE      | Local Site          | L        | S          | L    | Protect         |
| 99      | Tewin Cowper Primary School          | Netball  | Education                         | One poor non-sports lit shale court with community use.  | Protect for community.   | The School, EN       | Local Site          | L        | S          | L    | Protect         |
| 100     | Tewin Recreation Ground              | Cricket  | Tewin Parish Council              | One standard cricket pitch accessed by Tewin CC and has actual spare capacity for Sunday and midweek cricket. Tewin CC states it requires a fixed lane practice net to support its training demand.    | Sustain pitch quality. Install a fixed lane practice net to support the clubs training need.   | The Council, HCCC    | Key Centre          | M        | S          | M    | Protect Provide |
| 100     | Tewin Recreation Ground              | Football | Tewin Parish Council              | One poor 5v5 pitch with standard ancillary facilities. Site is un-used and has actual spare capacity discounted due to unsecure tenure.  | Utilise un-used pitch. Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.   | The Council, HFA, FF | Key Centre          | M        | S          | L    | Protect Enhance |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

| Site ID | Site   | Sport             | Management           | Current status   | Recommended actions  | Partners                  | Site hierarchy tier | Priority | Timescales | Cost | Aim                |
|---------|--|-------------------|----------------------|--|--|---------------------------|---------------------|----------|------------|------|--------------------|
| 100     | Tewin Recreation Ground                            | Tennis            | Tewin Parish Council | Two good non-sports lit artificial turf tennis courts with community use. Site is accessed by Tewin Tennis Club and is the most overcapacity tennis site in the Authority.   | Sustain court quality.<br>Install sports lights to improve the club's capacity balance.  | The Council, LTA          | Key Centre          | H        | M          | M    | Protect<br>Provide |
| 120     | Watton-At-Stone Primary School                     | Football          | Education            | One poor 9v9 pitch that is accessed by Watton YFC and overplayed by 0.5 MES.   | Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime to remove overplay.   | The School, HFA, FF       | Local Site          | M        | M          | L    | Protect<br>Enhance |
| 120     | Watton-At-Stone Primary School                     | Netball           | Education            | One poor non-sports lit shale netball court with no community use.   | Protect for curricular use.  | The School, EN            | Local Site          | L        | S          | L    | Protect            |
| 128     | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Cricket           | Sports Club          | One standard cricket pitch that is used by Watton at Stone CC. Site has actual spare capacity for Saturday, Sunday and midweek cricket.  | Sustain pitch quality.<br>Utilise actual spare capacity.   | Sports Club, HCCC         | Key Centre          | L        | S          | L    | Protect            |
| 128     | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Football          | Sports Club          | One poor youth 11v11 with good ancillary facilities. Site is used at capacity by Watton YFC.   | Improve pitch quality through an enhanced maintenance regime.  | Sports Club, HFA, FF      | Key Centre          | M        | M          | L    | Protect<br>Enhance |
| 128     | Watton At Stone Community Hall & Recreation Ground | Tennis            | Sports Club          | Three sports lit macadam courts available for community use, two of which are good and one standard. Site is used by Watton at Stone Tennis Club and is operating within LTA capacity guidelines.  | Sustain court quality.   | Sports Club, LTA          | Key Centre          | L        | S          | L    | Protect            |
| 130     | Bayford & Hertford Nondescripts Cricket Club       | Cricket           | Sports Club          | One standard cricket pitch which has actual spare capacity for Saturday, Sunday and midweek cricket.   | Sustain pitch quality.   | Sports Club, HCCC         | Local Site          | L        | S          | L    | Protect            |
| -       | New site - Watton at Stone YFC                     | Football<br>Padel | Sports Club          | Watton at Stone YFC wants to build a new multi-sport site in the South East of the village. The main purpose is to obtain a small sided 3G pitch, however, it states a wish for a multi-sport site that could include grass pitches, padel as well as walking trails and ancillary provision. It currently has 19 teams and there is a shortfall of 3G pitches in the Watton-at-Stone Analysis Area. | The steering group should look to deliver new grass pitches, small sided 3G and ancillary provision to support Watton at Stone YFC. Considerations should also be made to install other sports or walking provision. | Sports Club, HFA, FF, LTA | Key Centre          | H        | H          | H    | Provide<br>Enhance |

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

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## **PART 7: DELIVER THE STRATEGY AND KEEP IT ROBUST AND UP-TO-DATE**

The section below is a generalised approach on how to deliver a PPOSS whilst also keeping it robust and up-to-date. However, a more tailored approach should also be considered and designed for the East Hertfordshire based on the requirements and priorities of the Steering Group.

### **Delivery**

The PPOSS seeks to provide guidance for maintenance/management decisions and investment made across the East Hertfordshire. By addressing the issues identified in the Assessment Report and using the strategic framework presented in this Strategy, the current and future sporting and recreational needs of the district can be satisfied. The Strategy identifies where there is a deficiency in provision and recommends how best to resolve this in the future.

It is important that this document is used in a practical manner, is used to engage with partners and encourages partnerships to be developed, to ensure that outdoor sports facilities are regarded as a vital aspect of community life and which contribute to the achievement of Council priorities.

The creation of this document should be regarded as part of the planning process. The success of this Strategy and the benefits that are gained are dependent upon regular engagement between all partners involved and the adoption of a strategic approach. Each member of the steering group should take the lead to ensure the PPOSS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence.

To help ensure the PPOSS is well used, it should be regarded as the key document within the study area guiding the improvement and protection of playing pitch and outdoor sport provision. It needs to be the document people regularly turn to for information on the how the current demand is met and what actions are needed to improve the situation and meet future demand. For this to be achieved, the Steering Group needs to have a clear understanding of how the PPOSS can be applied and therefore delivered.

The process of completing the PPOSS will hopefully have already resulted in a number of benefits that will help with its application and delivery. These may include enhanced partnership working across different agendas and organisations, pooling of resources along with strengthening relationships and understanding between different stakeholders and between members of the steering group and the sporting community. The drivers behind the PPOSS and the work to develop the recommendations and action plan will have also highlighted, and helped the steering group to understand, the key areas to which it can be applied and how it can be delivered.

### **Monitoring and updating**

It is important that there is regular monitoring and review against the actions identified in the Strategy. This monitoring should continue be led by the local authority and supported by all members of, and reported back to, the Steering Group. Understanding and learning lessons from how the PPOSS has been applied should also form a key component of monitoring its delivery. It is possible that in the interim between reviews the Steering Group could also operate as a 'virtual' group; prepared to comment on suggestions and updates electronically when relevant.

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

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It is agreed that the Council (potentially via consultants e.g., KKP) is responsible for keeping the database and background supply and demand information up-to-date in order that area-by-area action plans can be updated. This should be carried out in consultation with the NGBs, particularly around affiliation time when information is updated.

As a guide, if no review and subsequent update has been carried out within three years of the PPS being signed off by the steering group, then Sport England and the NGBs would consider it and the information on which it is based to be out of date. The nature of the supply and in particular the demand for provision is likely to change year-on-year, meaning that without any form of review and update it would be difficult to make the case that the supply and demand information and assessment work is sufficiently robust.

