

# HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Built Sports Facilities Strategy

### Draft Final Report Summary

**August 2019**



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## STRATEGY PURPOSE

1. Harborough District Council and its partners have a clear stated objective of improving the health and wellbeing of the communities across the district. The network of sports facilities will be an essential element in the delivery of these objectives and the purpose of this Built Sports Facilities Strategy (BSFS) is to identify the needs and guide the investment which will be required from now up to 2031.
2. **It should be noted that the facility proposals identified in the strategy are not all intended to be provided or funded directly by the District Council and it should not be assumed that the Council will automatically make additional funds available to assist other bodies to provide new or improved facilities. It also does not mean that the Council will take on responsibility for providing or managing more facilities.**
3. The responsibility for provision of sport and recreation facilities is shared between the District, Town and Parish Councils, schools, sports clubs and associations and commercial providers. The District Council's direct role in the provision of sport and leisure facilities is twofold; firstly, via its ownership of Harborough Leisure Centre and Lutterworth Sports Centre, and secondly via the provision and application of planning policy to secure new or improved facilities from new developments.
4. The strategy is intended to inform not only planning documents and development management decisions by the Council, but also recreation infrastructure planning by the partners, and to support funding bids by both the Council and other providers.
5. Harborough District Council will support clubs and external providers with guidance on the strategic requirements, external funding and the planning process where there is an identified need for new or improved sport and recreation facilities. The main sports and recreation facility investment priorities are given in Figure 3, but other priorities for community and village halls (of less than 3- badminton court size) will be developed later in 2019. These will be based on detailed consultation with the local interests including Parish and Town Councils.
6. The investment priorities in Figure 3 do not preclude smaller specific investment projects which may come forwards through local clubs and organisations, particularly in future years. If the promoters of these projects wish to seek external funding, the request will need to be fully justified, including with reference to the strategy, and the facility shown to be sustainable into the long term.
7. The geographical scope of the strategy is Harborough district. However, it takes into account the influence of facilities in adjacent local authority areas where appropriate, and the assessment has identified high levels of cross-boundary movement for some sports, particularly around the Market Harborough and Great Glen areas.

8. The strategy has been developed using the best practice approach advocated in the Sport England Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance (ANOG) which has included: site visits to all sports facilities and meetings with the managers of the strategically important ones; consultation with local clubs, national governing bodies of sport, local facility providers, Town and Parish councils and Harborough District Council; and modelling future needs based on population projections. It also takes account of previous relevant community consultation undertaken by the Council.
9. It is intended that the strategy's priorities will be revisited annually to track progress, and that a full review will be undertaken in around 2024.

## **THE SPORTS FACILITY NETWORK**

10. The two public leisure centres, Harborough Leisure Centre and Lutterworth Sports Centre are supplemented by sports facilities on school sites, both Academies and the independent Leicester Grammar. Most of these school sports facilities have no long-term agreements which will ensure their community use, with the exceptions being where public funding (Harborough DC, lottery or other) has been used to support improvements. However, since there are no known threats to existing community use on any of the school sites, it is assumed that public access will continue.
11. Where schools have indicated that they are keen to encourage or expand community use, then this has been a factor in devising the recommendations, such as at Robert Smyth in Market Harborough.
12. The commercial sector is important for health and fitness gym provision in the district, but otherwise has a low impact locally.
13. There are a small number of sites owned/operated by sports clubs in the district, such as the Bowmen of Glen and Saddington Sailing Club.

## **KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Sports Halls**

14. The current demand for sports hall space (3-badminton courts or larger halls) is approximately in balance with the available supply in the west and east of the district. The area around Market Harborough attracts users from outside the district, but there is still a slight surplus of supply. Almost all residents of the district have access to a sports hall within 20 minutes' drive, either within or outside of the authority.
15. The quality of the halls available for community use varies, from excellent at Leicester Grammar, The Kibworth School and Meadowdale Primary School, to poor

quality at Welland Park Academy, Robert Smyth and Lutterworth College. The sports halls at the two leisure centres are standard quality. No major user issues were identified in relation to sports halls from the consultation.

