

7 RUGBY UNION PITCH NEEDS

7.1 Organisational context

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

7.2 Strategic context

7.2.1 National rugby facilities strategy

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

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

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

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

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

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

7.2.2 Neighbouring local authorities

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

Rugby

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

Blaby

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

Oadby and Wigston

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

Leicester

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

Charnwood

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

Melton:

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

Rutland

Rutland County Council is working on an updated Playing Pitch Strategy for the county in 2022. The '*Rutland Sports and Recreation Strategy*' (2015) identifies that 'there is sufficient pitch space for rugby up to 2036'.

Corby

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

Kettering

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

Daventry

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

7.2.3 Findings of the 2018 Harborough PPS

The key findings of the 'Harborough Playing Pitch Strategy' (2018) in relation to rugby are below:

- 'Rugby activity across the district has remained stable over recent years with the only real increase in demand arising from the women's and girls' game'.
- 'All of the community rugby activity takes place on three club sites in the district. The sites are controlled by the clubs and they are responsible for their management.'
- The pitches are mostly above the RFU 'standard' quality and can sustain 2.5 - 3 match equivalent sessions per week. Market Harborough however has drainage issues on some of the pitches it uses. The current success of the clubs across the district is variable. Lutterworth has 5 teams more than the district-wide average would suggest; more minis and juniors, and a women's team. Market Harborough again has more minis and juniors than the district wide average would suggest. These two clubs compare to Aylestone St James, which is facing major site issues with its clubhouse and is currently only running 2 senior men's teams, when it would normally also be expected to be running 7 teams at the mini and junior levels'.
- 'Aylestone St James considers that it has lost members to both Market Harborough RFC and to Lutterworth RFC, though other accessible clubs outside of the district may also have attracted members or potential members from this club'.
- 'All of the sites are in secure community use and at present there are no major shortfalls in capacity at Market Harborough or Aylestone St James. However this is not the case at Lutterworth, which is significantly short of pitch space, the equivalent of 2.25 pitches deficit. This club also needs more car parking and more changing space'.
- 'The Aylestone St James site is currently being used as a home site by two men's teams and one women's team from the De Montfort University. This means that they are both training and playing matches there. The old Stoneygate RFC site which is immediately adjacent to Aylestone St James is being used by the professional club Leicester Tigers for training. It does not have any community use at the present time'.
- 'Several of the pitches have a higher carrying capacity than the RFU standard of 2 per week, even though the maintenance levels are either standard or poor. Each of the clubs

has a clubhouse but there are major issues with the building at Aylestone St James. These problems with the clubhouse have had a serious impact on the size of the club and it has reduced to two senior teams. Both Market Harborough and Lutterworth need extended changing rooms and more car parking.

- ‘There will be an increase in demand for rugby as the population in the area grows. The rate of growth is expected to be highest amongst women and girls, but the teams for the female game will remain relatively low’.
- There is no requirement for a new club site, but there is a need to increase the capacity at Lutterworth RFC and in the longer term at Market Harborough RFC. Lutterworth RFC is the highest priority as it is already being used over capacity and requires additional pitch space, car parking and changing rooms.
- ‘There is a need for improvements at the existing sites. Housing developments should therefore contribute to the club site within the relevant sub-area to deliver the improvements required. The Stoneygate site is not required for community rugby, but there is an anticipated deficit of both cricket and football pitches in the area in the period up to 2031. The site should therefore be retained. If developed, then mitigation measures are required with the re-provision of the same quantum of playing field area’.

7.2.4 Implications of the strategic context

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

- **Shortfalls in neighbouring areas:** There are current pitch capacity shortfalls in five neighbouring local authorities, which may lead to some exported demand to Harborough district.
- **Additional demand for pitch capacity:** The RFU’s targets for increased participation will create additional demand for pitch capacity, including activity in the summer period when traditionally much pitch maintenance is undertaken.

