

11 NETBALL COURT NEEDS

11.1 Organisational context

- **England Netball:** England Netball is the governing body of the sport and supports the development of the game in Harborough district.
- **Affiliated Clubs:** There are 12 England Netball-affiliated clubs in Harborough district, collectively providing 19 adult and 12 junior teams.

11.2 Strategic context

11.2.1 England Netball's strategy

England Netball's 'Adventure Strategy 2021 - 2031' (2021) contains the following relevant material:

A Game for Life: This 'destination' has the following targets:

- A 50% increase in the number of women playing netball across all life stages.
- A year-on-year increase in the diversity of the netball playing population, with an ambition to reflect the diversity of the nation.
- A countrywide accessible offer for men and boys.
- 90% of all schools delivering a quality netball experience.
- A clear and connected offer of choice for every community, with world class experiences in clubs and leagues at the heart of community netball.
- A place to play within easy travel of every household.

11.2.2 Neighbouring local authorities

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

Rugby

The 'Rugby Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategy' (2013) does not include an assessment of outdoor netball court needs.

Blaby

The 'Blaby Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment' (2020) identifies that 'there is enough netball provision in the district to meet current and future demand therefore a priority should be placed on retaining the supply of courts and improving quality when possible'.

Oadby and Wigston

The 'Oadby and Wigston Playing Pitch Strategy' (2018) does not include an assessment of outdoor netball court needs.

Leicester

The '*Leicester City Council Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2017) does not include an assessment of outdoor netball court needs.

Charnwood

The '*Charnwood Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2018) identifies that 'there is no recorded community demand for outdoor provision in the Borough with all current demand met by indoor facilities. No club has expressed demand for use of outdoor facilities to supplement training or match demand'.

Melton

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

Rutland

Rutland County Council is working on an updated Playing Pitch Strategy for the county in 2022. The current '*Rutland Sports and Recreation Strategy*' (2015) does not include an assessment of outdoor netball club needs.

Corby

The '*Corby Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan*' (2017) identifies that activity is expected to stay predominately indoors. There is unlikely to be demand from the community for access to outdoor netball courts; however, retention is required for school activity'.

Kettering

The '*Kettering Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy Needs Assessment Report*' (2020) identifies that 'although there is enough outdoor netball provision in the Borough to meet current and future demand, not all the courts are fully accessed'.

Daventry

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

11.3 Stakeholder consultation

11.3.1 England Netball

Consultation with England Netball highlighted the following issues:

- Harborough district has a number of active clubs, all of which play in the Harborough Netball League which is based at the indoor courts at Harborough Leisure Centre. The key issue for netball in Market Harborough is the future of

the indoor dome at Market Harborough Leisure Centre, which is assessed in the *'Harborough Built Sports Facilities Strategy'* (2020).

- There has been a big rise in junior participation over the last 3-5 years. There was a surge in growth after the 2018 Commonwealth Games.
- Club netball has seen a big growth in the 25-40 age group.
- Walking netball (over 60s) is also proving to be popular.

11.3.2 Leicestershire Netball

Consultation with Leicestershire Netball highlighted the following issues:

- 'We would like to run satellite development programmes in Market Harborough'.
- 'Netball in Harborough is growing. We are a diverse community spanning multiple decades in age. We just don't have enough space to support everyone who wants to play'.

11.3.3 Market Harborough Netball League

- 'We cannot let any more teams enter the league as we can't fit the number of games required in on Saturday afternoons. The league has run on Saturday afternoons since inception, it's when players will play'.
- 'We cannot grow, upskill or offer additional netball due to lack of booking availability of the Dome. This problem just continues to grow as it's used for all sports. Using other venues is not an option as we need all volunteers in one location to cover first aid, child protection and coaching needs for sessions'.
- 'We would like to grow our league but cannot unless the Council provides the sporting facilities in one venue for England's number one women's sport. As Harborough continues to grow, so does the dilution of venue access, as its currently used for many sports'.
- 'Netball is massive in Harborough. Historically the Leisure Centre were not booking it as netball on their system so the information from the leisure centre cannot be used as a measure. As the netball dome is used for many other sports, which is good, the only way netball can grow is with three courts indoors in one location'.