16. The strategy identifies that the existing network of sports halls is adequate to meet all projected needs up to 2031 assuming that:
  - the planned Broughton Astley facility is brought into use;
  - there is a new 4-court hall at the proposed replacement leisure centre in Market Harborough; and
  - the existing 2 netball indoor courts being provided via the dome at the leisure centre are re-provided.
17. There is also a need to improve the existing sports hall space at Robert Smyth Academy.
18. If the dome is not re-provided, then there will be a need for an 8-badminton court hall at the proposed replacement leisure centre plus investment in Robert Smyth Academy to meet the long term sports hall demand of the Market Harborough area. The planned refurbishment of the sports hall at Welland Park Academy will also need to be completed.
19. **The strategy recommendations for sports halls are:**
  - **4-court hall at the replacement Harborough Leisure Centre (if the dome facility IS re- provided).**

Or

  - **8-court hall at the replacement Harborough Leisure Centre (if the dome facility IS NOT re-provided) plus investment at Robert Smyth Academy.**

And

  - **Completion of the planned facility at Broughton Astley and planned refurbishment at Welland Park Academy.**

## Swimming pools

20. There are currently two swimming pool sites available for casual swimming as well as club use, at Harborough Leisure Centre and Lutterworth Sports Centre. Leicester Grammar pool, which is owned and managed by the independent school, is open to club use during evenings and weekends.
21. Harborough District Council commissioned bespoke supply and demand modelling to assess in detail the swimming pool needs up to 2031, using the Sport England Facilities Planning Model. The findings from that study confirmed the emerging findings from the strategy assessment.

22. The main findings for swimming pools are:

- There is insufficient swimming pool space in Market Harborough to meet the needs of residents and the pool also attracts users from Northamptonshire. This means that the pool is running at full capacity at some peak times and swimming has to be restricted. There will be more demand for swimming up to 2031 and a larger pool complex is recommended in relation to a new leisure centre: 25m x 8 lane pool with sufficient spectator seating for club events; teaching/learner pool; some leisure water.
- There is almost sufficient water space at Lutterworth Sports Centre up to 2031 to cater for the needs of the area. At most there may be need for an additional teaching/learner pool, but this requirement should be kept under review when the strategy is refreshed in the future. The existing Sports Centre site is well located within the town, but if long term relocation is required, then this should be to a site within the existing town area to maximise the sustainable transport options for users.
- Most swimmers living in the east of the district are able to use pools in the adjacent authority areas. The scale of the new housing in the area is insufficiently large to justify new pool provision in this part of the district, and the new demand from Scraftoft is most likely to be met in Leicester.

23. **The strategy recommendations for swimming pools are:**

- **A larger swimming pool complex at the replacement leisure centre in Market Harborough.**
- **Retention of the existing pool at Lutterworth Sports Centre. If a replacement site is required, then this should be within the existing town area.**

## Health and fitness provision

24. The two leisure centres both provide fitness gyms with equipment and studio space, but over 70% of the fitness provision in the district is delivered via the commercial sector. There is wide variety in the nature of the sites, for example the specialist cross fit gym in Lutterworth, and the Curves women's gym in Harborough.
25. The fitness market is volatile, with gyms opening or closing, or changing their offer and target market fairly frequently. The leisure centre facilities need to compete effectively in this commercial world.

26. At the same time, leisure centres rely heavily on the income generated by the fitness gyms and studios to subsidise the high costs of provision of their swimming pools. The proposed replacement leisure centre in Market Harborough will therefore need a large fitness facility and a number of studio spaces to help generate the revenue to support the swimming pools. Improvement/expansion of the Lutterworth Sports Centre fitness provision is also justified on this basis.
27. **The strategy recommendations for Health and Fitness provision are:**
- **The provision of large fitness and studio facilities at the proposed replacement Harborough Leisure Centre with the details being determined as part of the future feasibility assessments.**
  - **At Lutterworth Sports Centre, the expansion or change to existing facilities as justified locally.**