7.3 Rugby demand

7.3.1 Expressed demand

The information on rugby clubs and teams based in Harborough district was supplied by the RFU, cross-referenced to a local clubs survey. A questionnaire survey was circulated to all three RFU-affiliated rugby clubs in Harborough district. Two clubs responded.

<i>Club</i>	<i>Home Ground</i>	<i>Men’s teams</i>	<i>Women’s teams</i>	<i>Age grade teams*</i>
Aylestone St. James RFC	Aylestone St. James RFC	1	-	-
Lutterworth RFC	Lutterworth RFC	3	2	33*
Market Harborough RFC	Market Harborough RFC	5	1	22*
TOTALS	-	9	3	55*

* For the purposes of calculating mini-rugby teams, Market Harborough RFC has suggested dividing the average number of players in a mini team (which varies from 4

to 15 across the age grades, but with a mean figure of 12) by the number of age grade players at each club, to arrive at ‘team equivalent’ numbers. The figures for Lutterworth RFC and Market Harborough RFC therefore reflect this calculation to emphasise the demand for pitch space, but it makes direct comparison with the team figures in the 2018 PPS problematic.

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

Sub-area	Men’s teams	Women’s teams	Age grade teams
West	3	2	22
Middle	5	1	33
East	1	-	-
HARBOROUGH	9	3	55

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

Season	Men’s teams	Women’s teams	Boy’s teams	Girl’s teams
2016/17	8	1	10	5
2021/22	9	3	10	5
Change	+1	+2	0	0

7.3.2 Displaced demand

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

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

7.3.3 Unmet demand

Unmet demand takes a number of forms:

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

There is some evidence of unmet demand at present.

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

7.3.4 Latent demand

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

<i>Club</i>	<i>Men's teams</i>	<i>Women's teams</i>	<i>Boy's teams</i>	<i>Girl's teams</i>	<i>Mini teams</i>
Aylestone St. James RFC	-	-	-	-	-
Lutterworth RFC	0	0	1	1	1
Market Harborough RFC	0	0	4	1	7
TOTALS	0	0	5	2	8

7.4 Rugby pitch supply

7.4.1 Quantity

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

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

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Floodlit pitches</i>	<i>Non-floodlit pitches</i>
Aylestone St. James RFC	Covert Lane, Scraftoft LE7 9SP	1.5	0.5
Lutterworth RFC	Ashby Lane, Bitteswell, Lutterworth LE17 4LW	1.5	1.5*

Market	Harborough RFC	Northampton Road, Market Harborough LE16 9HF	2.5	4.5*
TOTALS		-	5.5	7.5

* Also five separate junior/mini pitches at each site

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

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

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

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

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

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

7.4.2 Quality

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

- **Pitch drainage:** Inadequately naturally drained (scores D0), adequately naturally drained (scores D1) pipe drained (scores (D2) and pipe and slit drained pitches (scores D3).

- **Grounds maintenance:** Frequency of aeration, sand-dressing, fertilising, weed killing and chain harrowing. This generates scores of 'Poor' (M0), 'Adequate' (M1) and 'Good' (M2).

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

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

7.4.3 Grass pitch carrying capacity

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

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

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

Site	Midweek capacity	Weekend capacity	Total capacity
Aylestone St. James RFC	3.0	2.0	5.0
Lutterworth RFC	6.0	3.0	9.0

Market Harborough RFC	7.5	11.5	18.5
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7.4.4 Changing quality

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

Site	Rating	Comments
Aylestone St. James RFC	Poor	Clubhouse currently undergoing refurbishment
Lutterworth RFC	Standard	Some changing room issues with age and gender segregation, but an extension project will resolve the problems by the start of the 2022/23 season.
Market Harborough RFC	Standard	Some expansion to changing facilities required.

