



LUTON PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

2014 - 2021

Integrity, Innovation, Inspiration

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LUTON PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND PRIORITISATION LIST

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) for Luton. Building upon the preceding Assessment Report, it provides a clear, strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing outdoor sports facilities and ancillary facilities between 2014 and 2021:

- ◀ Inform planning policy within the emerging Luton Local Plan policies in terms of protection and enhancement of provision.
- ◀ Provide adequate planning guidance to assess development proposals affecting playing fields;
- ◀ Inform land use decisions in respect of future use of existing outdoor sports areas and playing fields (capable of accommodating pitches) within the Borough;
- ◀ Provide a strategic framework for the provision and management of outdoor sports in the Borough;
- ◀ Support external funding bids and maximise support for outdoor and informal sports facilities;
- ◀ Provide the basis for on-going monitoring and review of the use, distribution, function, quality and accessibility of outdoor sport.

1.1 Scope

The strategy covers all of the outdoor pitch sports as well as non-pitch sports as follows:

- ◀ Football pitches
- ◀ Cricket pitches
- ◀ Rugby union pitches
- ◀ Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) including sand based/filled, water based and 3G surfaces
- ◀ Bowling greens
- ◀ Gaelic football pitches
- ◀ Golf courses
- ◀ Netball courts
- ◀ Tennis courts
- ◀ Athletics tracks
- ◀ Informal sports

1.2: Structure

The Strategy will be developed from research and analysis of outdoor sports facilities and usage, including informal activity within Luton and it will provide:

- ◀ A vision for the future improvement and prioritisation of outdoor sports (including ancillary facilities).
- ◀ A series of generic strategic objectives which provide a strategic framework for the improvement, maintenance, development and, as appropriate, rationalisation of the stock.
- ◀ A series of sport by sport objectives which provide a strategic framework for sport led improvements to provision.
- ◀ A prioritised area-by-area action plan to address key issues.

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- ◀ A series of strategic objectives which provide a strategic framework for measuring the impact of participation in informal sporting activity in Luton to inform the health agenda.

The Strategy and Action Plan will recommend a number of priority projects for Luton, which should be implemented from 2014 to 2021. The Strategy and Action Plan is outlined to provide a framework and, although resources may not currently be in place to implement it, potential partners and possible sources of external funding will be identified.

There is a need to build key partnerships with NGBs, Sport England, schools, community clubs and private landowners to maintain and improve playing pitch provision. In these instances the potential for the Council to take a strategic lead is more limited (except in terms of developer contributions). This document will provide clarity about the way forward, and allow the Council to focus on key issues that it can directly influence and achieve.

1.3: Strategic Vision for Sport and Physical Activity (April 2013)

The overarching strategy for sport in Luton is set out in The Strategic Vision for Sport and Physical Activity (2013). It is a corporate document of which the playing pitch strategy fits into. The Playing Pitch Strategy informs the vision for sport and its action plan.

The vision ensures that the Council's investment into sport effectively contributes to the authority's overall outcomes. Beyond this, a vision for sport in Luton will provide:

- ◀ Clarity of priorities in times of austerity
- ◀ A means of securing resources through a clear, needs-based approach
- ◀ Ability to maximise use of resources through informed decision making
- ◀ A meaningful post 2012 legacy
- ◀ A framework to realise Luton's sporting ambitions

The importance of health and wellbeing is also high on the agenda for Luton. This strategy also aims to improve levels of participation in physical activity in children and adults by improving access to playing pitches. This will have a positive impact on health inequalities by improving future provision, maximising current outdoor pitches and enabling key partners to work together. Long term it is envisaged that the prevalence rates of physically active adults will improve. In addition improving cohesion in communities and increasing the number of active older people, young people, woman and girls, residents from the BME communities, and people with a disability taking part in sport will provide an opportunity to enhance residents aspirations and personal life skills.

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PART 2: SUMMARY FROM THE ASSESSMENT REPORT

This section summarises the key issues identified from the Assessment Report.

2.1: Football – grass pitches

- ◀ The audit identifies a total of 125 football pitches in Luton. Of these, 101 (46 sites) are available, at some level, for community use (although not necessarily used).
- ◀ A total of 240 teams are identified as Luton based team, however, 208 play in Luton. Of these, five teams are playing on 3G pitch provision.
- ◀ There are no suitable sites in Luton to service Step 5 and above clubs, for example, Crawley Green FC, resulting in displaced demand. Step 5 of the football pyramid contains leagues which have strict facility requirements such as perimeter pitch fencing and appropriate changing accommodation. The pitch also needs to be built to meet the requirements for league cup finals.
- ◀ There is a need to consider asset transfer as a way to make facilities more sustainable
- ◀ In addition, 32 teams are identified as being from Luton but actually play outside of the Borough. This is primarily thought to be due to a lack of access to good quality pitches.
- ◀ At peak time, most sites expressing potential capacity are actually unavailable and should, therefore not be counted as spare capacity. Of the 40 pitches with spare capacity and available for community use, 26.5 pitches are available within the peak period (66%). This equates to 53 match equivalent sessions per week as actual spare capacity.
- ◀ Overall in Luton there are sufficient adult pitches to accommodate over-play, unmet demand, latent demand and future demand. Overall there is an oversupply of 6.5 match equivalent sessions (4 pitches). No areas are deficient in adult pitches.
- ◀ Overall in Luton there are sufficient youth pitches to accommodate over-play, unmet demand, latent demand and future demand. However there are slight shortfalls in Luton North and West.
- ◀ Overall in Luton there are sufficient mini pitches to accommodate over-play, unmet demand, latent demand and future demand. Overall there is spare capacity of 5.5 match equivalent sessions (three pitches). However Luton East is deficient by 0.5 match equivalent sessions per week.

2.1.1: Football – Artificial Grass Pitches (AGP)

- ◀ The FA model suggests that there are enough 3G pitches (once the new pitch at Lea Manor Recreation Centre has been converted) to service current football training demand in Luton. However, local demand suggests that more access to 3G provision may be needed, although pricing is also a key factor for clubs.
- ◀ Currently there is not a high demand for competitive fixtures to be played on 3G pitches in Luton. However, if the quality of grass pitches deteriorates there may be a future increase in demand to play matches on 3G pitches.

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2.2: Cricket

- ◀ In total, there are 11 cricket pitches provided in Luton, of which only one is unavailable for community use (at Icknield High School which is a junior pitch). Cricket pitches accommodate 42 senior teams and 8 junior teams.
- ◀ Site assessments scored one pitch as good quality (Luton Town & Indians CC) and the other nine as standard quality.
- ◀ There is a need to consider asset transfer as a way to make facilities more sustainable.
- ◀ It is reported that a large number of players (approximately 100) travel outside of the Borough to access cricket pitches and a higher standard of play. This is attributed to both a lack of pitches in Luton as well as a lack of higher quality pitches.
- ◀ It has been highlighted that significant informal play takes place at parks sites in Luton. Due to the difficulties in providing robust quantitative data for this type of demand it is likely that the deficiencies identified are greater than stated.
- ◀ Overplay at cricket sites in Luton is a total of 45 matches across the Borough per season. If all overplay was to be relocated to other sites there would be a need for one additional cricket ground (based on a cricket square with 10 wickets).
- ◀ Unmet demand cannot be accommodated on the current supply of pitches and equates to the need for four additional cricket grounds (based on a square with 10 wickets).
- ◀ As over play and unmet demand cannot be met due to pitches being at capacity there is no spare capacity to accommodate any latent or future demand which requires an additional 11 pitches (based on a cricket square with 10 wickets).

2.3: Rugby union

In total, there are 12 senior and two mini rugby pitches located across nine sites in Luton. Of these, nine pitches are available for community use and used.