An annual review should not be regarded as a particularly resource intensive task. However, it should highlight:

- ◀ How the delivery of the recommendations and action plan has progressed and any changes required to the priority afforded to each action (e.g., the priority of some may increase following the delivery of others).
- ◀ How the PPOSS has been applied and the lessons learnt.
- ◀ Any changes to particularly important sites and/or clubs in the area (e.g., the most used or high quality sites for a particular sport) and other supply and demand information, what this may mean for the overall assessment work and the key findings and issues.
- ◀ Any development of a specific sport or particular format of a sport.
- ◀ Any new or emerging issues and opportunities.

Alongside regular steering group meetings a good way to keep the strategy up-to-date and maintain relationships is to hold sport specific meetings with the NGBs and other relevant parties. These meetings look to update the key supply and demand information, if necessary amend the assessment work, track progress with implementing the recommendations and action plan and highlight any new issues and opportunities.

These meetings could be timed to fit with the annual affiliation process undertaken by the NGBs which would help to capture any changes in the number and nature of sports clubs in the area. Other information that is already collected on a regular basis such as pitch booking records for local authority and other sites could be fed into these meetings.

The NGBs are also able to indicate any further performance quality assessments that have been undertaken within the study area.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

## Checklists

In order for this Strategy to be signed off by the steering group, a Stage D Checklist: Develop the Strategy, is signed off.

| <b>Stage D Checklist: Develop the Strategy</b>   | <b>Tick ✓</b> |                           |
|--|---------------|---------------------------|
|  | <b>Yes</b>    | <b>Requires Attention</b> |
| <b>Step 7: Develop the recommendations and action plan</b>   | ✓             |                           |
| 1. Have a number of study area specific scenarios been looked at to help explore key issues and findings along with possible recommendations and actions?                                  | ✓             |                           |
| 2. Have any recommendations and actions regarding AGP provision taken into account the guidance in the 'Selecting the Right Artificial Surface' document and any NGB specific information? | ✓             |                           |
| 3. Do the recommendations reflect the drivers, vision and objectives of the work?  | ✓             |                           |
| 4. Are the recommendations precise enough to enable the development of clear individual area, sport and site specific actions to help achieve them?  | ✓             |                           |
| 5. Have all relevant parties been engaged with the development of, and are signed up to the delivery of, the recommendations and actions?  | ✓             |                           |
| 6. Are the recommendations and actions clearly presented?  | ✓             |                           |
| 7. Has particular attention been paid to the situation at priority sites and those which are being significantly overplayed?   | ✓             |                           |
| 8. Have area, sport and site specific solutions been proposed to protect, enhance, and provide playing pitch provision to meet the current and future demand?                              | ✓             |                           |
| 9. Has guidance on the future of any sites highlighted as being at risk been provided?   | ✓             |                           |
| 10. Do the recommendations and actions seek to make the best use of existing pitches?  | ✓             |                           |
| 11. Has the detriment and benefit of proposals to relocate provision been presented?   | ✓             |                           |
| 12. Has the level and type of any new playing pitch provision required been presented?   | ✓             |                           |
| 13. Has the importance of providing appropriate and fit for purpose ancillary facilities been highlighted in order to maximise the potential benefit to sport of any pitches?              | ✓             |                           |
| 14. Have the recommendations sought to ensure an adequate amount of spare capacity in the provision of accessible pitches with secured community use?                                      | ✓             |                           |
| 15. Does the PPS provide a steer as to the future of any spare capacity and any provision that may be genuinely surplus to requirements (paragraphs D12 to D15)?                           | ✓             |                           |
| 16. Does the action plan cover the points listed in paragraph D17?   | ✓             |                           |
| 17. Does the action plan provide the most appropriate actions to improve provision in the study area rather than just those which the local authority can deliver?                         | ✓             |                           |
| 18. Does the action plan represent an infrastructure plan for playing pitches with deliverable area, sport and site specific actions and projects?   | ✓             |                           |
| <b>Step 8: Write and Adopt the Strategy</b>  | ✓             |                           |
| 1. Does the PPS document provide the reader with a clear understanding of the areas listed in paragraph D20?   | ✓             |                           |

## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

|    |  |   |  |
|----|--|---|--|
| 2. | Is it clear from the PPS document why the recommendations and actions have been included, how they are to be delivered and what they will achieve?                   | ✓ |  |
| 3. | Does the PPS document indicate how it should be used and applied in different areas and circumstances along with the benefits of doing so?                           | ✓ |  |
| 4. | Has the PPS document been subject to appropriate consultation?   | ✓ |  |
| 5. | Do all members of the steering group and other relevant parties endorse the PPS and recognise its lead role in guiding the improvement of pitches in the study area? | ✓ |  |
| 6. | Has the PPS document been formally adopted by the local authority and is its status recognised across all relevant departments?                                      | ✓ |  |

To help ensure the PPOSS is delivered and is kept robust and up-to-date, the steering group can refer to the new methodology Stage E Checklist: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up-to-date:

| <b>Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up-to-date</b>   | Tick ✓ |                    |
|--|--------|--------------------|
|  | Yes    | Requires Attention |
| <b>Step 9: Apply and deliver the strategy</b>  |        |                    |
| 1. Are steering group members clear on how the PPS can be applied across a range of relevant areas?  |        |                    |
| 2. Is each member of the steering group committed to taking the lead to help ensure the PPS is used and applied appropriately within their area of work and influence?                                     |        |                    |
| 3. Has a process been put in place to ensure regular monitoring of how the recommendations and action plan are being delivered and the PPS is being applied?   |        |                    |
| <b>Step 10: Keep the strategy robust and up-to-date</b>  |        |                    |
| 1. Has a process been put in place to ensure the PPS is kept robust and up-to-date?  |        |                    |
| 2. Does the process involve an annual update of the PPS?   |        |                    |
| 3. Is the steering group to be maintained and is it clear of its on-going role?  |        |                    |
| 4. Is regular liaison with the NGBs and other parties planned?   |        |                    |
| 5. Has all the supply and demand information been collated and presented in a format (i.e. single document that can be filtered accordingly) that will help people to review it and highlight any changes? |        |                    |
| 6. Have any changes made to the Active Places Power data been fed back to Sport England?   |        |                    |

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

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## APPENDIX ONE: SPORTING CONTEXT

The following section outlines a series of national, regional and local policies pertaining to the study and which will have an important influence on the Strategy.

### National context

The provision of high quality and accessible community outdoor sports facilities at a local level is a key requirement for achieving the targets set out by the Government and Sport England. It is vital that this strategy is cognisant of and works towards these targets in addition to local priorities and plans.

### Department of Culture, Media and Sport Get Active: A Strategy for the Future of Sport and Physical Activity (2023)

The Government published its new strategy for sport in August 2023. The 2015 government sport strategy, Sporting Future: A New Strategy for a More Active Nation, was a fundamental re-framing of sport and physical activity in the UK. It set out five outcomes delivered by sport and physical activity:

- ◀ Physical wellbeing.
- ◀ Mental wellbeing.
- ◀ Individual development.
- ◀ Social and community development.
- ◀ Sustainable economic development.