11.3.4 Aircare Thunder Netball Club

The club made the following comments:

- 'We were founded in and cater for dedicated players of all ages'.
- 'Our Club currently has two teams playing in the Market Harborough Netball League, each year, all players vote for how we will structure each team'.

- 'Improved courts would mean we could grow the youth league and also expand the league. Better facilities would allow us to become a netball hub for the area and potentially host teams and tournaments from the county and beyond. Harborough is so unique in that it offers netball from primary through to pensioners and it would be great to support this and allow it to grow. It is so well supported and so good for women's sport'.

11.3.5 CC Wellbeing Netball Team

The team commented that 'we are a team made up from players from Market Harborough and surrounding villages as well as players from Kettering and Northants'.

11.3.6 Club Correze Netball Team

The team made the following comments:

- 'Netball is a growing sport in Market Harborough and had been for several years without any help financially'.
- 'There are 12 teams in the adult league and they are also running coaching/training sessions from the age of 5 up to 15'.
- 'The local committee and teams all work very hard to make sure netball thrives'.
- 'Women's sport in this area has always had to fight for its place vs. men's sports and this needs to change sooner rather than later'.

11.3.7 Foxton Rural Trading Netball Club

The club made the following comments:

- 'Foxton Netball Club began life as the league's 'Back to Netball team' in 2011.
- 'The club has grown quickly from the few ladies who turned up at those first sessions and we now enter two teams into Market Harborough Netball League'.
- 'We train on a Thursday evening at Robert Smyth Academy'.
- 'Flyers support a number of youth players coming through our youth club into adult league'.
- 'The facilities available for training are inadequate. Across the Harborough league there are not enough facilities to allow all teams to train due to the demand from the adult and junior teams in Market Harborough'.
- 'The current facilities for netball in Market Harborough are not adequate. As the number one female participation sport there should be investment into facilities to allow the participation level levels to grow. Market Harborough has an excellent set up for both an adult league and also a junior club with competitive teams. This creates a large demand for three indoor courts to allow all teams to train and play competitively'.

11.3.8 Harborough Harriers Netball Team

The team made the following comments:

- 'We joined Market Harborough Netball League in the summer of 2016 after being encouraged to form a new back to netball team for the friendly summer league'.
- 'We are a team of friends that like to play netball together. We train once a week and play matches in the Harborough league however we almost had to stop training as we couldn't find any courts to continue due to the limited availability'.

11.3.9 Lutterworth Robins Netball Club

The club made the following comments:

- 'We are the longest running netball club in Lutterworth with seven senior teams'.
- 'We have 40+ adult players and 25 junior players. We play netball in two different leagues and have been running for 10 years'.

11.3.10 Market Harborough Youth Netball

The club made the following comments:

- 'We are an all-inclusive netball club, offering session for girls from school year one. Bee Netball sessions introduce our youngsters to the game. From school year 4, our players move into age group sessions, which run weekly for U10, U11, U12, U13, U14, U15 and U16. In addition to these age groups, we run weekly invitational competition squad sessions, with trials at the start of each season'.
- 'From U10, our teams compete in the local youth leagues, East Midlands regional leagues and a number of national competitions, providing game play for players at all levels'.
- 'We operate a waiting list system for all age groups but cannot offer additional places due to availability lack of courts'.
- Due to the limited netball facilities at Market Harborough Leisure Centre, we play matches at other facilities including Benham Park in Northampton and Soar Valley Netball Centre in Leicester. Both of these are some distance away and require travel. We do play matches at the Dome when it is available but often find this to be challenging due to the dome being used for other sports and the courts not being of a suitable quality for competitive matches. We would like to play as many matches at home as possible should the facilities be acceptable and available. Our Club train at the Dome on a weekly basis. This year, one age group was unable to use the dome due to a conflict with another sport, resulting in the need to train at a much earlier time which has proven to be a challenge (and at times, not possible) for parents, players and coaches'.
- 'We wish to expand the membership of our all-inclusive Club to provide provision for all those young people in the area wishing to play netball. This is currently not

possible due to the lack of courts. We have waiting lists across all age groups and due to the high retention rate of the Club, there are a number of girls who have been on the waiting list for a number of years. As a Club, we would welcome new or refurbished facilities but due to our own financial constraints, remain dependent on hiring these facilities. We have growth plans which we would love to implement but are currently restricted by the facilities’.