- ◀ Those pitches that are unavailable for community use are located on school sites. The poor quality (drainage) is a significant factor in these pitches not being available to use.
- ◀ Club pitches are generally of an adequate or good quality. Only the senior pitch at Stockwood Park is assessed as poor quality.
- ◀ All training takes place on grass pitches in Luton; there is no dedicated IRB¹ pitch. Training on the pitches adds to the wear and tear and impacts on the quality and carrying capacity. A related issue is a lack of floodlighting for training provision.
- ◀ Due to the large amount of demand for training there is a need for an IRB compliant AGP. This would be best placed in the South Analysis Area.
- ◀ There is no reported, unmet, displaced or latent demand for rugby pitches in Luton.
- ◀ There is no peak time spare capacity for usage of pitches. However, one new women's team will be accommodated on spare Sunday capacity at Luton RFC next season.
- ◀ Overplay (of 9.5 matches per week) is due to the amount of training usage being accommodated on match pitches.

¹ International Rugby Board (IRB) compliant pitches are artificial grass pitches which meet specifications that make pitches safe for players and replicate good quality grass pitches. The specifications required are known as Regulation 22.
http://www.irbplayerwelfare.com/pdfs/Turf_Performance_Tech_Spec_EN.pdf

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- ◀ Increasing the quality of the senior pitch at Stockwood Park would help to increase capacity. However, it should be noted that Stockwood Park is in an area of County Wildlife Site designation and of considerable archaeological interest. This may reduce options for improvement, e.g. new pipe drainage systems may require an archaeological survey.
- ◀ Future demand resulting from population growth equates to the need for access to one senior and one mini pitch.

2.4: Hockey

- ◀ In total, five clubs play competitive fixtures in Luton, fielding a total of 21 teams.
- ◀ There are four full sized sand based AGPs suitable to accommodate competitive hockey. Of these, three are floodlit and all are available for community use.
- ◀ One (floodlit) pitch at Lea Manor is imminently due to be converted into a 3G surface.
- ◀ Two pitches are assessed as good quality and two as poor quality (including Lea Manor).
- ◀ The lack of floodlights at Luton 6th Form AGP reduces capacity for winter training; therefore, clubs which play competitive fixtures there must train at Venue 360, which is assessed as poor quality.
- ◀ Luton Town Hockey Club is the only hockey user of Challney Girls School AGP; however, there is spare capacity for training in the evenings.
- ◀ Ancillary facilities are highlighted as a problem for clubs as all clubs must travel off site, away from the pitch, to access clubhouse facilities.
- ◀ No unmet demand was identified in Luton, however, latent demand for three senior and three junior teams was reported. The current supply of pitches could not accommodate this demand for both training and matches due to poor quality (at Venue 360) and lack of floodlighting (Luton 6th Form College).

2.5: Bowls

- ◀ There are ten bowling greens in Luton provided across nine sites.
- ◀ All greens in Luton are assessed as good quality. In terms of the views from clubs, only one club (Luton West End Bowls Club) reports that the green was slightly poorer than the previous year. Vandalism is or has been an issue at some sites.
- ◀ Luton West End Bowls Club reports demand for improved ancillary facilities that could lead to having more members. In addition Luton West End Bowls Club, Wardown Park Bowls Club and Sunlea Bowls Club report demand for increased green access for wheelchair players.
- ◀ There are eight clubs using bowling greens in Luton with an average playing membership of 40. The majority of clubs suggest that an additional bowling green at their home green or in the area would not lead to an increase in club membership.
- ◀ Junior participation is low in Luton and none of the clubs report having junior members. There is a general issue with older members not being replaced by younger players; most are aging teams.
- ◀ Notwithstanding that there may be additional demand for bowling greens in the future; there is an approximate current oversupply of three greens in Luton based on a membership capacity analysis. Just considering Council greens, there is a current oversupply of two greens.

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2.6: Gaelic football

- ◀ There are two Gaelic football clubs in Luton; Claddagh Gaels and St Vincent's GAA Club.
- ◀ There is one Gaelic pitch at Legrave Park (good quality) and one at Stockwood Park (standard quality).
- ◀ The ancillary facilities are perceived to be fit for purpose and adequate although there are reports that other sports such as cricket are given priority over changing room access.
- ◀ Car parking is described as inadequate at Legrave Park.
- ◀ Although current demand is being met in Luton, it is thought likely that any increase in demand will lead to the need for more pitches.
- ◀ A school's programme is to be rolled out in 2014 and is likely to lead to an increase in demand for Gaelic football pitches.

2.7: Golf

- ◀ There is one golf course in Luton provided at Stockwood Park comprising of an 18 hole course, a driving range and a 9 hole course.
- ◀ Membership at the Club has generally remained static in the previous three years and there is no waiting list to join. Although the Club reports that it is not operating at membership capacity, it has to balance this with pay and play usage of the course.
- ◀ Almost all Luton residents are serviced by a golf course within a 20 minute drive time. Although there are some small pockets of deficiencies where residents are not serviced by a 20 minute drive time this is unlikely to equate to the need for an additional golf course as people have a higher propensity to drive to golf courses.
- ◀ If the development at Tea Green Course was to go ahead analysis would need to be carried out to identify whether Stockwood Park would be able to accommodate the increase in demand.

2.8: Netball

- ◀ There are 41 netball courts identified within Luton with varying degrees of quality. All courts are located on education sites.
- ◀ 27 teams compete in the Luton, Dunstable and District outdoor league. Only four of the teams are from outside of Luton. The number of teams has remained largely static over the previous three years.
- ◀ Despite a formal community use agreement (CUA) being in place at Challney High School the League reports that attempted access to the courts for senior matches has been unsuccessful.
- ◀ All demand for matches is accommodated on the current supply of courts and this is supported by the League which suggests that there are generally enough courts in Luton to satisfy demand.
- ◀ There are also enough courts that could be accessed if the League was to grow further.
- ◀ Overall the Luton League manages on the courts that are at its disposal but moving forward would benefit from the development opportunities that a Central Venue facility (i.e. 4/5/ 6 outdoor courts) would bring.

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2.9: Tennis

- ◀ There are 65 tennis courts identified within Luton of which 13 are parks tennis courts.
- ◀ The one club in Luton is Luton & Vauxhall Lawn tennis club with a membership of 160 juniors and 110 adults.
- ◀ Although availability of courts at the Club is not a particular issue, the Club reports that it is operating at capacity at peak time for matches. It identifies potential for two more courts to be created on the overflow car park land if required.
- ◀ Council parks courts are free to use and are open access. Wardown Park is the most used site.
- ◀ Quality at parks sites could be improved as all are assessed as standard quality; however they are fit for purpose and provide a recreational standard of court.

2.10: Athletics

- ◀ There is one athletics track in Luton located at Stockwood Park. The track is certified Grade A and is of a good enough standard to hold county competitions. It was re-laid 18 months ago and is suitable to satisfy demands from the Club.
- ◀ There is demand for a separate throwing area, with new circles planned for 2014. This is critical to retain the existing track certification.

2.11: Key priorities to address

Using the key issues identified in the Assessment Report, the following priorities are identified for each sport and provide the context for the development of the aims and objectives within the Strategy.

Football:

- ◀ A lack of football pitches/sites in Luton to service clubs at Step 5 and above, for example, Crawley Green FC, resulting in displaced demand. Alongside this there is the need for a cup final standard pitch.
- ◀ Current overplay resulting in the need for two additional youth (11v11) pitches in the North analysis area.
- ◀ Small (equivalent to less than one pitch) deficiencies in youth pitches (11v11) in the East.
- ◀ Future demand to 2021 for two youth (11v11) and one (9v9) pitches.
- ◀ A lack of available football pitches on education sites.
- ◀ Surplus of youth 11v11 pitches in the South.
- ◀ Continue to monitor the future demand for 3G AGPs.
- ◀ Consider the need for asset transfer as a way to make facilities more sustainable.

Cricket:

- ◀ Current overplay and unmet demand resulting in the need for five additional cricket grounds (based on a cricket square with ten wickets).
- ◀ Future and latent demand resulting in the need for an additional 11 cricket grounds (based on a cricket square with ten wickets) by 2021, totalling 16 cricket grounds altogether (including current overplay and unmet demand).
- ◀ A lack of available cricket pitches on education sites.
- ◀ The need for more dedicated informal provision.

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Rugby union:

- ◀ Increasing the quality of rugby pitches where possible/appropriate to increase capacity.
- ◀ Current overplay from training resulting in the need for five additional senior pitches or the need for an IRB compliant AGP to accommodate this training.
- ◀ Future and latent demand resulting in the need for an additional senior match pitch by 2021, totalling six altogether (including current overplay and unmet demand).
- ◀ Need for additional floodlighting for training pitches.