This new strategy builds on the foundations of Sporting Future and retains these five outcomes at its core. In order to measure its success in producing outputs which accord with these aims it has also adopted a series of three core priorities, with seven indicators to achieve these priorities as follows:

- ◀ **Being unapologetically ambitious in making the nation more active**
  - ◀ Ensuring everyone is focused on increasing physical activity, meaning fewer inactive children, and narrowing the gap on inactivity where groups are not being reached, with visible progress across the country by 2030
  - ◀ Focusing on evidence, data and metrics
  - ◀ Setting the future direction for facilities and spaces where people can be active
- ◀ **Making sport and physical activity more inclusive and welcoming for all that everyone can have confidence that there is a place for them in sport**
  - ◀ Helping the sector to be welcoming to all
  - ◀ Improving how issues and concerns are dealt within the sector
- ◀ **Moving towards a more sustainable sector that is more financially resilient and robust**
  - ◀ Supporting the sector to access additional, alternative forms of investment
  - ◀ Working towards a more environmentally sustainable sector

Delivering against these priorities will help create a more active nation and a more sustainable sport sector. These aims are complementary; greater participation, stronger governance and confidence in the sector will help to drive investment, which in turn helps to attract new audiences. The vision is to make sport and physical activity accessible, resilient, fun and fair, for now and the years to come – for the benefit of individuals and the country.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

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## **Sport England Uniting the Movement: Our 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport (2021-2031)**

Sport and physical activity makes people happier and healthier, and movement is the lens through which we can make that happen. It does the same thing for our communities, with life-changing, sustainable benefits that have huge economic and social value. That's why Sport England wants sport and physical activity to be recognised as essential to help overcome these national challenges.

The Strategy recognises the need to invest in sport and physical activity through NGBs, other sports bodies and local sports clubs, organisations and community groups to increase engagement for different groups as part of our core purpose. It states that there is now a need to go further in promoting movement in general as the means to unlock sport and activity for some people.

There are deep-rooted inequalities in sport and physical activity, which means that there are people who feel excluded from being active because the right options and opportunities aren't there. These inequalities are at the very core of the Uniting the Movement.

Sport England plans on having a laser focus on tackling inequalities in all that it does, because providing opportunities to people and communities that have traditionally been left behind, and helping to remove the barriers to activity is vitally important.

### **National Planning Policy Framework (2024)**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out planning policies for England. It details how these changes are expected to be applied to the planning system. It also provides a framework for local people and their councils to produce distinct local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities.

The NPPF states the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It identifies that the planning system needs to focus on three themes of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. A presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key aspect for any plan-making and decision-taking processes. In relation to plan-making the NPPF sets out that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs.

The 'promoting healthy communities' theme identifies that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficiencies or surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform what provision is required in an area.

As a prerequisite the NPPF states existing open space, sports and recreation buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- ◀ An assessment has been undertaken, which has clearly shown that the open space, buildings or land is surplus to requirements.
- ◀ The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.
- ◀ The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

In order for planning policies to be 'sound' local authorities are required to carry out a robust assessment of need for open space, sport and recreation facilities.



# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

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## The FA National Football Facilities Strategy (2018-28)

The Football Association's (FA) National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS) provides a strategic framework that sets out key priorities and targets for the national game (i.e., football) over a ten-year period.

The Strategy sets out shared aims and objectives it aims to deliver on in conjunction with The Premier League, Sport England and the Government, to be delivered with support of the Football Foundation.

These stakeholders have clearly identified the aspirations for football to contribute directly to nationally important social and health priorities. Alongside this, the strategy is clear that traditional, affiliated football remains an important priority and a core component of the game, whilst recognising and supporting the more informal environments used for the community and recreational game.

Its vision is: "Within 10 years we aim to deliver great football facilities, wherever they are needed"

£1.3 billion has been spent by football and Government since 2000 to enhance existing football facilities and build new ones. However, more is needed if football and Government's shared objectives for participation, individual well-being and community cohesion are to be achieved. Nationally, direct investment will be increased – initially to £69 million per annum from football and Government (a 15% increase on recent years).

The NFFS investment priorities can be broadly grouped into six areas, recognising the need to grow the game, support existing players and better understand the different football environments:

- ◀ **Improve 20,000 Natural Turf pitches**, with a focus on addressing drop off due to a poor playing experience;
- ◀ **Deliver 1,000 3G AGP 'equivalents'** (mix of 11v11 and small sided provision, including MUGAs - small sided facilities are likely to have a key role in smaller / rural communities and encouraging multi-sport offers), enhancing the quality of playing experience and supporting a sustainable approach to grass roots provision;
- ◀ **Deliver 1,000 changing pavilions/clubhouses**, linked to multi-pitch or hub sites, supporting growth (particularly in women and girls football), sustainability and providing a facility infrastructure to underpin investment in coaching, officials and football development;  
**Support access to flexible indoor spaces**, including equipment and court markings, to support growth in futsal, walking football and to support the education and skills outcomes, exploiting opportunities for football to positively impact on personal and social outcomes for young people in particular;
- ◀ **Refurbish existing stock to maintain current provision**, recognising the need to address historic under-investment and issues with refurbishment of existing facilities;
- ◀ **Support testing of technology and innovation**, building on customer insight to deliver hubs for innovation, testing and development of the game.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

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## Local Football Facility Plans

To support in delivery of both the current and superseding FA National Game Strategy (NGS), the FA commissioned a nationwide consultancy project. A Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) has now been produced for every local authority across England. Each plan is unique to its area as well as being diverse in its representation.

The LFFP is strategically aligned to the National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS); a 10-year plan to change the landscape of football facilities in England. The NFFS represents a major funding commitment from the national funding partners (The FA, Premier League, DCMS, Football Foundation) to inform and direct an estimated one billion pounds of investment into football facilities over the next ten years.

Each LFFP will build upon PPOSS findings (where present and current) regarding the formal and affiliated game, to also include strategic priorities for investment across small sided football (recreational and informal including indoors). The LFFP will also incorporate consultation with groups outside of formal football, as well as underrepresented communities. This could include those which may be key partners with regards to football for behavioural change and groups which may be key drivers of FA NGS priorities around participation in the likes of women and girls' football, disability football and futsal.

LFFPs will identify key projects to be delivered and act as an investment portfolio for projects that require funding. As such, around 90% of all national football investment through the funding partners will be identified via LFFPs.

It is important to recognise that a LFFP is an investment portfolio of priority projects for potential investment - it is not a detailed supply and demand analysis of all pitch provision in a local area. Consequently, it cannot be used in place of a PPOSS and is not an accepted evidence base for site change of use or disposal. A LFFP will, however, build on available/existing local evidence and strategic plans and may adopt relevant actions from a PPS and/or complement these with additional investment priorities.

### **The FA: Inspiring Positive Change Through Football (2024-28)<sup>18</sup>**

The FA launched its new Strategy which aims to 'take English football forward, with clear focus on the biggest opportunities and challenges that need to be addressed'.

To achieve this, eight key strategic priorities are identified which include four 'Game Changer' objectives and four 'Drivers' objectives as detailed below. The strategy also outlines how The FA's plans to achieve these objectives.