- ‘Netball is a growing sport and the waiting lists at our Club provide evidence for the increasing number of young people wishing to participate. At a time when our young people have had to face the additional challenges of a COVID world, the importance of exercise to support positive physical and mental health cannot be underestimated. The provision of netball facilities in Market Harborough is currently limited. As a Club, we are committed to providing the best netball provision we can yet find we cannot expand without adequate indoor courts in one venue’.

11.3.11 Netball Camp Harborough

The organisers commented that ‘the Harborough area is desperate to keep indoor netball courts (at least 3). There is no provision elsewhere that can keep up with the demand of such a rapidly growing girl's sport. Netball needs to be inside to be played safely and with enjoyment for our youth’.

11.4 Netball Court Demand

11.4.1 Introduction

This section summarises the demand for netball in Harborough district and includes:

- Expressed demand.
- Displaced demand.
- Latent and unmet demand.
- Future demand.

11.4.2 Expressed demand

- **Clubs and teams:** Netball clubs and teams in Harborough district and the outdoor courts where they train and play are as follows. Indoor courts are shown in italics:

Club	Courts	Teams	Members
Aircare Thunder Netball Club	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	2 adult	41
CC Wellbeing Netball Team	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	1 adult	41

Club Correze Netball Team	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	1 adult	30
Foxton Rural Trading Netball Club	Robert Smyth Academy	2 adult	24
Harborough Harriers Netball Team	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	1 adult	18
Lutterworth Robins Netball Club	Lutterworth College	7 adult 2 junior	200
Market Harborough Youth Netball Club	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	10 junior	200
Siamo Sirens Netball Team	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	1 adult	22
Snowfinders Netball Team	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	1 adult	54
Turner's Tornados Netball Team	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	1 adult	20
Vanelli Vixens Netball Team	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	1 adult	21
Welland Valley Blinders Netball Team	<i>Market Harborough Leisure Centre</i>	1 adult	17

- **Development programmes:** In addition to formal competitive play, a number of netball development programmes operate in the district, in particular 'Back to Netball' and 'Netball Now'. These are currently accommodated at the outdoor courts at Robert Smyth Academy and the indoor courts at Market Harborough Leisure Centre.
- **Bee Netball:** Bee Netball Registered Schools (who provide a version of the game for under 11s) in the district are as follows:

School	Address
Farndon Fields Primary School	Argyle Park, Market Harborough LE16 9JH
Fleckney Primary School	Batchelor Road, Fleckney LE8 8BE
Foxton Primary School	Gallow Field Road, Foxton LE16 7QZ
Leicester Grammar School	London Road, Great Glen LE8 9FL
Little Bowden Primary School	Scotland Rd, Market Harborough LE16 8AY
North Kilworth Primary School	Dag Lane, North Kilworth LE17 6HD
Ridgeway Primary Academy	The Ridgeway, Market Harborough LE16 7HQ
St. Joseph's Catholic Academy	Coventry Rd, Market Harborough LE16 9BZ
Stoneygate School	London Rd, Great Glen LE8 9DJ

- **Netball Camp Harborough:** Netball Camp Harborough runs a school holiday netball programme at the outdoor courts at Stoneygate School and the indoor courts at Market Harborough Leisure Centre for 100 junior players, 70% of whom are from Harborough.

11.4.3 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to play by teams from within the study area which takes place outside of the area, or vice versa. Based upon the results of the clubs' survey:

- There is some exported demand for junior matches to facilities hosting central venue leagues in neighbouring areas (Benham Sports Arena in Northampton and Soar Valley Leisure Centre in Loughborough).
- Lutterworth Robins NC play matches in the Rugby Netball League, based at Rugby School.

11.4.4 Unmet demand

Unmet demand takes a number of forms:

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

There is no evidence of unmet demand for outdoor netball courts in Harborough district at present, although there are waiting lists for junior teams at Market Harborough Youth Netball Club but it uses the indoor courts at Harborough Leisure Centre.