7.4.5 Pitch maintenance

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

7.4.6 Ownership, management and security of access

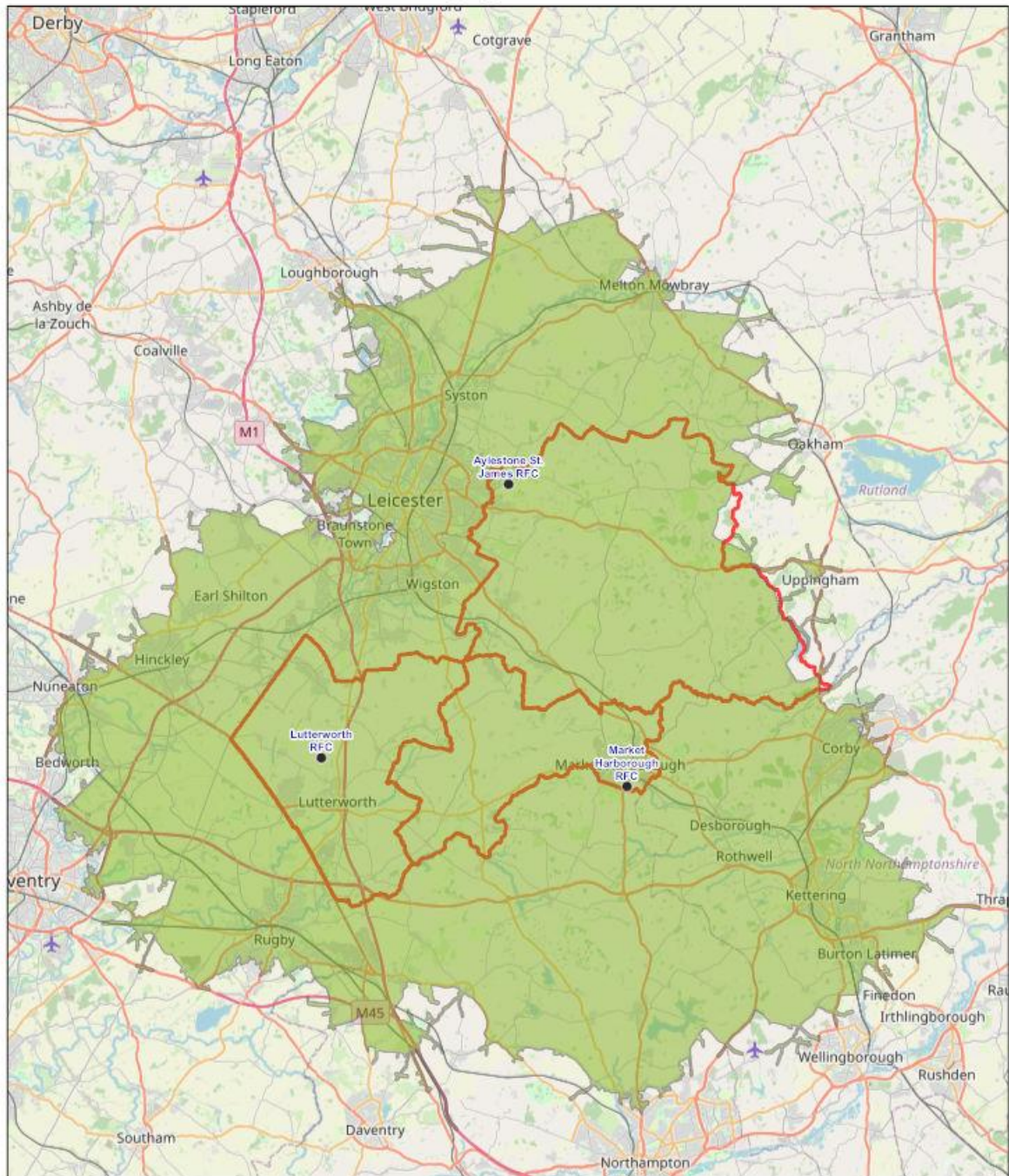
The ownership, management and security of community access of rugby pitch sites is detailed below. Security of access refers to the extent to which community use of the site is protected (through public ownership, planning policy ownership covenants etc.), rather than the security of tenure of specific club users.