Hockey:

- ◀ Poor pitch quality at Venue 360 and lack of floodlighting at Luton 6th Form College.
- ◀ Latent demand expressed for three senior and three junior hockey teams.
- ◀ Lack of clubhouse facilities at pitch sites

Bowls:

- ◀ Low junior bowls participation. There is a general issue with older members not being replaced by younger players; most are aging teams.
- ◀ Current oversupply of three greens in Luton based on a membership capacity analysis. Considering only Council greens, there is a current oversupply of two greens.
- ◀ A need to review Council management of greens.

Gaelic football:

- ◀ Future demand for Gaelic football pitches following development work starting in schools in 2014.

Netball:

- ◀ The need for a netball venue with four or more good quality, floodlit courts to accommodate tournaments and junior central venue competitions.

Golf:

- ◀ The need to protect and maintain current standard of Stockwood Park Golf Course.

Tennis:

- ◀ Quality at parks sites could be improved as all are assessed as standard quality; however they are fit for purpose and provide a recreational standard of court.
- ◀ Luton & Vauxhall Lawn Tennis Club is operating at capacity at peak time.

Athletics:

- ◀ The need to protect and maintain the current standard of track at Stockwood Park, and to accommodate demand for a separate throwing area which is critical to retain the Grade A quality certificate of the track.

Education:

- ◀ Availability of education sites, particularly secondary schools to accommodate a range of community use needs, including underuse of grass pitches.

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PART 3: A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

3.1 Context

The PPS sits within the context of Luton Borough Council's Prospectus 2013-2016, in which three key priorities are identified, which include: 'to ensure the most vulnerable in Luton are safe and supported,' and 'to better equip residents of all ages to get jobs through investment in education and training.' Against this backdrop, the rationale for producing the strategy is that it will help to deliver on the broader agenda to increase participation in sport, which is key to improving health and wellbeing outcomes and which can also play an important role in the development of confidence and skills among individuals.

The objectives of the strategy extend across multiple LBC departments and are summarised below:

- ◀ To help deliver the public health agenda
- ◀ To inform the investment strategy for LBC initiatives
- ◀ To inform local plan policy and potential developer contributions
- ◀ To set the outdoor sports facilities plan within the context of the local plan and wider strategies for parks, green spaces and community development
- ◀ To inform sports development initiatives
- ◀ To reflect wider LBC asset reviews
- ◀ To help facilitate community use of outdoor facilities on education sites

The overarching strategy for sport in Luton is set out in The Strategic Vision for Sport and Physical Activity (2013). It is a corporate document of which the playing pitch strategy fits into. The vision ensures that the Council's investment into sport effectively contributes to the authority's overall outcomes. Beyond this, a vision for sport in Luton will provide:

- ◀ Clarity of priorities in times of austerity
- ◀ A means of securing resources through a clear, needs-based approach
- ◀ Ability to maximise use of resources through informed decision making
- ◀ A meaningful post 2012 legacy
- ◀ A framework to realise Luton's sporting ambitions

Luton

Due to the restrictions of green space in Luton there is a need for Luton's parks and open space to be multifunctional and provide for the formal and informal recreational needs of the whole community which also includes important areas of habitat and historical interest. This is a major consideration in the context of providing playing pitches to service both formal and informal sport.

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Links to other strategies

There are a number of related strategies developed by Luton Borough Council which have been adopted or are in the process of being developed, which are used to inform the Playing Pitch Strategy. They include:

- ◀ Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012 – 2017
- ◀ Luton Local Plan, 2001 – 2011
- ◀ Corporate Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy 2010- 2015
- ◀ Luton Local Plan Review, 2011 – 2031 (in development, not available online)
- ◀ Luton and South Bedfordshire Draft Green Space Strategy 2008 (useful background, available via www.shapeyourfuture.org.uk)
- ◀ Luton Green Space Strategy (in development as part of Local Plan review, not available online)
- ◀ Community Priorities documents, developed as part of the Your Say, Your Way programme
- ◀ Luton's Sustainable Community Strategy, 2008 – 2026

As detailed in the Luton Borough Council Prospectus 2013-16, the backdrop to the development of the Playing Pitch Strategy is that for the next three years, the Council must manage on much less funding from Government than in the previous three years. Increased pressures are likely to flow from changes to welfare benefits, greater need for social care and a new duty to improve the public's health.

Within this context, a Playing Pitch Strategy for Luton must help to address health inequalities by seeking to promote participation in sport. The action plan must also take into account the considerable constraints on local authority budgets in the medium term, the practical consequences of which may include less intensive maintenance within Council operated parks.

As stated in the Luton Local Plan, 2001 – 2011, Luton is now generally developed up to its administrative boundary and a central issue is the 'extent to which the conflicting needs for various uses and facilities are to be balanced.' In relation to a Playing Pitch Strategy, the use of land for formal sport must be set in the context of the other potential uses of green space and the need to protect and enhance the natural environment.

Please refer to Appendix One for the full national strategic context for the PPS, including Sport England and NGB strategies.

3.2: PPS vision

Building upon the Council and its partners priorities, the vision for the Playing Pitch Strategy is:

Luton will provide a network of high quality outdoor sports facilities that are conducive to sustaining and increasing participation in sport and consequently helping to improve the health and wellbeing, employment and business of residents both now and in the future.

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This strategy will help in identification, and prioritisation, of outdoor sports that are of local and Borough-wide significance and guide the Council and its partners to work collaboratively (i.e., reduce duplication and competition), identify and use limited resources to optimum effect.

3.3: PPS aims

The proposed vision is based upon clear and achievable aims (set out within the boxed text below). It is recommended that the following are adopted by LBC and its partners to enable it to achieve the overall vision of the Strategy:

AIM 1

To protect and enhance levels of outdoor sports facilities

AIM 2

To address issues of quality and management with regard to facility provision

AIM 3

To maximise access to all outdoor facilities and in particular educational facilities

AIM 4

To maximise investment into outdoor sports facilities

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PART 4: OBJECTIVES

The objectives need to be implemented to enable the aims to be delivered. It is recommended that LBC and partners adopt the following objectives across a range of departments to enable it to achieve the vision of the Strategy (note: not in any priority order):

AIM 1

To protect and enhance levels of outdoor sports facilities

Objectives:

- a. Rectify quantitative shortfalls in the current pitch stock and outdoor sports facilities.
- b. Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand.
- c. Protect sports facilities where there is a need to do so.

Given that the scope to replace facilities in the Luton context is limited, there is a justified need to protect existing outdoor sports facilities unless there is deemed to be a surplus of provision.

Objective (a) - Rectify quantitative shortfalls in the current pitch stock and outdoor sports facilities

The Council and its partners should work to rectify identified inadequacies and meet identified shortfalls as outlined in the Assessment Report. Current quantitative shortfalls of existing provision are identified as:

- ◀ Five grass cricket pitches (based on 10 wickets) to meet current overplay and unmet demand.
- ◀ Current overplay resulting in the need for two additional youth football pitches in the North analysis area.
- ◀ Five senior grass rugby pitches to accommodate overplay (or an IRB compliant AGP as over play is due to training on grass pitches).

It is important that the current levels of grass pitch provision are protected, maintained and enhanced to secure provision now and in the future. For most sports the future demand for provision identified in Luton can be overcome through maximising use of existing pitches through a combination of:

- ◀ Securing long term community use at school sites.
- ◀ Working with commercial and private providers to increase usage.
- ◀ The re-designation of pitches for which there is an oversupply.
- ◀ Improving pitch quality in order to improve the capacity of pitches to accommodate more matches.

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- ◀ Prioritising Luton clubs/residents (i.e. those with a strong tradition of playing in or being established in Luton) for access to pitches.

While maximising the use of existing pitches offers scope to address the quantitative deficiencies for most sports, new or additional cricket squares on public playing fields as well as improving existing wickets is required to meet the levels of demand identified for cricket both current and future.