#### Game Changers:

- ◀ Win tournaments
  - ◀ Develop pathways
  - ◀ Support elite players
  - ◀ Enhance environments
  - ◀ Collaborate and influence
- ◀ A game free from discrimination
  - ◀ Boost representation
  - ◀ Drive more inclusion
  - ◀ Tackle discrimination
- ◀ Equal opportunities for women & girls
  - ◀ Increase school participation
  - ◀ Increase club participation

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<sup>18</sup> [FA Strategy 2024-2028: The Football Association](#)

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

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- ◀ Enhance women's competitions
- ◀ Support female coaches and referees
- ◀ Transform the pitch landscape
  - ◀ Sustain and grow high-quality grass pitches
  - ◀ Deliver new 3G pitches
  - ◀ Support inclusivity accessibility and environmental sustainability of facilities

## Drivers:

- ◀ Thriving community clubs
  - ◀ Develop club opportunities
  - ◀ Support the current and future generation of club leaders
  - ◀ Equip clubs to add long-term value to local communities
- ◀ World-class FA cups
  - ◀ Broaden commercial appeal
  - ◀ Evolve the Adobe Women's FA Cup format
- ◀ Participant led
  - ◀ Place participants at the centre of decision making
  - ◀ Create flexible models to meet participants needs
  - ◀ Provide digital tools to improve experiences
- ◀ Progressive governance
  - ◀ Support integration of women's and girls' football
  - ◀ Support governance of the NLS
  - ◀ Support our County Football Associations (CFAs)

## The FA: Reaching Higher (2024-28)<sup>19</sup>

The FA's 2020-2024 strategy, 'Inspiring Positive Change', coincided with record growth across the sport, with more women and girls playing, coaching, officiating and supporting the flourishing professional game than ever before.

This strategy aims to build on the success achieved to date and strives to continue working to unlock the full potential of the women's and girls' game. The strategy outlines four strategic priorities as seen below.

1. **Build and Protect the Uniqueness of the Women's Game:** Continue to honour the history of women's football and recognise those who have contributed towards making it so unique, whilst ensuring the distinct qualities and unique culture of the women's game are valued and protected.
2. **Win a Major Tournament:** Continue to be world-leaders both on and off the pitch, developing players and building an inclusive talent pathway system to make football more equal and accessible at every level of the game, ensuring the England pathway and teams represent society.
3. **Build Robust, High-Quality Competition:** Create compelling competition structures and support clubs to develop to the appropriate level within the game, while enabling people to grow and develop within The FA's competition structures.
4. **Deliver Equal Opportunities for Women and Girls to Play:** Sustain growth in schools whilst tackling inequalities. Continue to grow the number of female teams and deliver vibrant league offers whilst extending and enhancing the sessional football offer. The ambition is for 90% of schools to deliver equal access for girls to play football in key stages two and three.

There are five golden threads which weave through each of the four strategic priorities and across all levels of the women's and girls' game, which will be instrumental for delivering the next phase of growth by 2028:

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<sup>19</sup> [The FA Women's & Girls Football Strategy 2024-28](#)

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

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1. **Female Health and Wellbeing:** Develop the game to support women and girls with their health and wellbeing needs, providing them with environments in which they can thrive.
2. **Safeguarding:** Support the evolution of an ever-safer culture across the women's and girls' game.
3. **Refereeing:** Grow and nurture a new generation of referees who are representative of our society.
4. **Coaching:** Support and develop brilliant coaches capable of unleashing every player's potential in a safe and inclusive game.
5. **Diversity and Inclusion:** Ensure the game is more reflective of our society.

## Inspiring Generations – Cricket's Game-wide Strategy (2025 – 28)<sup>[1]</sup>

In October 2024 the ECB released its updated Inspiring Generations – Cricket's Game-wide Strategy (2025–28). Cricket in England and Wales has seen transformative growth since the publication of its previous strategy Inspiring Generation (2020-24). Its new strategy represents an evolution of its plans, however, many of its previous themes are still relevant. Its main purpose is to say 'Cricket is a game for me' through its vision:

- ◀ To become the most inclusive team sport
- ◀ To grow and unite the game
- ◀ Lead the game through global transformation

It aims to obtain this vision through six key objectives

- ◀ Make cricket diverse, inclusive and accessible
- ◀ Transform Women's and Girl's cricket
- ◀ Connect communities through play
- ◀ Inspire through winning England teams
- ◀ Support a thriving and sustainable men's and women's professional game
- ◀ Win the battle for attention

Underpinning these six ambitions are a series of enablers that cut-across multiple areas of the game, alongside Cricket's Core Values.

## The Rugby Football Union Strategy 2021 Onwards

Through the strategy, the RFU aims to enrich lives, introduce more people to rugby union and develop the sport for future generations. The goal is to achieve this by strengthening and uniting rugby union in England and producing consistently winning England teams.

Eight key strategic priorities are identified with all investment decisions aligned to these. The strategy also outlines the RFU's core activities which form the backbone of its business operations and services to the game.

The priorities include four 'Game Objectives' and four 'Driving Objectives' as detailed below.

Game Objectives:

- ◀ Enjoyment – enable positive player experiences on and off the field
- ◀ Winning England – create the best possible high-performance system for England Rugby
- ◀ Welfare – enhance player welfare to protect and support the wellbeing of players

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<sup>[1]</sup><https://resources.ecb.co.uk/ecb/document/2024/10/22/19a925d7-3c92-4a36-8e7b-f49cb470377f/ECB-Inspiring-Generations-2025-2028.pdf>

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

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- ◀ Flourishing rugby communities – support clubs to sustain and grow themselves and to reflect society

## Driving Objectives:

- ◀ Diversity & Inclusion – drive rugby union in England to reflect the diversity of society
- ◀ Understand – build a deep understanding of players, volunteers and fans to shape the future of the game
- ◀ Connect – connect with and grow the rugby community and create exceptional experiences
- ◀ Commercial and operational excellence – ensure a sustainable and efficient business model delivered by an inspired workforce

## England Hockey Strategy (2023 – 2028)

England Hockey's Facilities Strategy can be found [here](#).

Aiming to make hockey more noticeable, relevant, and accessible to all, England Hockey have launched their new strategy 'Creating a Future for Our Game Together' on 3<sup>rd</sup> October. The new strategy is a continued effort to re-engage with the current hockey community and to reach out to potential newcomers to introduce them to hockey.

Underpinning the strategy and of importance to the hockey community are four values, "collaborate inclusively, care for people and places, play with spirit win with grace and resilient in everything we do".

The strategy is the culmination of two years consultation with various stakeholders across the sport and larger sporting sector. Hockey will be guided by five key objectives over the next five years.

1. Lead Positive Change: to create and champion positive change within the community by broadening and widening the engagement of the sport and making it more ethnically and culturally diverse.
2. Meaningful Growth: to make sure that our sport thrives and grows into the future, we want to nurture a love of hockey within a more diverse group of young players and communities to reflect society.
3. Drive Visible Impact: to produce and release high-quality, engaging content that shares the love of the game, captures the passion, builds a deep connection and amplifies the voices of the hockey community with new and existing participants.
4. Responsible Leadership: to provide forward thinking, compassionate and inclusive leadership. Leadership that fosters trust within physically and psychologically safe environments and which puts players, the community and sustainability at heart of every decision.
5. Inspirational International Success: inspirational club and national teams delivering podium success in Europe and on the world stage, underpinned by a thriving talent system and domestic game.