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

7.4.7 Geographical distribution

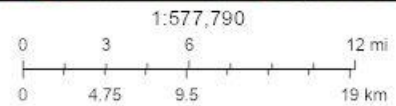
The geographical distribution of rugby pitches in Harborough district has been assessed by identifying catchments to illustrate local level accessibility. This is based on the results of the clubs' survey, which identifies 20-minutes travel time as the typical maximum. Based upon this, the map overleaf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

HARBOROUGH - Rugby Pitches 20 Minutes Drive



2/14/2022

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



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7.5 The views of local stakeholders

7.5.1 The Rugby Football Union

Consultation with the RFU highlighted that:

- There are three rugby clubs in the district.
- The former Stoneygate RFC site, which is immediately adjacent to the Aylestone St James site, is no longer in use for rugby and the pitches are overgrown.
- Both Lutterworth RFC and Market Harborough RFC have pitch capacity issues that are limiting their training and match play needs.
- There have been major problems with the clubhouse at Aylestone St James RFC which has meant that there has been a huge fall in its membership with many players relocating to other clubs, including Market Harborough and Lutterworth.
- There is significant potential for growth at Aylestone St James RFC, driven by local housing growth east of Leicester. Over the next three to five years, this is likely to amount to one new women's team, one new girls' team and three age grade teams. There is sufficient pitch capacity at the club to accommodate this growth.

7.5.2 Lutterworth RFC

The key comments were as follows:

- 'Over-use of pitches is a problem leading to cancellation of training. Car parking (c100 vehicles) is inadequate. The immediate plans for our changing facilities deal with gender segregation and safeguarding and are due for completion autumn 2022. Future plans will need to deal with anticipated increased demand from Lutterworth East and potential developments to the south of Leicester due over next 10-15 years'.
- 'Since 2016, two of our three pitches have primary and secondary drainage. This has had a huge beneficial effect. No games have been lost to wet weather since. Training is lost to protect for upcoming weekend games'.
- 'Two out of six changing rooms only have en-suite facilities. Gender and age separation is currently possible but disruptive. Our development plans should resolve this. Disabled access is over grass (not hard pathway) to reach other pitches'.
- 'The club has appointed a Development Officer to promote the club in the locality particularly in schools'.

7.5.3 Market Harborough RFC

The key comments were as follows:

- 'Our approach is to have an open door to new members ... we don't get full, we just have less grass each ... and we have a strategy of inclusive rugby where

players of all abilities get an equal share of game time. This creates a high demand for our grass, particularly on Sunday mornings’.

- ‘On a Sunday we are unable to mix genders as most Sunday mornings all of our pitches are being used. This restricts how many home fixtures we can host, causing us to send teams away and prevents our girls teams from playing/training in the morning too’.
- ‘We have exhausted the capacity within our current boundary and unless the football club decides to reduce its footprint, our sole option would be to seek to purchase neighbouring farmland for conversion, although we note this land is in Northamptonshire and recently appeared in a housing proposal’.
- ‘The provision of parking is insufficient in the area, impacting on local residents. When the ground is dry enough we are able to utilise a section of land behind the in goal area of our first pitch, although vehicles are in the firing line of rugby balls. On a dry day this is useful but if converted to a tarmac car park could be used all year round. It may even be possible to make it multi-purpose such as a netball court’.
- ‘There are no other options to convert land to parking within our boundaries, without losing pitches. Longer term, options to expand parking on council-owned land would be welcomed’.
- ‘The biggest single restricting factor is the lack of lit pitch-space for training. Although 2.5 pitches are floodlit, there is insufficient power supply to do so simultaneously with the clubhouse and as such only 1.5 pitches may be lit at any one time. One of those, pitch 3 is also our primary pitch, lit to county level standards and used for significant fixtures and so it is kept for match use but cannot be lit at the same time as the training pitches anyway’.
- ‘This has the additional impact that when there is a mid-week game (as happens several times in a season), the training lights cannot be used so all other members miss training. Because training is then all taking place on 1.5 pitches, these pitches face significant over-use and the need to cram the many users into available evening slots is also very restrictive for our volunteer coaches who are trying to juggle this with other life commitments’.
- ‘Once the pitches get wet and badly cut-up, training then gets cancelled as currently no off-pitch area is lit to a safe standard. We see the short-term solution as an increase to the power supply and the lighting of further pitch space to allow the expansion of training areas in order to rest pitches and rotate where we train’.
- ‘Medium term would be the conversion of a training pitch to an all-weather surface suitable for rugby’.
- ‘Longer term would rely on acquisition of more land as above’.
- ‘Drainage remains as universal concern of the club. It is not currently adequate to cater for current rainfall patterns and is less likely to do so in the future with climate change’.