There may be a requirement to protect some senior football pitches as this provides the flexibility to provide senior, junior or mini pitches (through different line markings/coning areas of the pitch). However, further work should be undertaken on this as an action for the Council/NGBs. Furthermore the re-designation of adult pitches that are not currently used may lead to a deficiency of adult pitches in the medium to longer term as younger players move up the ages. It is likely that for some sports, particularly football, that the provision of new pitches and facilities will be required in the future to support the predicted future demand.

Unmet demand, changes in sport participation and trends, and proposed housing growth should be recognised and factored into future facility planning. Assuming an increase in participation and housing growth occurs, it will impact on the future need for certain types of sports facilities. Sports development work also approximates unmet demand which cannot currently be quantified (i.e., it is not being suppressed by a lack of facilities) but is likely to occur. The following table highlights the main development trends in each sport and their likely impact on facilities. However, it is important to note that these may be subject to change.

In terms of unmet demand, it is only expressed for cricket pitches, with three of the five analysis areas (North, East and Central) requiring additional facilities.

Furthermore, retaining some spare capacity allows some pitches to be rested to protect overall pitch quality in the long term. Therefore, whilst in some instances it may be appropriate to re-designate a senior pitch where there is low demand identified a holistic approach should be taken to re-designation for the reasons cited. The site-by-site action planning will seek to provide further clarification on where re-designation is suitable.

Likely future sport-by-sport demand trends

Sport	Future development trend	Strategy impact
Football	The needs of the game will change significantly from the 2013/14 season with the implementation of the FA Youth Development Review. As a result, pitch demands will change. This could also see changes in the seasonal demand of pitches (youth football).	Consider re-allocating leases to Charter Standard clubs with a large number of teams. Work with clubs to identify facility development opportunities. Work with clubs in relation to their pitch demands as a result of the FA Youth Development Review.
	Demand for senior football is likely to be sustained or decrease slightly based on current trends and the move to small sided football.	Sustain current stock but consideration given to reconfigure pitches.

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Sport	Future development trend	Strategy impact
	An increase in women and girls football following £2.4m investment over the next two years (2014-2016) from Sport England to increase the number of women and girls taking part in football sessions.	A need to provide segregated ancillary facilities and the potential need for more pitches.
Cricket	Demand for additional midweek cricket pitches to accommodate the Luton & District midweek league.	Access to additional midweek cricket pitches Consider alternatives to grass wickets
	Women's and girls' cricket is a national priority and there is a target to establish two girls' and one women's team in every local authority over the next five years.	Support clubs to ensure access to segregated changing and toilet provision and access to good quality cricket pitches to support growth.
Rugby Union	The Rugby World Cup (2015) is predicted to see a further increase in the demand for rugby provision. Strong junior sections	Clubs are likely to field more teams in the future, and therefore have a demand for more pitches. It is important, therefore, to work with the clubs to maintain the current pitch stock and to support facility development where appropriate.
Gaelic football	Increase in junior players due to schools programme starting in 2014.	Access to additional pitches.
AGPs	Demand for 3G pitches for football continues to increase. It is likely that future demand for the use of 3G pitches to service competitive football, particularly mini and youth will result in some reduced demand for grass pitches. Provision of 3G pitches which are IRB compliant will help to reduce overplay as a result of training on rugby pitches.	Ensure that access to new AGP provision across the Borough is maximised and that community use agreements are in place. Utilise Sport England/NGB guidance on choosing the correct surface: http://www.sportengland.org/media/30651/Selecting-the-right-artificial-surface-Rev2-2010.pdf
Bowls	General trend of demand for bowling greens remaining static or slightly decreasing.	Likely to result in the need for less outdoor bowling greens. However, this could link to demand increasing for short mat bowls and indoor green provision.
Netball	Demand for Netball has remained relatively static over the previous three years and is likely to continue. However, if a central venue was created with at least four floodlit courts demand is likely to increase, especially for juniors.	A need to continue to maintain the current stock of courts to a good standard but also to provide a central venue with at least four good quality floodlit courts.

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Sport	Future development trend	Strategy impact
Tennis	With Luton & Vauxhall Lawn Tennis Club operating close to capacity, any increase in participation is likely to lead to the need for more courts. Creation of a Beacon Site at Luton Regional would also increase participation.	The need for additional courts at Luton & Vauxhall Lawn Tennis Club and support for Luton Regional to become a Beacon Tennis Site.
Athletics	Athletics membership is estimated to increase by 10% in Luton over the next five years.	Athletics track is able to accommodate increase in demand but the impact will be seen on maintenance and ancillary facilities which will need to be increased.

Objective (b) - Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand

The Council should use, and regularly update, the Action Plan within this Strategy for improvements to its own pitches and facilities whilst recognising the need to support partners. The Action Plan lists improvements to be made to each site focused upon both qualitative and quantitative improvements as appropriate for each area.

Public playing fields within and immediately outside Luton should, where possible, be made available for cricket pitch provision. This may require negotiation with neighbouring authorities to help meet the shortfalls expressed. In addition to this, there is a need to encourage development of artificial wickets on school sites, linked to specific use by clubs through a community use agreement.

Objective (c) - Protect sports facilities where there is a need to do so

Protect the existing supply of sports facilities where it is needed for meeting current or future needs. The majority of facilities from the assessment report justify protection. Local plan policies should protect facilities and the scope to legally safeguard long term use of strategically important sites to the community such as the strategic sites and key centres identified in objective (e) should be considered. For example, through the Fields in Trust programme (www.fieldsintrust.org).

Where there is no need to protect facilities and the assessment shows scope for rationalisation, e.g. bowling greens, the following should be considered when making any decisions about disposal:

- ◀ Is the facility surplus to requirements not only now but also in the future?
- ◀ Could the facility be used for another type of sport for which there is a deficit?
- ◀ Can current users be sufficiently accommodated at another appropriate site taking into consideration access, cost and locality?
- ◀ Consideration as to the quality of the facilities (including ancillary facilities).
- ◀ The long term sustainability of the facility.
- ◀ The level of current use and the impact on the spatial distribution of facilities across Luton of closing a facility.

It may be appropriate to dispose of some existing playing field sites (that are of low value i.e. one- three pitch sites with no changing provision) to generate investment towards

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creating bigger better quality sites (Strategic Sites) in order to meet the objectives of the Strategy and to develop the hierarchy of sites (see objective e).

The following criteria should be established as the basis for negotiations to mitigate the loss of playing field provision:

- ◀ Ensure that where playing fields are lost through alternative development or closure, that the type of provision of the same or improved standard is provided to meet demand identified.
- ◀ Where pitches are lost due to redevelopment of the site, compensatory re-provision or an equivalent contribution for re-investment into new pitches will be sought as appropriate in an alternative accessible location.
- ◀ Where opportunities exist to additionally increase pitch quality (and therefore pitch capacity to accommodate more matches) this should be a priority (please refer to the action plan to identify quality deficiencies in the appropriate area).
- ◀ All negotiations and mitigation packages should be raised and discussed in partnership with the relevant NGB and Sport England through the Playing Pitch Strategy Steering Group.

In terms of mitigation it is important, where possible and appropriate for a particular sport, that this takes place in an area that is accessible to the playing field that is lost to avoid a scenario where a redundant playing field is lost in an area of the Borough which has deficiencies and is replaced on the other side of the Borough.

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AIM 2

To address issues of quality and management with regard to facility provision

Objectives:

- d. Seek to address overplay
- e. Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites – See page 33

Objective (d) – Seek to address overplay

Priority in the short term (given limited resources) should be directed to poor quality sites. This standard, based on an achievable target using existing quality scoring to provide a baseline, should be used to identify deficiencies and hence investment should be prioritised to those sites which fail to meet the proposed quality standard (using the site audit database, provided in electronic format). The policy approach to these outdoor recreation facilities achieving these standards should be to enhance quality and therefore the planning system should seek to protect them.

Good quality refers to facilities that have, for example, good grass cover, an even surface, are free from vandalism, litter etc, have access for disabled people and are supported by good quality ancillary facilities including changing accommodation, toilets and car parking. While “adequate” quality refers to facilities that have, for example adequate grass cover, minimal signs of wear and tear, reasonable changing accommodation and the goalposts may be secure but in need of minor repair. Please refer to the Sport England quality assessments.