11.4.5 Latent demand

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

11.4.6 Future demand

This has been assessed as follows:

- **Participation rates:** Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey has recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for netball at national level since 2015:

Nov 2015- Nov 2016	May 2016- May 2017	Nov 2016- Nov 2017	May 2017- May 2018	Nov 2017- Nov 2018	May 2018- May 2019	Nov 2018- Nov 2019	May 2019- May 2020	% Change
0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	-0.1%

- **Population growth:** The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 104,839 by 2031, an increase of 9,302 (or 9.7%). This will create a requirement for equivalent additional capacity by 2031.

11.4.7 Key findings on demand

The key findings on demand are as follows:

- There are 12 local clubs serving Harborough district.
- Contrary to the 'Active Lives' survey trends, most local clubs have experienced increased memberships in the past three years.
- There is no evidence of unmet demand for outdoor netball courts in Harborough district at present, although the indoor courts at Harborough Leisure Centre cannot accommodate all demand for junior teams.
- Future demand patterns are likely to increase, based on participation trends and population projections.

11.5 Netball Court Supply

11.5.1 Introduction

This section summarises the detail of netball court supply in Harborough district. The courts included in the analysis are defined as hard courts permanently laid out with regulation markings for netball. This includes multi-use games areas also marked for other sports, in particular tennis, that are therefore not exclusively used for netball. The categories assessed are as follows:

11.5.2 Courts with community use and used

Site	Address	Floodlit courts	Non-floodlit courts	Sub-area
Lutterworth College	Bittesworth Road, Lutterworth LE17 4EX	4	0	West
Robert Smyth Academy	Burnmill Road, Market Harborough LE16 7JG	2	0	Middle
Stoneygate School	London Rd, Great Glen LE8 9DJ	0	2	East
TOTALS	-	6	2	-

11.5.3 Courts by sub-area

Courts with community use and used by sub-area are as follows:

Sub-area	Population	No. Courts	Courts per capita
West	28,963	4	1: 7,241
Middle	35,494	2	1: 17,247
East	28,197	2	1: 14,099
HARBOROUGH	95,537	8	1: 11,942

11.5.4 Courts with no community use

The following courts are not available for community use. Floodlit courts are asterisked:

Site	Address	Courts
Farndon Fields Primary School	Argyle Park, Market Harborough LE16 9JH	1
Fleckney Primary School	Batchelor Road, Fleckney LE8 8BE	2
Foxtton Primary School	Gallow Field Road, Foxtton LE16 7QZ	1
Kibworth Mead Academy	Smeeton Road, Kibworth Beauchamp LE8 0LG	1
Leicester Grammar School	London Road, Great Glen LE8 9FL	6*
Little Bowden Primary School	Scotland Rd, Market Harborough LE16 8AY	1
North Kilworth Primary School	Dag Lane, North Kilworth LE17 6HD	1
Thomas Estley Community College	Station Road, Broughton Astley LE9 6PT	4
Welland Park Academy	Welland Park Road, Market Harborough LE16 9DR	2
TOTALS	-	19

11.6 Quality

11.6.1 The criteria assessed for netball courts

The quality of outdoor netball courts was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were assessed were as follows:

- **The court:** Court surface, line markings and fitness for purpose.
- **Fencing:** Condition and appearance.
- **Disability access:** Provision for disabled access to the courts.
- **General access:** Parking, signage and proximity to public transport.
- **Lighting:** The quality, illumination levels and evenness of floodlights.

11.6.2 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to 'very good', 4 to 'good', 3 to 'average', 2 to 'poor' and 1 to 'very poor'.