- ‘The frequency and severity of water-logging can be significant, leading to cancelled matches and training as the pitches become unsuitable, also taking considerable time to repair following periods of heavy rainfall. This reduces the amount of playing time at our facilities and in recent years this has been up to 10% or more of the scheduled playing season (not insignificant)’.
- ‘A full review of drainage and strategy is required to cater for the club’s needs. We have recently partnered with Harborough Athletic Club and this will bring further demand issues for available space and potentially for lit space’.
- ‘We have started a Walking Rugby section, designed to be used by members who are no longer young enough or mobile enough to play other forms of rugby – but we have recently moved it to use the all-weather surface at Welland Park Academy as it is a safer surface for these less agile members. If we had our own all-weather area this would not be needed’.
- ‘The immediate priority is to improve and increase our lit training areas, with the intention to go from 2.5 pitches to 5 pitches (one match, four training) and with sufficient power in order to use them simultaneously’.
- ‘Our other objectives (in no particular order) are:
 - To expand our own hard surface parking options and to look into partnership options with Harborough Athletics Club to develop areas for their use within our boundaries.
 - To install an all-weather playing surface.
 - To improve drainage to enable season-round use of facilities.
 - To further expand the clubhouse and increase/improve changing facilities.
 - To seek to acquire more land to develop new pitches and parking options’.
- ‘Currently we are restricted as to which age groups can train given that we only have 1.5 pitches lit. On Tues/Weds/Thurs evenings, the 1.5 pitches are used for 13 sessions. On Sundays the 7 pitches are used for 7 sessions. As such demand is very uneven and an average does not describe the challenges. 1.5 of our pitches are used for about 15 sessions every week, plus matches too. The other pitches are all in simultaneous use on a Sunday but are not in use for evening training as unlit. They may take matches on Saturdays too’.
- ‘Our 7 adult pitches are all in use on a Sunday, allowing us the space to cope with demand by running morning and afternoon sessions then. Sometimes this will see two age groups sharing a pitch. (Before we expanded to 7 pitches that was the norm).The 2 training pitches which are lit however face significant overuse and often have no grass left by the latter part of the season. The ground gets compacted by over-use and fails to then drain, rendering it out of bounds for any activity, causing cancellation of training’.

- 'We allow free use of facilities to Welland Park Academy to host matches as we believe in growing the game locally and supporting our schools. The same would apply (within reason) to others who approached us'.
- 'We have 6 changing rooms, sufficient for 3 matches. That is not enough for some Saturdays and Sundays. Some have their own showers and toilets but most do not, instead relying on a communal shower in the main changing block. We have 2 referees changing rooms'.
- 'We have 2 changing rooms separate from the other 4, so if the gender demand requirement matches, sometimes we can separate genders in changing areas but not always. The same applies to juniors/adults'.
- 'Car parking on site and nearby is sufficient on most days except Sundays or occasional Saturday afternoons'.
- 'Disabled access is fine for P1 as tarmac path spectator area but to get anywhere else is across grass so is weather dependent'.
- 'Whilst there are all weather football pitches close by, they are very rarely accessible to us so to all intents and purposes we have no solutions. Our own all weather facility would alleviate that and reduce cancelled activity. The main issue we face currently though is lighting and the need to be able to actually use the grass we already have by it being lit when we need access'.
- 'Our storage needs are currently managed by using some shipping containers and old lorry-back roller shutter containers but are actively seeking more presently. This is to house our grounds maintenance machinery, post protectors, flags etc and also all the training kit used by the volunteer coaches. Aesthetically and for future proofing it would be far better to have a building to house our grounds machinery and then separately all the sporting equipment that currently out of necessity sits in various people's garages at home'.
- 'The current council-owned leased part of our site has a low wooden fence boundary. The site security would be improved by a metal fence similar to that recently installed at Robert Smyth Academy. Again whilst not our immediate priority, particularly though once we have installed floodlights it would be beneficial to secure the whole site'.