Improving pitch/surface quality as a priority

In order to improve the overall quality of the playing pitches stock; it is necessary to ensure that pitches are not overplayed beyond recommended weekly carrying capacity. This is determined by assessing pitch quality (via a non technical site assessment) and allocating a weekly match limit to each. Each NGB recommends a number of matches that a good quality pitch should take:

Sport	Pitch type	Matches
Football	Adult pitches	3
	Youth pitches	4
	Mini pitches	6
Rugby	Pipe and Slit Drained and a good level of maintenance	5
Cricket	Grass wickets	5 per season
	Synthetic wicket	60 per season

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Sites played beyond capacity may require remedial action to help reduce this, for example, overplay at four sites is attributed to 'poor' pitch quality:

- ◀ Alder Crescent Recreation Ground
- ◀ Lothair Road Recreation Ground
- ◀ Foxdell Recreation Ground
- ◀ Wigmore Valley Park

Improving pitch quality should not be considered in isolation from maintenance regimes.

Whilst it works both ways in so much as poor pitch condition is a symptom of pitches being over played, potential improvements may make sites more attractive and therefore more popular.

There is also need to balance pitch improvements alongside the transfer of play to alternative pitch sites. Therefore, work with clubs to ensure that sites are not played beyond their capacity and encourage play, where possible, to be transferred to alternative venues which are not operating at capacity.

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AIM 3

To maximise access to all outdoor facilities and in particular educational facilities

Objectives:

- f. Establish a more coherent, structured relationship with schools to maximise community use of educational facilities.
- g. Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs, through a range of solutions and partnership agreements.
- h. Increase opportunities to support informal sporting activities.
- i. Work with NGBs to ensure that there is a link/pathway for those that want to move into formal sport.

Aim 3 should include access to outdoor facilities in the context of widening access to facilities for demographic groups among whom participation rates are low.

Objective (f) – Establish a more coherent, structured relationship with schools and colleges to maximise community use of educational facilities

The ability to access good facilities within the local community is vital to any sports organisation, yet many clubs struggle to find places to play and train. In Luton pricing policies at facilities is a major barrier to access at some of the education sites, Luton Council will need to develop an understanding of the pricing structures by working closely with schools and colleges.

A large number of sporting facilities are located on education sites and making these available to sports clubs can offer significant benefits to both the school/college and the local clubs. Luton Council and other key partners must work with schools and colleges to develop an understanding of the issues that restrict or affect community access. Support should be provided, where appropriate, to address underlying problems. Consideration should be given for an 'opt in' approach to a centralised booking system for community use of schools and colleges in order to minimise administration and make access easier for the users.

It is not uncommon for school pitch stock not to be fully maximised for community use. Even on established community use sites, access to outdoor sports facilities to the community is limited. The Assessment Report identified several issues relating to the use of school facilities:

- ◀ Community use is limited and often based on informal agreements between individual schools and clubs.
- ◀ There is no strategic guidance as to which clubs are allocated the use of playing pitch facilities (i.e. in accordance with a strategic need).
- ◀ There are a number of school sites where a community use agreement is in place but it is not clear whether the agreement is being upheld.

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- ◀ There are management issues inherent in developing, implementing and managing community use agreements. Advice and guidance can be obtained from Sport England's Schools toolkit and Sports organisations toolkit. (www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning)

Where appropriate, it will be important for schools to negotiate and sign formal and long-term agreements that secure community use. This need to be examined against these issues:

- ◀ The analysis provides a clear indication of the future pitch requirements and provides a basis for partners to negotiate.
- ◀ Community use should not impact on the needs of schools to deliver curricular and extracurricular activities

Sport England has also produced guidance, online resources and toolkits to help open up and retain school sites for community use and can be found at:

<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/accessing-schools/>

It is recommended that a working group, led by a partner from the education sector but supported by a range of other sectors including sport and leisure is established to implement the strategic direction in relation to the increased use of school facilities.

Broadly speaking, its role should be to:

- ◀ To better understand current community use, practices and issues by 'auditing' schools.
- ◀ Ensure community use agreements are upheld
- ◀ Identify and pilot one school/club formal community use agreement with a view to rolling out the model across the area.
- ◀ Ensure that funding to improve the quality of the facilities is identified and secured.
- ◀ As part of any agreement secure a management arrangement for community access, which does not rely on existing school staff structures.
- ◀ Ensure that pitch provision at schools is sufficient in quality and quantity to be able to deliver its curriculum. Once this has been achieved provision could contribute to overcoming deficiencies in the area (as identified in the assessment above).

Although there are a number of academies and college sites in Luton, which the Council has no control over the running of (with the exception of Barnfield College New Bedford road site), it is still important to understand the significance of such sites and attempt to work with the schools where there are opportunities for community use. In addition, the relevant NGB has a role to play in supporting the Council to deliver the strategy and communicating with schools where necessary.

Objective (g) - Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality development minded clubs through a range of solutions and partnership agreements

Local sports clubs should be supported to achieve sustainability across a range of areas including management, membership, funding, facilities, volunteers and partnership working. For example, the Council should continue to support club development and encourage clubs to develop evidence of business and sports development plans to generate an income through their facilities. All clubs could be encouraged to look at different management models such as registering as Community Amateur Sports Clubs

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(CASC)². Clubs should also be encouraged to work with partners locally whether volunteer support agencies or linking with local businesses.

As well as improving the quality of well-used, local authority sites, there are a number of sites which have poor quality (or no) ancillary facilities. It is recommended that security of tenure should be granted to the clubs playing on these sites (minimum 25 years as recommended by Sport England and NGBs) so the clubs are in a position to apply for external funding to improve the ancillary facilities.

There is potential for a number of further sites in Luton to be leased to sports clubs and/or organisations. Each club will be required to meet service and/or strategic objectives set out by the Council. However, an additional set of criteria should be considered, which take into account the quality of the club, aligned to its long term development objectives and sustainability. The criteria will be crucial in determining which clubs are successful as historically there are more requests for such an arrangement than there are sites available.

In the context of the Comprehensive Spending Review, which announced public spending cuts, it is increasingly important for the Council to work with voluntary sector organisations in order that they may be able to take greater levels of ownership and support the wider development and maintenance of facilities. To facilitate this, the Council should support and enable clubs to generate sufficient funds to allow this.

Recommended criteria for lease of sport sites to clubs/organisations

Club	Site
<p>Clubs should have Clubmark/FA Charter Standard accreditation award.</p> <p>Clubs commit to meeting demonstrable local demand and show pro-active commitment to developing school-club links.</p> <p>Clubs are sustainable, both in a financial sense and via their internal management structures in relation to recruitment and retention policy for both players and volunteers.</p> <p>Ideally, clubs should have already identified (and received an agreement in principle) any match funding required for initial capital investment identified.</p> <p>Clubs have processes in place to ensure capacity to maintain sites to the existing standards.</p>	<p>Sites should be those identified as Club Sites for new clubs (i.e. not those with a City-wide significance) but which offer development potential. For established clubs which have proven success in terms of self-management City Sites and Key Centres are appropriate.</p> <p>As a priority, sites should require capital investment to improve (which can be attributed to the presence of a Clubmark/Charter Standard club).</p> <p>Sites should be leased with the intention that investment can be sourced to contribute towards improvement of the site.</p> <p>An NGB/Council representative should sit on a management committee for each site leased to a club.</p>

The Council can further recognise the value of Clubmark/Charter Standard by adopting a policy of prioritising the clubs that are to have access to these better quality facilities. This may be achieved by inviting clubs to apply for season long leases on a particular site as an initial trial.

² <http://www.cascinfo.co.uk/cascbenefits>

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Club outcomes for lease agreements

The Council should establish a series of core outcomes to derive from clubs taking on a lease arrangement to ensure that the most appropriate clubs are assigned to sites. As an example outcomes may include:

- ◀ Increasing participation and retaining players.
- ◀ Supporting the development of coaches and volunteers.
- ◀ Commitment to quality standards.
- ◀ Improvements (where required) to facilities, or as a minimum retaining existing standards.

In addition, clubs should be made fully aware of the associated responsibilities/liabilities when considering leases of multi-use public playing fields.