The strategy aligns with Sport England's 'Uniting the movement' strategy and UK Sport's Powering Success, Inspiring Impact' strategic plan.

## Rugby Football League – National Community Facilities Strategy (2024 – 2030)

The RFL has developed a new National Facilities Strategy which will guide investment into the game from 2024 through to 2030. The proposed investment package aligned to the Strategy will not only transform facilities, but also bolster the sport's social impact, reinforcing

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

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its position as a vital part of the nation's sporting and social fabric. The four focus areas of the Strategy are:

- ◀ **Security of Tenure** – allowing clubs to plan for the long-term
- ◀ **Accessible and Inclusive Facilities** – providing suitable facilities for all and creating safe spaces for the wider community
- ◀ **Adequate and Appropriate Pitch Provision**– investment both in playing surfaces, and in upskilling a volunteer workforce to maintain them
- ◀ **Sustainability**– both environmental and financial

The Strategy will deliver on the four focus areas by delivering against a set of five recommendations which are set within the Strategy and are detailed below. These recommendations reflect the wider strategic aspirations across the sport and are for the RFL to work to deliver.

- ◀ **Focus Community Clubs**
  - ◀ Ensure the RFL has sufficient capacity and resource to deliver the recommendations identified within this Strategy to support its community clubs.
  - ◀ Ensure all community clubs have the knowledge and resource to provide good quality grass pitches.
  - ◀ Supporting clubs to have good quality changing and social facilities which can support the scale of need at each club. These must be inclusive for all participants and benefit target user groups such as women and girls' participants.
  - ◀ Ensure clubs can accommodate a sustainable operational programme for clubhouses to ensure the longevity of provision.
  - ◀ Work with clubs and key partners to increase the number of clubs with secured tenure of their club facilities.
  - ◀ Develop a dedicated funding programme which is specifically aimed at supporting clubs to gain security of tenure at their respective site.
  - ◀ Highlight success stories and best practices from community clubs to inspire others and showcase the positive impact of these efforts.
- ◀ **Deliver positive social and environmental impact**
  - ◀ Support clubs through training and advice on how to promote facilities for non-rugby league purposes.
  - ◀ Work with Active Partnerships across England to enable higher usage and activation of rugby league assets for non-rugby league activity.
  - ◀ Prioritise clubs for wellbeing hubs which may offer the widest social benefit (relative to local need) – particularly those in high deprivation areas.
  - ◀ Use the activation of club facilities as a prerequisite to capital funding for club house improvements / new development.
  - ◀ Collaborative working with sports partners and key agencies
- ◀ **Collaborative working with sports partners and key agencies**
  - ◀ Ensure continued working with Sport England and National Governing Bodies of other sports to capitalise on shared investment opportunities.
  - ◀ Work with the Football Foundation to maximise Multi-Sport funding opportunities – utilising the framework provided in this Strategy as the baseline of shared investment.
  - ◀ Work closely with Active Partnerships in areas with high club densities to establish opportunities for pitch access via the Open School Facilities programme.
- ◀ **Technological solutions**
  - ◀ Ensure the RFL gathers greater levels of information from clubs via affiliation. To include (e.g.) security of tenure information and an integrated self-assessment audit of community facilities.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL: PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

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- ◀ Continue expanding the use and application of PitchPower so all clubs can self-assess provision and support clubs to make positive contributions to improving the quality of grass pitches.
- ◀ Promote technological solutions which progress clubs into being more sustainable, energy efficient and ensure their long-term viability as community assets.
- ◀ Create a platform or resource hub where clubs can access information on funding opportunities, facility management, and sustainable operational practices.
- ◀ **Working with Charitable Community Organisations and Wheelchair Rugby League**
  - ◀ Develop an investment package to support the operational delivery of professional club foundation led wheelchair activity focusing on storage and logistical solutions.
  - ◀ Prioritise capital investment into community club sites which also accommodate professional club foundations as tenants for community Rugby League activity.
  - ◀ Begin work on the feasibility of developing a national wheelchair centre which includes exploring partnership opportunities with other sports to maximise multisport value and return on investment.
  - ◀ Consult with professional club foundations, where possible, to understand the need for 3G access and work to ascertain sufficient access hours during peak times of need.

## Herts Sport and Physical Activity Partnership

This is the active partnership area in which East Hertfordshire is located. The Partnership's vision is to 'strategically and collaboratively improve the lives of the people of Hertfordshire, by using the power of sport and physical activity to tackle inequality and disadvantage'. It is one of 43 active partnerships across England and is funded by Sport England to locally deliver the Uniting the Movement Strategy. Key insights which informed its Strategic Plan 2022-2027 are:

- ◀ The need for a joined-up approach between schools and community sport.
- ◀ The Covid-19 Pandemic affecting the most disadvantaged communities.
- ◀ Opportunities to use sport and physical activity to tackle the number of long-term health conditions and wider societal issues.
- ◀ Widening inequality gaps.
- ◀ The need for well-designed spaces to increase physical activity levels and improve mental health.

# EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

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### **Bowls England: Fit for the Future (2021-2026)**

Bowls England's new Strategy: 'Fit For The Future' frames an exciting course for the sport. The five-year plan has been designed with the ultimate goal of getting more people playing & enjoying bowls. It sets out its vision for the sport, how it plans to achieve its objectives and what success looks like in 2026. The priorities that will get it the target of 1 million bowls experiences per year by 2026 are:

- ◀ Building the brand of bowls by increasing focus on international & top domestic bowls, and utilizing opportunities such as Birmingham 2022 to achieve larger media coverage;
- ◀ Ensuring the sport is truly accessible to all by offering different formats of the game which suit all time constraints, as well as driving more people to clubs in new ways;
- ◀ Creating positive playing experiences for everyone who steps on the green, both for casual and competitive players, as well as growing our events calendar and introducing a Performance Pathway
- ◀ Putting volunteers first, as the lifeblood of our sport, by increasing our support for clubs in order to empower them to thrive;
- ◀ Leading the sport with purpose by developing our Governance structures, diversifying our revenue streams, and work collaboratively with all the sport's key stakeholders.

### **England Netball**

In November 2021 England Netball launched a 10-year 'Adventure Strategy' for the game with a new brand identity for the organisation.

England Netball's 'Adventure Strategy' shares a purpose-led ambition for the game, to build on the momentum the sport has seen in recent years and take it to new heights for the decade ahead.

The 'Adventure Strategy' outlines the intention to:

- ◀ accelerate the development and growth of the game at every level, from grassroots to the elite,
- ◀ elevate the visibility of the sport, and
- ◀ lead a movement to impact lives on and beyond the court.

At the heart of its purpose, England Netball, with its proud and unique female foundations, will remain dedicated to increasing opportunities for women and girls to play the game as a priority, working tirelessly to address the gender participation gap in sport that has widened since the global pandemic.

Underpinned by years of engaging with and delivering netball for female communities, the organisation pledges to understand, support and nurture women and girls more deeply at every life stage, at every age.