7.6 The implications for rugby in Harborough district

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

- **Expressed demand:** There are three local clubs serving Harborough district. Team numbers have increased slightly since 2018.
- **Pitch supply:** There are significant pitch capacity issues at Market Harborough RFC and Lutterworth RFC.

- **Pitch quality:** Four of the pitches at Market Harborough RFC are poorly drained (classified as 'natural inadequate' drainage) which limits their carrying capacity.
- **Floodlights:** Seven of the thirteen pitches in the district are floodlit, but two of these are only partially floodlit (with lighting columns on one side only, so the effective number of floodlit pitches reduces to 4.5). Power supply problems at Market Harborough RFC further compromise the use of floodlit pitches at their site.
- **Changing facilities:** There are issues with changing facilities at all sites, which are particularly acute at Aylestone RFC, although these are in the process of being addressed.
- **Security of access:** All pitches have secured community access.

7.7 Developments since the 2018 PPS

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

- Based on team numbers, expressed demand has remained broadly constant since 2016/17. However, Market Harborough RFC in particular has identified that the number of 'team equivalents' at mini and junior level is much greater than the assessment in the 2018 PPS.
- Drainage improvements to two of the pitches at Lutterworth RFC have improved overall capacity, although there is still a shortfall for midweek training due to limited floodlighting.
- The clubhouse issues at Aylestone St. James RFC have still not been fully resolved, although remedial works are currently under way.
- The pitches at the former Stoneygate RFC site are now completely disused.

7.8 Assessment of current needs

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

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

The site overviews identify the extent to which pitches are:

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

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

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

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pitch number</i>	<i>Users</i>	<i>Weekly capacity</i>	<i>Weekly demand</i>	<i>Weekly balance</i>	<i>Peak capacity</i>	<i>Peak demand</i>	<i>Peak balance</i>
Aylestone St. James RFC	1*	Aylestone St. James RFC	2.5	1.5	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Aylestone St. James RFC	2*	Aylestone St. James RFC	2.5	0.0	+2.5	1.0	0.0	+1.0
SITE TOTALS	2	-	5.0	1.5	+3.5	2.0	1.0	+1.0
Lutterworth RFC	1*	Lutterworth RFC	3.0	3.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Lutterworth RFC	2	Lutterworth RFC	3.0	3.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Lutterworth RFC	3*	Lutterworth RFC	3.0	3.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Lutterworth RFC	5 Mini	Lutterworth RFC	5.0	6.75	-1.75	5.0	6.75	-1.75
SITE TOTALS	3 (5)	-	14.0	15.75	-1.75	8.0	9.75	-1.75
Market Harborough RFC	1*	Market Harborough RFC	3.5	4.0	-0.5	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Market Harborough RFC	2*	Market Harborough RFC	3.5	3.0	+0.5	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Market Harborough RFC	3*	Market Harborough RFC	3.5	4.0	-0.5	1.0	1.0	Balanced

Harborough District Council
Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy

Market Harborough RFC	4	Market Harborough RFC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Market Harborough RFC	5	Market Harborough RFC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Market Harborough RFC	6	Market Harborough RFC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Market Harborough RFC	7	Market Harborough RFC	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Market Harborough RFC	5 Mini	Market Harborough RFC	5.0	5.0	Balanced	5.0	5.0	Balanced
SITE TOTALS	7 (5)	-	23.5	24.0	-0.5	12.0	12.0	Balanced
TOTAL	12 (10)	-	42.5	40.25	+1.25	22.0	22.75	-0.75