Community Asset Transfer Policy

The Council should continue to work towards adopting a policy, currently in draft format, which supports community management and transfer of ownership of assets to local clubs, community groups and trusts. This presents sports clubs and national governing bodies with opportunities to take ownership of their own facilities; it may also provide non-asset owning sports clubs with their first chance to take on a building.

The Sport England Community Sport Asset Transfer Toolkit is a bespoke, interactive web based tool that provides a step by step guide through each stage of the asset transfer process: http://www.sportengland.org/support_advice/asset_transfer.aspx

Objective (h) - To increase opportunities to support informal sporting activities

Informal sports have many valuable attributes; because the structure is informal players get to use their interpersonal skills by choosing sides and organising the games. They devise rules for the game and take responsibility to resolve disputes by compromising and collaborating with their peers so that the games may continue. Participants' interactions are more relaxed because they are not as pressured to win. As a result, the focus is on social aspects, exercising, enjoying sports skills, learning in a relaxed environment and having fun.

In order to ensure opportunities are increased and sustained to accommodate informal sports, dedicated provision in public parks is required. This is most applicable to cricket and football in Luton.

To help support informal activity, the following may be a useful guide:

Improving accessibility: providing easy, safe and convenient access to a choice of opportunities for participating in sport and physical activity and active travel for the whole community.

Enhancing amenity: promoting environmental quality in the design and layout of new sports and recreational facilities, their links and relationship to other buildings and the wider public realm.

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Increasing awareness: raising the prominence and legibility of sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for physical activity through the design and layout of development.

Specifically in Luton the following types of informal facility should be provided on public sites with free access to meet identified demand:

- ◀ More artificial cricket wickets
- ◀ More informal small sided football pitches
- ◀ New and improved MUGAs for court sports

Sport England provides further design guidance aimed at increasing active participation which can be found at: <https://www.sportengland.org/media/48865/Active-design.pdf>

Objective (i) Work with NGBs to ensure that there is a link/pathway for those that want to move into formal sport

There are a range of benefits which can be gained from NGB affiliation, including, for example:

- ◀ Insurance/indemnity cover
- ◀ Qualified coaching
- ◀ Ground quality assurance (for some sports i.e. ECB)

There are also some 'softer' benefits for individuals associated with NGB membership which can include:

- ◀ Informative magazines
- ◀ Attendance at events
- ◀ Ticketing opportunities for Championships

Each NGB is responsible for signposting individuals to a formal club/opportunity. This could start in the form of semi structured sessions where people can just turn up and play. As an example, The FA operates popular Just Play sessions at Ashcroft School.

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AIM 4

To maximise investment into outdoor sports facilities

Objectives:

- j. Establish an approach to securing developer contributions
- k. Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding

Objective (j) – Establish an approach to securing developer contributions

It is important that this strategy informs policies and emerging supplementary planning documents by setting out the approach to securing sport and recreational facilities through new housing development. The guidance should form the basis for negotiation with developers to secure contributions to include provision and/or enhancement of appropriate playing fields and its subsequent maintenance. Section 106 contributions or CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) could also be used to improve the condition and maintenance regimes of the pitches in order to increase pitch capacity to accommodate more matches. A number of planning policy objectives should be implemented to enable the above to be delivered:

- ◀ Planning consent should include appropriate conditions and/or be subject to specific planning obligations. Where developer contributions are applicable, a Section 106 Agreement or equivalent must be completed specifying the amount which will be linked to Sport England's Building Cost Information Service from the date of the Planning Committee, and timing of the Contribution(s) to be paid.
- ◀ Some contributions may need to be ring fenced for use according to the particular terms of the Planning Obligation, where there is opportunity to improve the appropriate pitches within the local vicinity. However, for some sports such as for example cricket and rugby a "central pot" for developer contributions across the local authority area may be necessary for the particular sport.
- ◀ Contributions should also be secured towards the first ten years of maintenance on new pitches. Consideration should also be given to what the maintenance regime will be following this, given future budget cuts. NGBs and Sport England can provide further and up to date information on the associated costs.
- ◀ External funding should be sought/secured to achieve maximum benefit from the investment into appropriate playing pitch facility enhancement and its subsequent maintenance .
- ◀ Where new multiple pitches are provided, appropriate changing rooms and associated car parking should be located on site.
- ◀ All new or improved playing pitches on school sites should be subject to community use agreements. For further guidance please refer to Sport England:
<http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/community-use-agreements/>
- ◀ Establish a formula for collating developer contributions for playing pitches which is demand based.

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Objective (k) - Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding

Partners, led by the Council, should ensure that appropriate funding secured for improved sports provision are directed to areas of need, underpinned by a robust strategy for improvement in playing pitch facilities.

In order to address the community's needs, to target priority areas and to reduce duplication of provision, there should be a coordinated approach to strategic investment. In delivering this objective the Council should maintain a regular dialogue with local partners and through the Playing Pitch Steering Group.

Some investment in new provision will not be made by the Council directly, it is important, however, that the Council therefore seeks to direct and lead a strategic and co-ordinated approach to facility development by education sites, NGBs, sports clubs and the commercial sector to address community needs whilst avoiding duplication of provision.

Please refer to Appendix Two for further funding information which includes details of the current opportunities, likely funding requirements and indicative project costs.

Sport and physical activity can have a profound effect on peoples' lives, and plays a crucial role in improving community cohesion, educational attainment and self-confidence. However, one of sport's greatest contributions is its positive impact on public health. It is therefore important to lever in investment from other sectors such as health through, for example, the PCT.

Sport England research suggests the following:

Economic impact:

- ◀ In 2010, sport and sport-related activity contributed £20.3 billion to the English economy – 1.9% of the England total.
- ◀ The contribution to employment is even greater – sport and sport-related activity is estimated to support over 400,000 full-time equivalent jobs, 2.3% of all jobs in England.

Health impact:

- ◀ Physical activity, including sport, is linked to reduced risk of over 20 illnesses, including cardiovascular disease and some cancers.
- ◀ Taking part in regular sport can save between £1,750 and £6,900 in healthcare costs per person.

Social and cultural impact:

- ◀ Published studies show the positive effects of sport on education include improved attainment, lower absenteeism and drop-out, and increased progression to higher education. For instance, young people's participation in sport improves their numeracy scores by 8 per cent on average above non-participants.
- ◀ Other studies have found that sport programmes aimed at youths at risk of criminal behaviour can enhance self-esteem and reduce reoffending.

Engaging with Active Luton and identifying a key contact at Luton PCT are good starting points to identify local opportunities for funding.

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4.1: Sport specific objectives

Site specific actions falling out of the sport by sport objectives outlined below are detailed within the action plan.

FOOTBALL OBJECTIVE

Meet identified deficiencies at peak times and ensure there is a range of football facilities across the Borough to service *all* levels of the game.

- ◀ Protect the current level of playing pitches and seek to provide new pitches in areas of deficit.
- ◀ Seek to provide a pitch to meet the requirements of Step 5 and above, and league cup finals.
- ◀ Improve the quality and therefore carrying capacity of existing pitch stock.
- ◀ Transfer overplay to alternative venues which are not operating at capacity or are not currently available for community use. Geographical location is a determining factor for where people want to play and must be considered.
- ◀ Work with schools to secure tenure and access to primary and secondary schools to help address deficiencies. In particular target primary schools for access to mini/youth pitches and create better club school links.
- ◀ Where schools are available but unused ensure access arrangements are suitable for facilitating access to the whole community, particularly in relation to cost.
- ◀ In partnership with The FA, seek to establish a strategic phased programme of 3G pitches, which will increase training slots and support back to back modified games on Saturdays and Sundays.
- ◀ Monitor trends in usage and to work out whether more 3G provision is required
- ◀ Increase the quality and standard of changing rooms to accommodate dual gender changing facilities (in line with The FA standards).
- ◀ Where necessary, reconfigure existing pitch provision with access to suitable pitches and facilities, to support and grow the game.
- ◀ Where appropriate, develop partnership and/or lease arrangements with large, sustainable, development-minded (i.e. FA Charter Standard Community) clubs to manage their own 'home' sites thus facilitating club development (as detailed in the management objectives).
- ◀ Continue to support clubs in the management and improvement of their own facilities.
- ◀ As far as possible support clubs with facility development aspirations through the planning and application stages.
- ◀ Address demand from informal football users with alternative provision away from formal pitches to reduce wear and tear.