### Indoor netball and tennis (the dome)

28. The dome at Harborough Leisure Centre primary use is for netball, and there are over 400 women and girls using the dome for the adult and junior leagues during the winter months. Increasing participation in sport by women and girls is a key priority for Harborough District Council. One of the Harborough league youth teams recently came 4th at the national netball finals.
29. The dome also provides for some tennis training and a small amount of small-sided football, but it is aging and expensive to retain and maintain.
30. Given the demand for netball at Harborough Leisure Centre and the demand for tennis, a single facility cannot easily provide for both sports, so their facilities needs are best considered separately. A further consideration relates to the design of such a facility as a netball/tennis surface is suitable for futsal (indoor football), but netball and tennis cannot use an artificial grass pitch surface which is designed for football (3G).
31. Should the Harborough Leisure Centre be replaced, then replacement of the dome with an indoor facility accommodating 2 netball courts is justified, either as integral part of a new leisure centre for Harborough, or potentially on an alternative site. The minimum specification will need to meet the England Netball criteria for league netball.
32. There are two potential sites for indoor tennis being considered, one at Leicester Grammar and one at Lutterworth Tennis Club. Both of these projects are at an early stage of consideration.

33. **The strategy recommendations for indoor netball and tennis (the dome) are:**
- **The replacement of the dome with a facility which can provide for 2 indoor netball courts, suitable for netball league matches but also marked for other sports. The location and structure of the replacement dome should be considered as part of a feasibility study. Two outdoor floodlit netball courts should be provided adjacent to the new facility.**
  - **Indoor tennis needs should be confirmed by more detailed feasibility studies for the Leicester Grammar and Lutterworth Tennis Club proposals.**

### Indoor bowls centre

34. The indoor bowls facility at Harborough Leisure Centre is used at about 30% of its potential capacity and this figure has been gradually falling in recent years. The current facility appears to be unsatisfactory both from the perspective of the club and that of the operator. It is expensive to retain and maintain, particularly as the area of the green has to be protected and cannot easily be used for other sports on a regular basis.
35. Harborough Leisure Centre has the only specialist facility in the district but there are some specialist indoor bowls venues in the adjacent and nearby authorities. This means that all areas of the district are within a 30 minute drive (the national governing body's advised catchment) of at least one specialist indoor bowls centre, even if the Harborough facility was to close. The closest facilities to Market Harborough, at Kingsthorpe on the edge of Northampton and Desborough, also have sufficient spare capacity to absorb the current membership of the Harborough club.
36. In addition to bowling at the specialist centre, several of the village and community halls across the district provide short mat bowls. This is a different discipline within indoor bowling but does provide a broadly similar experience.
37. Based on the current and recent years' membership levels, the usage of the Harborough Leisure Centre facility might rise to around 45% by 2031, reflecting the aging population of the authority. If an alternative 4-rink facility was to be provided, then this might be used at around 45-50% of its capacity immediately, rising to between 70-80% by 2031.
38. The assessment suggests that there is sufficient accessible provision to specialist indoor bowls venues outside of the authority to meet the demand for indoor bowls into the future. There is therefore no clear justification to retain the specialist bowls centre at Harborough Leisure Centre. Further, there would be no justification to seek to replace the facility, even with a smaller one, should the current Harborough Leisure Centre site be developed.
39. Should the Council decide that bowls provision is a priority, then the costs of an alternative facility would need to be met by the District Council and/or through external funding such as grants.



**40. The strategy recommendations the indoor bowls centre are:**

- **Closure of the indoor bowls centre at Harborough Leisure Centre, with no specialist replacement provision.**
- **Investment in village and community halls to enable short mat bowls to take place, usually by providing additional storage.**

### Other sports facilities

**41. There are a number of other sports and recreation facility types covered by the strategy and the key recommendations are:**