The organisation is also committed to opening the sport to new audiences in every community, so netball better represents the rich diversity of the country it proudly represents, and ensures the sport continues to evolve and adapt to thrive in the future, helping to create a truly inclusive sport for all where everyone can belong, flourish and soar. A recent partnership announcement with England Men's and Mixed Netball Association (EMMNA) to help develop and grow male participation in the game, supports this commitment as England Netball pledges to promote difference and embrace the opportunity to make the sport a possibility within everyone's reach.



## EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

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Transforming netball for children and young people is a strategic priority to protect the future of the sport. Working with schools and policy makers to extend physical literacy within, and after the school day with a focus on netball specific provision will pave the way for greater community participation. The organisation will accelerate the expansion of its Bee Netball programme for young children, whilst supporting teens and young women to stay in the game to keep them physically active and in the game for life.

The elite game is in focus too, with the ambition for the Vitality Roses to be the best female sports team in the world, supporting the national team to consistently win on the world stage, with an outstanding talent pathway in place to fuel sustainable successes on court, and setting new standards for netball. The professionalisation of the game over the next decade is a priority, focusing on growing world-leading international and domestic competitions and events, and creating more careers in the sport.

Grounded in feedback from the Netball Family, with over 3,000 members and stakeholders consulted as part of the strategic process to understand what they wanted netball to 'look like' in 2031, the plan is aspirational and ambitious and sees the organisation pledge to continue to be a trailblazer for women's sport as it embarks on its new adventure.

### Facility development

The facility development aspirations stated within the Strategy are to:-

- ◀ Take a fresh look at the spaces required to support the sport, creating accessible places in every community to allow netball to be incorporated into how and where women and girls live their lives;
- ◀ Protect, enhance, and extend the network of homes that house the sport at a local and regional level;
- ◀ Develop an elite domestic professional competition that supports full time athletes underpinned by a world class infrastructure and environments.
- ◀ For England Netball to achieve its ambitions to make the game accessible to wider audiences and in every community, it encourages Local Authorities to adopt policies within Playing Pitch Strategies and Built Facilities Strategies that:-
- ◀ Facilitates informal netball activity within neighbourhood multi use games areas for example by installing combined outdoor basketball and netball goals and art courts in Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs).
- ◀ Incorporates the cultural and health needs of women and girls within any designs for improved or new facilities.
- ◀ Protects and enhances netball facilities within all Primary and Secondary School environments so they offer a positive first experience of the sport for students and the wider community during out of school hours.
- ◀ Supports the installation of floodlights on outdoor courts to increase all year-round use.
- ◀ Facilitates the development of netball growth programmes, club training and competition within public leisure centres.
- ◀ Where appropriate, supports the development of netball homes and performance environments that enable local women and girls to pursue a career in netball as an elite athlete, official, coach or administrator.

## **EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN**

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The purpose of this document is to set out our long term vision for athletics facilities in England. Facilities form a vital component of the overall England Athletics strategy.

The development, protection and enhancement of facilities will support our strategic plan and help England Athletics contribute to the delivery of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Sporting Futures: A New Strategy for Sport and Sport England's strategy Towards an Active Nation. Appropriate facilities help to attract and inspire new participants and provide the foundation and focus for a significant proportion of the England Athletics family.

The England Athletics Strategic Plan notes that the sport increasingly needs to become financially sustainable and that a business-like and innovative approach is a vital component of its future success. Facilities are fundamental, but they are also expensive to create and to maintain. The sport therefore faces a significant challenge to develop, improve and maintain facilities, most of which are currently operated and funded by third parties.

This strategy sets out a challenge to all those involved with the delivery of the sport to be innovative and business like in the operation and development of facilities at a time of financial challenge, as it aims "To create an innovative and inspiring network of sustainable athletic facilities, with the capacity to meet both current and future demand across England".

## EAST HERTS COUNCIL REPORT

### COUNCIL

**Date of meeting:** Wednesday, 10 December 2025

**Report by:** Councillor Carl Brittain – Executive Member for Financial Sustainability

**Report title:** Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27

**Ward(s) affected:** All Wards

### Summary

- To consider the latest available information around the current local Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme at East Herts and comment on the proposal that there be no change made for 2026/27.

### RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL

**A. To agree that there be no change to the local council tax support scheme for 2026/27.**

#### 1.0 Proposal(s)

1.1. That Executive Committee consider, in accordance with the Governments requirement for an annual approval of the Council Tax Support scheme, that no changes be made for 2026/27.

#### 2.0 Background

2.1 The Government made a provision within the Local Government Finance Bill to replace the former national Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme from 1 April 2013 with localised schemes for Council Tax Support Schemes (CTS) devised by individual local authorities (LA's). The schemes are valid for one year and must be approved by Council before the 11 March immediately preceding the financial year in which it is to take effect.

2.2 If the Council were to choose to consider any material revisions to the scheme, this would be the subject of public consultation,

which would need to be considered by both those entitled to receive support as well as the general taxpayers of East Herts.

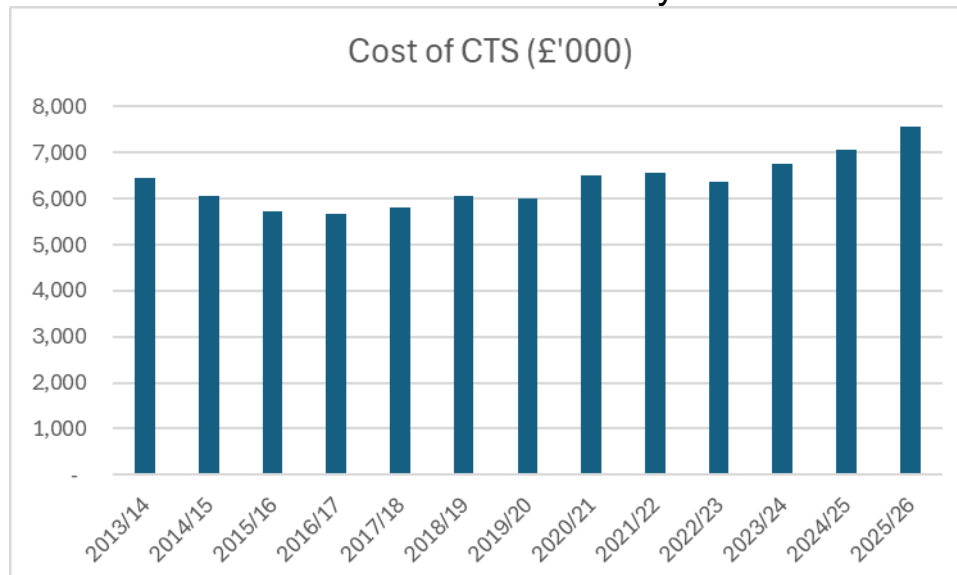
- 2.3 The Government require that major preceptors (County and Police) are consulted each year, and if there is any change to the scheme a full consultation open to all taxpayers in the district is required. There is no specific timescale prescribed but the period must allow for meaningful consultation.
- 2.4 Neither the County nor Police have raised any objection to the proposals for 2026/27.
- 2.5 Additionally, consideration must be given to providing transitional protection where the support is to be reduced or removed. The financial impact of any decision on CTS needs to be included when setting the Council budget and Council Tax levels at the same time.
- 2.6 Since the introduction of CTS in April 2013 various changes have been considered but the scheme has remained the same.
- 2.7 A report was previously presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 June 2025, outlining proposals to introduce a Council Tax Support (CTS) banded scheme for 2026/27. The key advantage of a banded scheme is that it allows for income fluctuations within a band without triggering a reassessment, offering greater stability for claimants.
- 2.8 However, due to the complexity of the proposed changes, significant work was required to ensure the scheme would remain broadly cost-neutral compared to the current model, while also ensuring that individuals would not be materially worse off. As a result, there was insufficient time to finalise and consult on the scheme ahead of its inclusion in the Tax Base for 2026/27. Therefore, the CTS scheme will remain unchanged for 2026/27. Work on the banded scheme will continue, with a view to consulting early in the new financial year.