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

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pitches</i>	<i>Midweek training capacity</i>	<i>Midweek training demand</i>	<i>Midweek training balance</i>	<i>Weekend match capacity</i>	<i>Weekend match demand</i>	<i>Weekend match balance</i>
Aylestone St. James RFC	1*	1.5	0.5	+1.0	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Aylestone St. James RFC	2*	1.5	0.0	+1.5	1.0	0.0	+1.0
SITE TOTALS	2	3.0	0.5	+2.5	2.0	1.0	+1.0
Lutterworth RFC	1*	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Lutterworth RFC	2	0.0	0.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Lutterworth RFC	3*	2.0	2.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Lutterworth RFC	5 Mini	0.0	0.0	Balanced	5.0	6.75	-1.75
SITE TOTALS	3 (5)	4.0	4.0	Balanced	8.0	9.75	-1.75
Market Harborough RFC	1*	2.5	3.0	-0.5	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Market Harborough RFC	2*	2.5	2.0	+0.5	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Market Harborough RFC	3*	2.5	3.0	-0.5	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Market Harborough RFC	4	0.0	0.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Market Harborough RFC	5	0.0	0.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Market Harborough RFC	6	0.0	0.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced

Market Harborough RFC	7	0.0	0.0	Balanced	1.0	1.0	Balanced
Market Harborough RFC	5 Mini	0.0	0.0	Balanced	5.0	5.0	Balanced
SITE TOTALS	7 (5)	7.5	8.0	-0.5	12.0	12.0	Balanced
HARBOROUGH	12 (10)	14.5	12.5	+2.0	22.0	22.75	-0.75

The key findings are that:

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

7.9 Assessment of future needs

7.9.1 Population growth

The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 104,839 by 2031, an increase of 9,302 (or 9.7%). Comparison of the projections for 2020 and 2031 shows that the percentage of people aged under 50 falls from 55.6% to 53.2%, with proportionate population increases amongst the over 50s.

7.9.2 Potential changes in demand

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

7.9.3 Site-specific pressures

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

7.9.4 Potential changes in supply

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

7.9.5 Existing spare capacity

Whilst there is spare capacity at Aylestone St. James RFC, there are shortfalls at Lutterworth RFC and Market Harborough RFC so there is no effective spare capacity. There is also spare capacity at the unused Stoneygate/Scraptoft site although it is not in the optimum location to meet rugby needs. Since there is a need for additional playing field capacity elsewhere in the district, the loss of the site should be compensated by the same quantity of new playing field elsewhere.

7.9.6 Future rugby pitch needs

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

Team type	Age range	Current population	Current teams	Unmet demand	TGR	Population 2031	Teams 2031	Extra teams
Adult males	19-45	13,164	9	0	1: 1,463	14,394	10	+1
Adult females	19-45	13,557	3	1	1: 3,389	14,717	4	0
Age Grade	7-18	13,923	55	18	1: 191	13,948	73	0

7.9.7 Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator

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

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

7.10 Key findings and issues

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

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

- **Pitch supply:** There are significant pitch capacity issues at Market Harborough RFC and Lutterworth RFC.
- **Pitch quality:** Four of the pitches at Market Harborough RFC are poorly drained (classified as 'natural inadequate' drainage) which limits their carrying capacity.
- **Floodlights:** Seven of the thirteen pitches in the district are floodlit, but two of these are only partially floodlit (with lighting columns on one side only, so the effective number of floodlit pitches reduces to 4.5). Power supply problems at Harborough RFC further compromise the use of floodlit pitches at their site.
- **Changing facilities:** There are issues with changing facilities at all sites, which are particularly acute at Aylestone RFC, although these are in the process of being addressed.
- **Security of access:** All pitches have secured community access.