Sport	Recommendation
Athletics	Improvements to routes, particularly traffic-free for running, walking and cycling. Should include measured routes through the provision of distance marker posts.
Squash	Retain and support the Market Harborough Cricket and Squash Club and explore ways of extending community activities on their site. Ensure long term community use of the site is retained.
Gymnastics	Support continued use of the leisure centres, Meadowdale Primary, Welland Park Academy and Robert Smyth by gymnastics clubs. Improve storage at community and village halls to enable new gymnastics activity, where there is a need.
Cycling and Walking	Improvements to routes, particularly traffic free. Improve links within the network of existing routes.
Table tennis	Support improvements at club venues where justified.
Archery	Bowmen of Glen – improve clubhouse facilities.
Equestrian	Bridleway and traffic free routes should be provided, and links improved.  The Council should have positive planning policies which support the provision of all-weather surfaces for both training and competition, including where justified, indoor riding centres.

## DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

### Securing provision of sport through development

**42. A key output from the strategy is the securing of new and improved sports provision through development. This can include on-site provision through master-planning and planning obligations, and by securing developers' contributions to off-site provision. Any shortfalls in funding for specific facilities will need to be met by other funding sources, for example grant aid from the national governing bodies of sport, lottery funding, private funding, and housing infrastructure funds.**

43. The authority seeks developers' contributions via S106, but it will still be necessary to meet the three Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) tests set out in the Government's regulations which can be summarised as:
- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
  - Directly related to the development
  - Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
44. In addressing these CIL tests, it is first necessary to have a robust and up-to-date evidence base for sporting provision need. This strategy provides the framework to determine the nature, location and level of sports facility needs that may be generated from new developments. The Provision Guide (Figure 1) is a summary of the proposals which have been derived from the strategy's assessment process. It is a quick reference guide to help calculate the amount of expected demand being generated by a development, the relevant catchment area and relevant quality standards. Note: fully available at peak time means open to community use in the evenings and at weekends.

*Figure 1: Recommended Provision Guide for new housing developments*

Facility type	Quantity per 1000 population	Accessibility	Quality
Sports Halls	0.27 badminton courts fully available at peak time	20 minutes by car	Design and quality to meet Sport England and the relevant national governing body guidance
Swimming pools	9.6 sq m water space fully available at peak time	20 minutes by car	Design and quality to meet Sport England and the relevant national governing body guidance
Fitness facilities (stations)	5.84 stations fully available at peak time	15 minutes by car	Design and quality to meet Sport England guidance
Fitness facilities (studios)	0.08 studios fully available at peak time	15 minutes by car	Design and quality to meet Sport England guidance
Indoor netball courts and associated floodlit outdoor courts	0.02 indoor courts fully available at peak time 0.02 floodlit outdoor courts fully available at peak time	District wide	Design and quality to meet Sport England and the relevant national governing body guidance
Indoor tennis	0.04 indoor tennis courts fully available at peak time	30 minutes by car	Design and quality to meet Sport England and the relevant national governing body guidance
Squash courts	0.04 courts fully available at peak time	20 minutes by car	Design and quality to meet Sport England and the relevant national governing body guidance

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

## Planning for sport and recreation

45. The table in Figure 2 relates to the planning functions of Harborough District Council, and identifies the actions and priorities relating to planning policy and development control which will be needed to implement the strategy.

*Figure 2: Actions for forward and development planning*

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

<b>Proposal / Facility</b>	<b>Action required</b>	<b>Lead organisation</b>	<b>Key partners</b>	<b>Date for action</b>
Replacement leisure centre for Harborough	Complete feasibility studies to confirm the preferred option for the location of the proposed replacement leisure centre for Harborough, and the build and funding options.	HDC	Sport England	Year 1
Lutterworth Sports Centre	Identify long term site options for Lutterworth Sports Centre (from 2031) within existing town area. Include within future planning policies.	HDC		Year 3
Planning applications	Respond to planning applications for development to ensure that the necessary sports provision is achieved.  If a sport and recreation site has become disused, consideration should be given to other sport, recreation or open space use, having regard to deficiencies identified in the assessments and strategies.	HDC	Sport England	On-going
Community use agreements on school sites	Ensure that any public investment, and where relevant, planning permission for sports facilities on school sites is linked to formal community use agreements, the terms of which should reflect the size of the investment.	HDC	Schools Sport England Funding bodies	Linked to specific projects. On-going