### **3.0 Reasons**

- 3.1 In 2013 the Council initially devised a scheme which replicated the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme but limited the Council Tax liability that was used to assess entitlement to 91.5% for

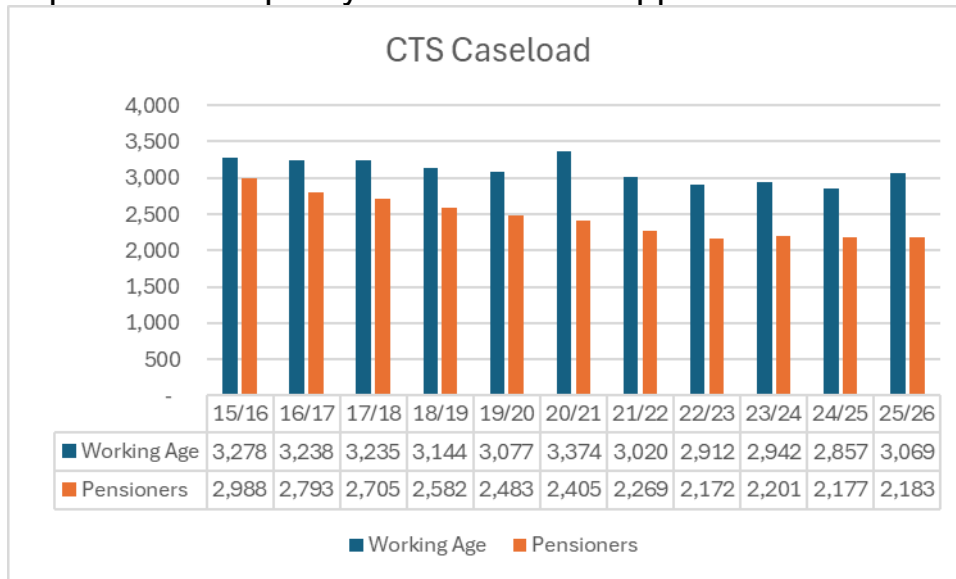
working age customers. The Council has maintained this position for the current scheme.

- 3.2 The cost of the scheme is reflected in the tax base, in the same way as other discounts which reduce the collectable debit.
- 3.3 Currently (2025/26) 79% of the tax base income is precepted by Hertfordshire County Council and 12% by the Police, and accordingly they have vested interest in the value of the CTS scheme as it directly impacts on their ability to raise funds. The lower the cost of the scheme, the higher the tax base on which they can precept.
- 3.4 The level of spend on Council Tax Support (CTS) since its introduction is shown below and demonstrates that cost of the scheme has increased over the last few years.



- 3.5 The main drivers for the increase from around £5.6m in 2016/17 to a projected £7.5m by 2025/26, are annual council tax increases, which raise the value of awards even if caseload remains stable, and economic pressures such as inflation and cost-of-living impacts, which increase entitlement levels.
- 3.6 The table below shows changes in caseload, highlighting a steady decline in pensioner claimants (from nearly 3,000 in 2015/16 to about 2,180 by 2025/26) alongside a relatively stable working-age caseload, which experienced a spike in 2020/21 linked to the pandemic. This shift is significant because working-age claimants generally receive higher levels of support. The

introduction of Universal Credit (UC) has also influenced this trend: while UC has simplified benefits, it has increased CTS claims among low-income working-age households, as UC recipients often qualify for maximum support.



3.7 The impact of any change in trend will be built into the taxbase for 2026/27 when it is constructed in October 2025.

3.8 The taxbase for 2025/26 was calculated in October 2024 and assumed CTS would cost the equivalent of 3,597.68 band D values. At 1 August 2025 the actual band D cost of CTS was 3,516.37, which is £190K less expensive. In context the taxbase is set to produce £144 million and has many variables.

3.9 The CTS scheme for 2025/26 can be summarised as follows:

- That the CTS scheme for all working age claimants will be based on 91.5% of their current tax liability;
- All local discretions currently in place continue e.g. war pension disregards;
- Other aspects of the new CTS scheme to mirror the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme.

3.10 This means all working age customer have to pay at least 8.5% towards their bill.

#### 4.0 Options

- 4.1 Alternative approaches to the current CTS scheme could include introducing a banded scheme (where support is based on income bands rather than exact income), applying a minimum payment requirement for all working-age claimants, reducing the maximum level of support, or revising income disregards to reduce entitlement. These options could help manage costs and provide greater predictability, but they represent significant policy changes that would directly affect residents' contributions.
- 4.2 Under statutory requirements, any such changes would require a formal public consultation, typically lasting several weeks, before they can be lawfully implemented. Given the current timescales and the need to finalise the scheme for the forthcoming financial year, there is insufficient time to complete this process. As a result, continuing with the existing scheme remains the only viable option for 2025/26.
- 4.3 **What others are doing:** the table below summarises other Hertfordshire CTS schemes (at the time of writing the report).

|                 | <b>Current scheme for maximum entitlement</b>                               |
|-----------------|---|
| Broxbourne      | 75% Liability, only up to Band E restriction                                |
| Dacorum         | 75% plus restrict to band D so it can be 75% of band D                      |
| Hertsmere       | 80% plus restrict to band D so it can be 80% of band D                      |
| North Herts     | 100% if income is below maximum bands. Bands are 100%, 75%, 45%, 25% and 0% |
| St Albans       | 100%  |
| Stevenage       | 91.5% - same scheme as East Herts   |
| Three Rivers    | 100%  |
| Watford         | 100%  |
| Welwyn Hatfield | 75%   |

## 5.0 Risks

5.1 As detailed in the report.

## 6.0 Implications/Consultations

### Community Safety

No

**Data Protection**

No

**Equalities**

No

**Environmental Sustainability**

No

**Financial**

As detailed in the report

**Health and Safety**

No

**Human Resources**

No

**Human Rights**

No

**Legal**

As detailed in the report

**Specific Wards**

No

**7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

7.1 None

**Contact Member** Carl Brittain, Executive Member for Financial Sustainability. [carl.brittain@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:carl.brittain@eastherts.gov.uk)

**Contact Officer** Brian Moldon, Director for Finance, Risk and Performance. Tel: 01279 502050. [brian.moldon@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:brian.moldon@eastherts.gov.uk)

**Report Author** Carol Bulloch, Assistant Director of Revenues and Benefits. Tel: 01279 502077. [carol.bulloch@hertspartnership-ala.gov.uk](mailto:carol.bulloch@hertspartnership-ala.gov.uk)



Neil Wright, Benefits Manager. Tel: 01279 502060.  
[neil.wright@hertspartnership-ala.gov.uk](mailto:neil.wright@hertspartnership-ala.gov.uk)

# Agenda Item 10

## **EAST HERTS COUNCIL REPORT**

### **COUNCIL**

**DATE OF MEETING: WEDNESDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2025**

**Report by:** Councillor Carl Brittain – Executive Member for Financial Sustainability

**Report title:** Council Tax Base 2026/27

**Ward(s) affected: (All Wards)**

**Summary** – To recommend the calculation of the Council Tax Base for the whole district, split by Town and Parish Council, for 2026/27.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:**

- a) The 2026/27 Council Tax Base for the district is set as 65,819.15 as calculated in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012.