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

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

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

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

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

- **Population growth:** The ONS 2018 sub-national population projections forecast a population of 104,839 by 2031, an increase of 9,302 (or 9.7%). Comparison of the projections for 2020 and 2031 shows that the percentage of people aged under 50 falls from 55.6% to 53.2%, with proportionate population increases amongst the over 50s.
- **Changes in demand:** Projecting future need based on current demand patterns (including unmet demand identified by the clubs) is the most appropriate basis for forecasting.
- **Changes in supply:** Market Harborough RFC has plans to improve and increase its floodlit training areas, with the intention to go from 2.5 pitches to 5 pitches (one match, four training) and with sufficient power supply to use them all simultaneously.
- **Existing spare capacity:** There is no effective spare capacity at the two main club sites in the district.

- **Future needs:** There will be a small increase in team numbers by 2031, but this will have a negligible effect on demand for pitches.

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

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

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

7.11 Scenario testing

7.11.1 Introduction

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

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

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

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

- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:

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

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

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

Site	<i>Adult pitches Floodlit</i>	<i>Adult pitches Partially floodlit</i>	<i>Adult pitches Non-floodlit</i>	<i>Age grade pitches Floodlit</i>	<i>Age grade pitches Partially floodlit</i>	<i>Age grade pitches Non-floodlit</i>
Aylestone St. James RFC	1	1	-	-	-	-
Lutterworth RFC	1	1	1	-	-	5
Market Harborough RFC	2*	1*	4	-	-	5
TOTALS	1	1	8	0	0	10

* Market Harborough RFC has 2.5 floodlit pitches, but because of power supply issues, it can only use 1.5 at any one time.

- **Advantages:** The advantage of this scenario is that floodlighting additional pitches will increase their availability on midweek evenings when training sessions take place. This will have the greatest benefits at:

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

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

- **Rationale:** Providing an artificial grass pitch at Market Harborough RFC (or alternative mechanism for enhancing the pitch capacity in addition to drainage e.g. hybrid technology) would increase capacity for midweek training sessions (including the potential for hire to other local clubs) and in the peak match play period for adults (Saturday afternoons) and Juniors/Minis (Sunday mornings). In addition, there is significant unmet demand from football clubs for access to '3G' pitches, so a rugby-compliant artificial grass pitch would also serve wider needs.
- **Advantages:** The advantages of this scenario are as follows:
 - Market Harborough RFC has long-term aspirations to install a World Rugby regulation 22-compliant artificial grass pitch.
 - The pitch would add 10.0 midweek match equivalent sessions and 4.0 weekend match equivalent sessions (offset by the loss of the grass pitch upon which it would be sited) which would meet all current and future needs.
 - Subject to any spare rugby capacity, the pitch could additionally contribute to meeting identified deficiencies in '3G' Football Turf Pitches in Harborough district.
- **Disadvantage:** The only disadvantage of this scenario is that to achieve maximum peak-time benefits will involve scheduling matches at non-traditional kick-off times which is a relatively new concept for many teams.
- **Conclusions:** Market Harborough RFC's long-term aspirations for a World Rugby Regulation 22-compliant artificial grass pitch (or alternative mechanism for enhancing the pitch capacity in addition to drainage e.g. hybrid technology) should be supported.

7.12 Policy recommendations

7.12.1 Introduction

The recommendations in relation to rugby union are made in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 98, which stipulates that existing open space including playing pitches, should not be built upon unless:

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

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

7.12.2 Protect

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

7.12.3 Enhance

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

7.12.4 Provide

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

hybrid solution and an artificial grass pitch, including the option of implementing these on a phased basis.

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

7.13 Action Plan

7.13.1 Introduction

In the context of the recommendations above, the rugby union action plan below will guide the implementation of the strategy. The abbreviations stand for HDC - Harborough District Council, RFU - Rugby Football Union, ASJRFC – Aylestone St. James RFC, LRFC - Lutterworth RFC and MHRFC - Market Harborough RFC. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England’s ‘*Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2021*’ (2021).

7.13.2 Key strategic actions

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

7.13.3 Site specific actions

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