11.6.3 Netball court assessment

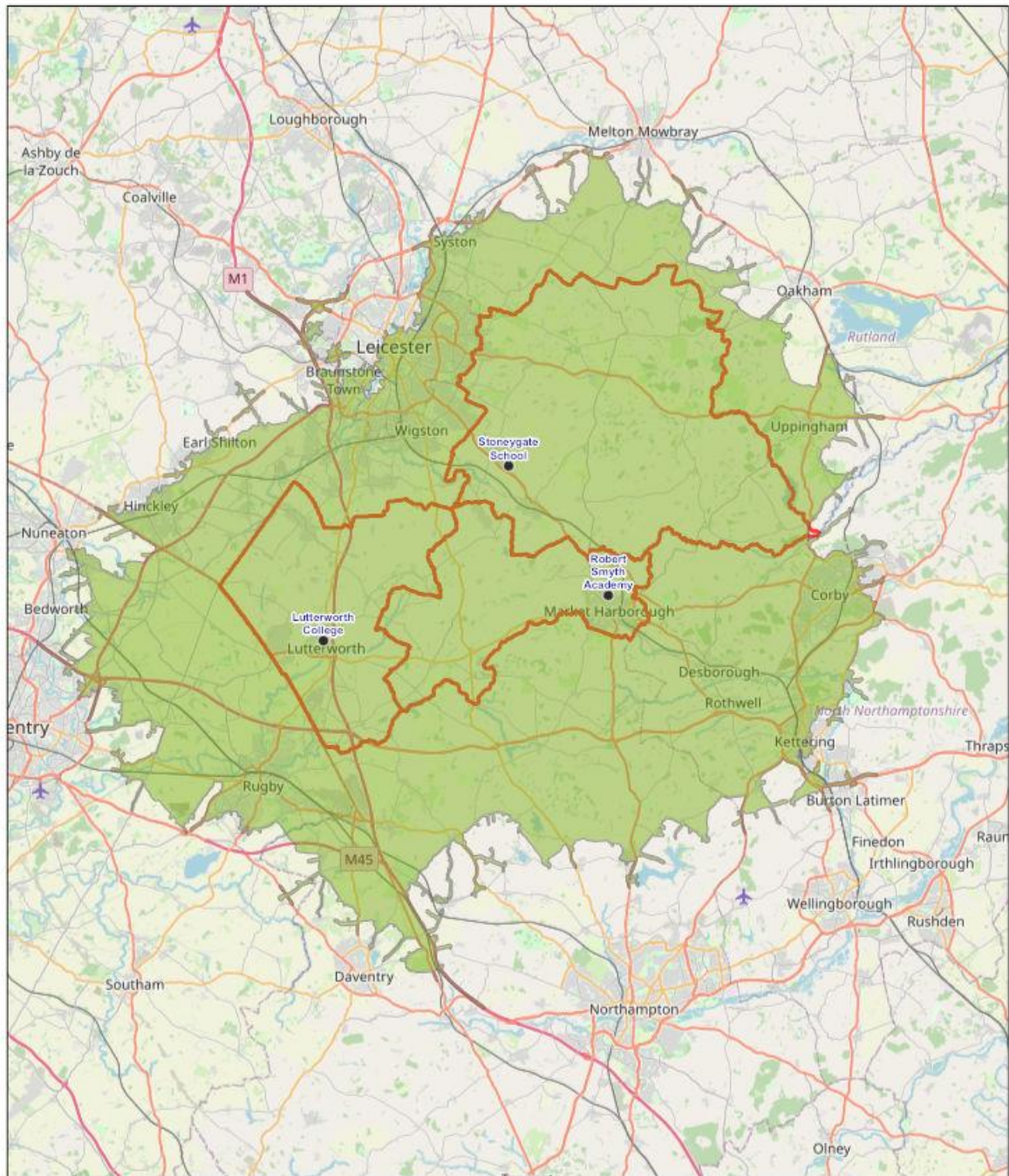
The ratings for netball courts in Harborough are shown in the table below.

Facility	Court	Fencing	Disability Access	General access	Lighting
Lutterworth College	3	3	4	3	4
Robert Smyth Academy	5	5	4	3	5
Stoneygate School	5	5	4	3	-

11.7 Accessibility

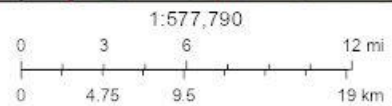
England Netball applies a 20 minute drivetime catchment to define accessibility. The whole of Harborough is within 20-minutes' drivetime of a court.

HARBOROUGH - Outdoor Netball Courts 20 Minutes Drive



2/14/2022

- OUTDOOR NETBALL
- 20.0 Minutes
- ▭ West Sub Area, Middle Sub Area, East Sub Area
- ▭ Harborough District Boundary



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11.8 Availability

The table below identifies the basis of use of outdoor netball courts in Harborough:

Facility	Basis of use
Lutterworth College	Block booked courts. £15.50 per hour.
Robert Smyth Academy	Block booked courts. £15 per hour.
Stoneygate School	Block booked courts. £10 per hour.