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

## Facility investment priorities

46. The table in Figure 3 provides a summary of the investment priorities identified via the strategy, including estimated costs where known. The assessment of the deliverability of the projects, including the achievement of planning permission, will need to be kept under regular review and alternative options identified if the preferred site/location is not possible to deliver.
47. The recommended priorities for the specific projects are identified as High, Medium and Low. These are defined as:

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

Figure 3: Built sports facility investment priorities

Project name	Main aim	Priority H = High M = Medium L = Low	Phasing St 2019-2022 Mt 2022-2027 Lt 2027-2031	Estimated capital cost (£000's)	Main delivery partners	Comment
Leisure Centres						
Harborough Leisure Centre replacement	Replace leisure centre with sports facility elements including:  4 badminton court sports hall 25m x 8 lane pool with spectator accommodation 10m x 8m leisure pool 5m x 4m learner/teaching/ training pool Large fitness gym (number of stations tbc) Studios /multi-activity rooms (number and size tbc) 2 indoor netball courts 2 floodlit outdoor netball courts adjacent to indoor	H	St Feasibility, construction and opening	£15.1m plus up to £5m for commercial opportunities	HDC Sport England Operator/ construction partner	Facility mix to be confirmed.  If netball provision not made via replacement dome type facility, then will require 8 badminton court sports hall plus investment off site to improve sports halls at Robert Smyth.
Lutterworth Sports Centre	Retain and maintain  Potentially expand health and fitness provision, subject to local justification.	H  M	On-going	tbc	Operator	For longer term, need to confirm future of site. If Sports Centre requires relocation, alternative town centre site will be required to be identified.

Project name	Main aim	Priority H = High M = Medium L = Low	Phasing St 2019-2022 Mt 2022-2027 Lt 2027-2031	Estimated capital cost (£000's)	Main delivery partners	Comment
Broughton Astley	Opening of new sports centre by parish council.	H	St	n/a	Broughton Astley Parish Council	Construction underway. Due to open in 2020 with 4 badminton court sports hall, floodlit 3G pitch, 70 station gym, 2 studios.
Schools						
Welland Park Academy	Refurbishment of sports hall	H	St	n/a	Academy	Refurbishment due summer 2019. Fully funded.
Robert Smyth Academy	Refurbishment of existing sports halls (4-court and 3-court) together with changing provision	M	Mt	tbc	Academy	Halls currently too small to provide for netball leagues.
Leicester Grammar	Retain and maintain current levels of community use.  Potentially site for indoor tennis	L	Mt	n/a	School LTA	School has no security of community use. Tennis facility may be fully funded by school.  Would need to be considered in the light of the proposal from Lutterworth Tennis Club.



Project name	Main aim	Priority H = High M = Medium L = Low	Phasing St 2019-2022 Mt 2022-2027 Lt 2027-2031	Estimated capital cost (£000's)	Main delivery partners	Comment
Other						
Market Harborough Cricket and Squash Club	More intensive use of site as sports hub and for wider community activity. Review of buildings and their uses on site. Requires detailed feasibility study.	M	St	tbc	Club	Site lease needs to be extended to secure long-term community use.  Also home to cricket club.
	Retain and maintain squash courts.	H	On-going	n/a	Club	
Bowman of Glen	Improve clubhouse facilities	L	St	tbc	Club	
Lutterworth Tennis Club	Cover some of existing courts.	L	Mt	tbc	Club LTA	Proposal at early stage of consideration. Would need to be considered in the light of any proposal emerging from Leicester Grammar.
Village and Community Halls	Provide additional storage to enable sites to offer activities such as gymnastics and short mat bowls	M	On-going	tbc	Hall trusts Parish Councils	Needs and costs will need to be justified locally
Walking, running and cycling routes	Improvements to existing routes and development of new links to extend network, particularly of traffic free routes.  Improved linking of open spaces.  Provision of distance markers on routes.	H	On-going	tbc	HDC Developers	Routes within and linking developments to wider network.  Improvements to existing network of routes.