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CRICKET OBJECTIVE

Meet unmet demand for access to additional pitches and work to increase the quality of existing provision.

- ◀ Meet deficiencies in cricket pitches and increase the number of cricket grounds.
- ◀ Protect current levels of provision and seek to provide new fine turf or artificial pitches to meet unmet demand.
- ◀ Where appropriate, develop partnership and/or lease arrangements with large, sustainable, development-minded clubs to manage their own 'home' sites thus facilitating club development (as detailed in the management objectives).
- ◀ Provide dedicated artificial wickets to service informal cricket in public sites.
- ◀ Increase and sustain informal cricket participation and provide a pathway for those who wish to play at a formal level.
- ◀ Ensure that any facilities developed support opportunities for women's and girl's competitive cricket.
- ◀ Support clubs to develop and improve 'off pitch' practice facilities.
- ◀ Where schools are available but unused ensure access arrangements are suitable for facilitating access to the whole community, particularly in relation to cost.

RUGBY UNION OBJECTIVE

Work towards meeting identified current and future deficiencies and increase quality as required.

- ◀ Protect current levels of provision and work to alleviate overplay on competitive grass pitches caused by training. Ensure clubs have access to training areas which are either dedicated floodlit grassed areas or through the provision of an IRB AGP.
- ◀ Where appropriate, increase the quality of rugby pitches in order to increase capacity.
- ◀ Investigate options to work with schools to maximise access to education sites to help address deficiencies.

HOCKEY OBJECTIVE

Maximise access to existing provision and work towards improving quality.

- ◀ Work with schools to maximise access to education AGPs to accommodate both hockey training and competitive play. Establish community use agreements which also ensure access to ancillary facilities.
- ◀ Ensure access arrangements are suitable for facilitating access to the whole community, particularly in relation to cost.
- ◀ Investigate options to provide floodlighting at Luton 6th Form College.
- ◀ Ensure that sinking funds are in place to maintain AGP quality in the long term.
- ◀ Seek to work in partnership with Venue 360 to resurface the AGP.
- ◀ Work with England Hockey to support its development programmes aimed at increasing participation.

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OTHER SPORTS OBJECTIVE

Maximise access to existing provision and work towards improving quality.

Bowls:

- ◀ Consider rationalisation of greens with a view to focusing investment on retained facilities to ensure that these are high quality and sustainable.
- ◀ Where possible ensure clubs provide pay and play opportunities at greens located in public parks.
- ◀ Support and encourage junior bowls development in order to grow and sustain future participation levels in the sport.
- ◀ Re-approach larger, sustainable, development-minded clubs to establish leases to fully manage their own 'home' sites thus facilitating club development.
- ◀ Develop maintenance arrangements with clubs on council bowling greens.
- ◀ Further investigate the sustainability of providing bowling hubs on artificial grass pitches.

Tennis:

- ◀ When demand exists, improve court quantity/quality and/or install floodlighting (in order to increase the capacity) of existing tennis court provision.
- ◀ Support development of a Beacon site to service Luton.
- ◀ Continue to support and encourage junior development in order to increase participation levels in the sport.
- ◀ Where possible upgrade parks tennis courts to support informal playing opportunities.

Netball:

- ◀ Work with the Luton League to identify and secure access to a suitable site which could accommodate four or more good quality courts to operate as a Central Venue facility. Sites with four courts include Ashcroft High School, Challney High for Girls and Icknield School.
- ◀ Work with schools to maximise access to education netball courts to accommodate competitive play.
- ◀ Ensure community use agreements with Schools are upheld.

Golf:

- ◀ Work with Stockwood Golf Club to protect and maintain current quality of course.
- ◀ Continue to work with Stockwood Golf Club to increase participation.

Gaelic football:

- ◀ Protect current provision of Gaelic football pitches and plan for anticipated increase in demand in the next five years.

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Athletics:

- ◀ Protect and maintain the current standard of track at Stockwood Park.
- ◀ Accommodate demand for a separate throwing area which is critical to retain the Grade A quality certificate of the track.
- ◀ Work with football clubs to improve access/management of the grass pitch in the centre of the athletics track to avoid the need for additional maintenance on the track.

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PART 5: PRIORITISATION LIST

5.1: Introduction

The site-by-site prioritisation list seeks to address surpluses and deficiencies, together with key issues identified in the accompanying Assessment Report. It provides recommendations for each site, based on current levels of usage, quality and future demand, as well as the potential of each site for enhancement.

It is a list developed by KKP and the Council and should be reviewed in the light of staff and financial resources in order to prioritise support for strategically significant provision and provision that other providers are less likely to make. Objective e below explains the hierarchy of priorities on the list. It is imperative that action plans for priority projects should be developed through the implementation of the strategy.

Actions plans will be prepared for delivering selected projects on the prioritisation list and decisions about which projects will be progressed to an action plan will be informed by the level of priority and timescales for delivery allocated.

The Council should make it a high priority to work with NGBs and other partners to comprise a priority list of actions based on local priorities, NGB priorities and available funding.

5.2: Justification of sites within the prioritisation list

The list details policy options relating to individual sites and the need to enhance and develop new sporting provision. The following criteria have been used to identify priorities and justify the inclusion of sites within the list. Just one of the following may apply:

- ◀ A project is currently underway to enhance the existing site and/or funding has been secured.
- ◀ An evaluation of site use is required as it is of poor quality and is reportedly underused.
- ◀ The desired action is small scale, short term and will enhance the quality of current provision, whilst aiding community use.
- ◀ The importance of the site is identified in other strategies.

Sites included within the prioritisation list have been tiered based on criteria set out in objective e:

Objective (e) – Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites

To allow for facility developments to be programmed within a phased approach the Council should adopt a tiered approach to the management and improvement of playing pitch sites and associated facilities.

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Luton has a number of 'key centres', which are sites that are considered to be the most popular and therefore need to be of a high standard in order that they can accommodate a sufficient number of matches per week. This applies mostly to football pitch hire. However, the Council should extend this provision model to recognise the supply and demand issues identified throughout the Assessment Report (i.e. current levels of overplay) and the investment necessary to improve sites based on current levels of usage. The identification of sites is based on their strategic importance in a Borough-wide context (i.e. they accommodate the majority of play). In addition to this, there are a number of sites which have been identified as accommodating both senior and junior matches, sometimes concurrently.

Not only could such sites require a mixture of mini, youth and senior pitches, but they also require split-level ancillary facilities, in order to maximise their usage at all times.

In the context of developing a tiered model approach to the management of sports facilities Luton has a large number of multi-team junior clubs which place a great demand on the pitch stock. There are therefore a number of sites which are still owned and maintained by the local authority, but are actually booked by the clubs for the entire season. The sites are then recognised as the 'home ground' of the club. Such sites are fundamentally different from those which can be hired on a regular basis because they are in effect, 'allocated' to a certain club and management responsibility, in terms of allocating teams to pitches, is transferred to the individual club.

Proposed tiered site criteria

Strategic sites	Key centres	Club or education sites	Strategic reserve sites
Strategically placed in the Borough.	Strategically placed in the local authority context.	Strategically placed in the local context.	Strategically placed in the local context.
Accommodates five or more grass pitches. Including provision of an AGP.	Accommodates three or more grass pitches.	Accommodates more than one pitch.	Likely to be single-pitch site with limited demand.
Single or multi-sport provision. Could also operate as a central venue.	Single or multi-sport provision. Could also operate as a central venue.	Single or multi-sport provision.	Supports informal demand and/ or training etc.
Management control remains within the local authority/other provider or with an appropriate lease arrangement through a committee or education owned.	Management control remains within the local authority or with an appropriate club on a lease arrangement.	Club either has long-term lease/hires the pitch for the entire season or owns the site. Management control remains within the local authority/other provider or with an appropriate lease arrangement through a committee or education owned.	Management control remains with the Council or existing management body.