11.9 Ownership, management and security of access

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

Site	Ownership	Management	Access
Lutterworth College	Lutterworth College	Lutterworth College	Unsecured
Robert Smyth Academy	Robert Smyth Academy	Robert Smyth Academy	Secured
Stoneygate School	Leicester Grammar School Trust	Leicester Grammar School Trust	Unsecured

11.10 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- Netball in Harborough district is played almost exclusively on indoor courts, mostly in the dome at Harborough Leisure Centre.
- The only outdoor courts with community use are at Lutterworth College, Robert Smyth Academy and Stoneygate School, although there are a further 19 courts on other education sites. There is Bee Netball use of many of the schools netball courts at present, which suggests that additional community use could be accessed at some or all sites if demand is sufficient.
- Many courts are also marked for tennis, which reduces their capacity to accommodate netball demand.
- The quality of the outdoor courts at Lutterworth College is 'standard', but the Robert Smyth Academy and Stoneygate School courts are 'very good'.
- Accessibility of courts is reasonable, with publicly accessible outdoor netball courts in all three sub-areas.

- Courts at two sites have unsecured community use, which means that netball clubs have limited control over access to, or maintenance of, courts

11.11 Developments since the 2018 PPS

The key developments since the assessment of netball needs in the 2018 PPS are as follows:

- There has been a growth in netball clubs in the district, with two new clubs forming as a result of 'Back to Netball' initiatives.
- Harborough District Council has committed to replacing the Harborough Leisure Centre in its existing site, including preserving the indoor netball court capacity currently provided by the sports hall and dome.
- Two floodlit courts have been upgraded at Robert Smyth Academy since 2018.
- A number of additional outdoor courts on school sites have been identified that were not recorded in the 2018 PPS.

11.12 The balance between netball court supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between netball court supply and demand in Harborough:

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

11.13 Quantity

11.13.1 Current needs

There is no evidence of unmet demand for outdoor netball courts in Harborough district, with spare capacity at the Lutterworth College courts.

11.13.2 Future needs

Future demand patterns are likely to be similar to current levels, based on participation trends but the population growth projections will create a requirement for 9.7% additional capacity by 2031. This can be accommodated via spare capacity at existing outdoor courts.

11.14 Quality

11.14.1 Current quality

The quality of netball courts is generally at least 'standard'.

11.14.2 Future quality

All netball court providers will need to continue to invest in maintaining and improving their facilities, so if this process can be assisted with funding from developer contributions in the future, it seems reasonable to assume that local provision will continue to be upgraded regularly.

11.15 Accessibility

11.15.1 Current accessibility

All of the population is within 20-minutes' drive of the nearest netball court.

11.15.2 Future accessibility

It is reasonable to assume that the current geographical coverage will be maintained in the future.

11.16 Availability

11.16.1 Current availability

Courts at two sites have unsecured community use. There is also no control by netball clubs over court maintenance.

11.16.2 Future availability

To secure netball court availability in the future, formal Community Use Agreements should be pursued.

11.17 The options for securing netball court capacity

The options for securing existing netball court capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

11.17.1 Protect

Protecting existing netball courts through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

11.17.2 Provide

There is no need to provide additional outdoor courts to meet demand arising from the population growth projections, provided that access to the existing unsecured court sites is maintained.

11.17.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing netball court capacity by ensuring that netball court markings are provided on all Multi-use Games Areas would help to supplement capacity.

11.18 Action Plan

11.18.1 Introduction

The tables below set out the action plan for netball courts to guide the implementation of the strategy.

11.18.2 Key strategic actions

Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Protection of existing netball courts.	Include a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing netball courts.	HDC	-	-	High
Netball court markings on MUGAs	Ensure that netball courts are marked on all MUGAs to promote the expansion of the game.	HDC	MUGA providers	£1,000 per MUGA	High

11.18.3 Site-specific actions

Site	Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Lutterworth College	Unsecured community access	Negotiate a Community Use Agreement	HDC	Lutterworth College	-	Medium
Robert Smyth Academy	No current issues	No action required	-	-	-	-
Stoneygate School	Unsecured community access	Negotiate a Community Use Agreement	HDC	St. Bede's School	-	Medium