#### **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The Council Tax Base is the measure used for calculating Council Tax and is used by both the billing authority and the major precepting authorities (Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner) in the calculation of their Council Tax requirements.
- 1.2 Calculation of the Council Tax Base is governed by statutory regulation (Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012) and the Council has limited discretion.
- 1.3 As a billing authority the Council must notify the major precepting authorities (the County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner) of the tax base between 1 December and 31 January preceding the tax year. The Council also must inform town and parish councils of their tax base within 10 working days of any written request.

#### **2.0 Reasons**

- 2.1 The Council Tax Base figure is arrived at in accordance with a prescribed formula and represents the number of chargeable dwellings expressed as Band 'D' dwellings.
- 2.2 The calculation of the Tax Base takes the actual number of dwellings in the district by council tax band (taken from the Valuation list as at 15 September). Adjustments are then made to these to take account of estimates for new dwellings following construction, exemptions, and discounts (including Council Tax Support Scheme).
- 2.3 The net revised figure for each band is then multiplied by the relevant proportions for each band to convert to a band D equivalent figure. The proportions are shown in table 1 below:

Table 1: Proportions by band

| Band       | A   | B   | C   | D   | E    | F    | G    | H    |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|
| Proportion | 6/9 | 7/9 | 8/9 | 9/9 | 11/9 | 13/9 | 15/9 | 18/9 |

- 2.4 An estimated percentage collection rate is then applied to the total band 'D' equivalent figure. For 2026/27 a 98.5% collection rate has been applied.
- 2.5 Taking account of all relevant information the calculation for 2026/27 gives a tax base figure of 65,819.15 for the district.
- 2.6 The billing authority must inform the Town and Parish Councils of their tax base upon written request. The breakdown of the 65,819.15 tax base by Town and Parish council is shown in table 2.

Table 2: Tax Base by Town & Parish Council

|                    |           |                     |          |
|--------------------|-----------|---------------------|----------|
| ALBURY             | 288.96    | HIGH WYCH           | 354.90   |
| ANSTEY             | 177.06    | HORMEAD             | 375.63   |
| ARDELEY            | 220.43    | HUNSDON             | 524.91   |
| ASPENDEN           | 120.73    | LITTLE BERKHAMPSTED | 280.68   |
| ASTON              | 517.72    | LITTLE HADHAM       | 547.94   |
| BAYFORD            | 237.84    | LITTLE MUNDEN       | 418.32   |
| BENGEO RURAL       | 277.13    | MUCH HADHAM         | 1,001.08 |
| BENNINGTON         | 417.16    | SACOMBE             | 90.60    |
| BISHOP'S STORTFORD | 17,801.52 | STANSTEAD ST.       | 699.90   |

|                      |           |                   |          |
|----------------------|-----------|-------------------|----------|
|                      |           | MARGARETS         |          |
| BRAMFIELD            | 109.32    | SAWBRIDGEWORTH    | 4,150.45 |
| BRAUGHING            | 693.88    | STANDON           | 2,044.12 |
| BRENT PELHAM/MEESDEN | 152.18    | STANSTEAD ABBOTTS | 738.35   |
| BRICKENDON           | 361.43    | STAPLEFORD        | 266.35   |
| BUCKLAND             | 113.39    | STOCKING PELHAM   | 84.49    |
| BUNTINGFORD          | 3,232.66  | TEWIN             | 849.24   |
| COTTERED             | 324.32    | THORLEY           | 631.24   |
| DATCHWORTH           | 748.97    | THUNDRIDGE        | 725.60   |
| EASTWICK/GILSTON     | 437.24    | WALKERN           | 726.81   |
| FURNEUX PELHAM       | 278.21    | WARESIDE          | 312.76   |
| GREAT AMWELL         | 974.24    | WARE TOWN         | 7,617.36 |
| GREAT MUNDEN         | 142.66    | WATTON-AT-STONE   | 1,068.50 |
| HERTFORD             | 12,828.09 | WESTMILL          | 161.06   |
| HERTFORD HEATH       | 982.36    | WIDFORD           | 297.21   |
| HERTINGFORDBURY      | 337.27    | WYDDIAL           | 76.88    |

### 3.0 Assumptions

3.1 The following assumptions have been made in the tax base calculation:

3.2 **New dwellings** – an estimated 351 new dwellings have been factored into the 2026/27 tax base. The assumptions are based on information collected from the Councils outside officers, local knowledge and a factor built in to recognise potential delays, in line with discussions with the Director of Finance, Risk & Performance.

3.2 **Discounted properties** - assumptions for discounts are in line with previous years experience and allowance has been made for discounts on new dwellings built into the tax base.

3.3 **Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme** – allowance has been included in the tax base for CTS on the new dwellings in line with previous experience for take up of the scheme. An overall increase of 3% in CTS has been built in.

### 4.0 Options

4.1 The Council must set its tax base for the upcoming financial year between 1 December and 31 January. Calculation of the Council Tax Base is governed by statutory regulation (Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012) and the Council has limited discretion.

## **5.0 Implications/Consultations**

### **Community Safety**

None arising from this report.

### **Data Protection**

None arising from this report.

### **Equalities**

None arising from this report.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

None arising from this report.

### **Financial**

Yes – the impact of the taxbase will be fed into the next iteration of the Medium-Term Financial Plan that will come to members in January 2026.

### **Health and Safety**

None arising from this report.

### **Human Resources**

None arising from this report.

### **Human Rights**

None arising from this report.

### **Legal**

The calculation of the Council Tax Base is governed by statutory regulation, Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012) and the Council has limited discretion.

### **Specific Wards**

All.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Contact Member</b>  | <b>Councillor Carl Brittain</b><br>Executive Member for Financial Sustainability<br><a href="mailto:carl.brittain@eastherts.gov.uk"><u>carl.brittain@eastherts.gov.uk</u></a>          |
| <b>Contact Officer</b> | <b>Brian Moldon</b><br>Director for Finance, Risk and Performance,<br>Contact Tel. No. 2050<br><a href="mailto:brian.moldon@eastherts.gov.uk"><u>brian.moldon@eastherts.gov.uk</u></a> |
| <b>Report Author</b>   | <b>Alison Street</b><br>Service Manager (Strategic Finance)<br><a href="mailto:alison.street@eastherts.gov.uk"><u>alison.street@eastherts.gov.uk</u></a>                               |