LUTON PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND PRIORITISATION LIST

Strategic sites	Key centres	Club or education sites	Strategic reserve sites
Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines.	Maintenance regime aligns with NGB guidelines.	Standard maintenance regime either by the club or in house maintenance contract.	Basic level of maintenance i.e. grass cutting and line marking as required.
Good quality ancillary facility on site, with sufficient changing rooms and car parking to serve the number of pitches.	Good quality ancillary facility on site, with sufficient changing rooms and car parking to serve the number of pitches.	Appropriate access changing to accommodate both senior and junior use concurrently (if required).	No requirement for access changing to accommodation.

Strategic Sites such as Crawley Green Recreation Ground already seek to accommodate the growing emphasis on football venues catering for both senior and junior (especially mini-soccer) matches. Strategic Sites can also have a borough wide impact of which is explained in section 5.3 below. The conditions recommended for mini and youth football are becoming more stringent. This should be reflected in the provision of a unique tier of pitches for mini and youth football solely that can ensure player safety, as well as being maintained more efficiently. It is anticipated that both youth and mini-football matches could be played on these sites. Initial investment could be required in the short term and identified in the Prioritisation List (page 41).

The financial, social and sporting benefits which can be achieved through development of strategic sites are significant. Sport England provides further guidance on the development of such sites at:

http://www.sportengland.org/facilities_planning/planning_tools_and_guidance/sports_hubs.aspx

Key Centres are important within the local context and service the local community (often analysis area) and are identified as local priorities, however in some instance they can be strategic priorities on broader levels.

It is considered that some financial investment will be necessary to improve the ancillary facilities at both Strategic sites and Key Centre sites to complement the pitches in terms of access, flexibility (i.e. single-sex changing if necessary), quality and that they meet the rules and regulations of local competitions.

Club/Education Sites are also important within the local context and service the local community (often analysis area) and are identified as local priorities, however in some instance they can be strategic priorities on broader levels. However, these sites are more often leased to clubs on a long-term basis. Primarily they are sites with more than one pitch. The level of priority attached to them for Council-generated investment may be relatively low and consideration should be given, on a site-by-site basis, to the feasibility of a club taking a long-term lease on the site (if not already present), in order that external funding can be sought.

It is possible that sites could be included in this tier which are not currently hired or leased to a club, but have the potential to be leased to a suitable club. Such sites will require some level of investment, either to the pitches or ancillary facilities, and is it anticipated that one of the conditions of offering a hire/lease is that the club would be in a position to source external funding to improve the facilities.

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Pitch quality improvements in most causes relate to installation and/or improving drainage works on sites. The continuing issue of teams training on pitches used by other teams for match play is also significant. This unofficial use of pitches is viewed as having a detrimental impact on quality of provision; ensuring a sufficient level of drainage on pitches as well as provision of artificial grass facilities in order to accommodate training needs is vital.

Strategic Reserve Sites could be used for summer matches/competitions, training or informal play. They could be single-pitch sites with limited usage, or have no recognised current usage.

5.3: Strategic priorities and local priorities

Within the prioritisation list the projects have been grouped into **strategic priorities** and **local priorities** and a small number of projects which are of **borough wide importance** have also been identified. The priorities have been identified on the basis of the impact that the site will have on addressing the issues identified in the assessment. For example Luton Sixth Form College (which is identified as a strategic priority and of borough wide importance, in the central area) would have a greater impact on addressing cricket facility deficiencies, therefore fulfilling a need at a strategic level in the central sub-area of Luton and at a borough wide level.

There are four overarching Borough wide priorities which should be considered as the top four priorities in Luton as they would have the most impact and benefits if the recommendations were carried out. These sites are:

- ◀ Wardown Park (Lower) – ID number 63 (Luton Central)
- ◀ Stopsley Common (Luton Regional and Lothair Road Recreation Grounds) – ID numbers 43/44 (Luton East)
- ◀ Crawley Green – ID number 22 (Luton East)
- ◀ Luton Sixth Form College – ID number 46 (Luton Central)

In addition the requirement for a cup final standard pitch cannot be included on the prioritisation as a venue is yet to be identified (although the possibility of a private provider satisfying this need whilst considering a Step 5 pitch is to be explored i.e. Kent Athletics).

The borough wide sites are highlighted in blue on the prioritisation list (page 37).

5.4 Management and development

The following issues should be considered when undertaking sports related site development or enhancement:

- ◀ Financial viability.
- ◀ Security of tenure.
- ◀ Planning permission requirements and any foreseen difficulties in securing permission.
- ◀ Adequacy of existing finances to maintain existing sites.
- ◀ Business Plan/Masterplan – including financial package for creation of new provision where need has been identified.
- ◀ Analysis of the possibility of shared site management opportunities.
- ◀ The availability of opportunities to lease sites to external organisations.
- ◀ Options to assist community groups to gain funding to enhance existing provision.
- ◀ Negotiation with landowners to increase access to private strategic sites.
- ◀ Football investment programme/3G pitches development with The FA.

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- ◀ Cricket investment programme/artificial wickets development with ECB/Bedfordshire Cricket.

5.5 Area by area specific prioritisation list

The prioritisation list has been created to be delivered over a ten year period. The information within the Assessment Report, Strategy and Prioritisation List will require updating as developments occur. It is not feasible to include all sites with identified development issues. Only sites, which meet the criteria listed above, have therefore been included. The timescales relate to delivery times and are not priority based.

Timescales: (S) -Short (1-2 years); (M) - Medium (3-5 years); (L) - Long (6+ years).

The strategic actions have also been ranked as low, medium or high based on cost. The brackets in which these sit are:

(L) -Low - less than £50k; (M) -Medium - £50k-£250k; (H) -High £250k and above. These are based on Sport England's estimated facility costs which can be found at www.sportengland.org/media/198443/facility-costs-4q13.pdf

LUTON PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY PRIORITISATION LIST

Central

Site	ID	Prioritisation Level	Management	Issue to be resolved	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Time-scale	Cost	Impact/benefits	
Luton Sixth Form College	46	Strategic priority	Education	Early stages of planning to develop a cricket square as part of a potential new cricket academy.	Work in partnership with the ECB and the College to develop a cricket square (to the south east of the college site on the college frontage), and ensure that it is available for community use, female cricket, full DDA access.	ECB & LBC	Education Site	M	M	Borough wide impact. Cricket squares are a high priority. This would help to reduce the heavy deficits in cricket provision.	
				Lack of floodlighting at the site.	Investigate the feasibility of providing floodlighting at the School, taking into account planning permission requirements, costs, partnership funding, etc.	England Hockey & LBC		S	M	Floodlighting would allow the site to be used by teams for training in winter. Improved security for vulnerable groups including juniors and females.	
Wardown Park	Upper Wardown Park	60	Local priority	LBC	Luton Town & Indians CC has funding to refurbish the changing facilities at the site.	Support the Club to carry out changing facility refurbishments.	LBC, ECB	Strategic site	S-M	M	Accessibility for women's teams, people with disabilities and youth would be greatly improved.
	Wardown Park (Main park)	63	Local priority	LBC	Two bowling greens with significant spare capacity.	Reduce to one bowling green, return area to amenity parkland and secure savings in relation to maintenance costs.	LBC, Bowls England	Strategic site	S-M	L	Maintenance costs will be reduced if the bowling green which is underused is no longer maintained. Demand can be met on the adjacent green.
	Lower Wardown Park	63	Strategic priority	LBC	Average quality tennis courts.	Work to secure funding to upgrade tennis courts.	LBC, LTA	Strategic site	S-M	L	Borough wide impact. Improving the tennis court surfaces will help to increase participation including for people with mobility disabilities, juniors, the elderly and BME groups; and work with the LTA should help to maintain this.
			Strategic priority	LBC	Artificial cricket wicket in the middle of grass wickets.	Relocate the artificial wicket to the edge of the square subject to funding.	LBC, ECB	Strategic site	S-M	L	Borough wide impact. Relocation of the artificial cricket will reduce wear and tear of the fine turf wickets which should help to maintain quality. Helps sustain cricket including for existing BME groups and planned junior cricket development.
			Local priority	LBC	Cricket ground over played by 10 matches per season.	Add two cricket strips to the square to accommodate over play, subject to funding.	LBC, ECB	Strategic site	S-M	M	Additional wickets will help accommodate over play at the site. Helps sustain cricket including for existing BME groups and planned junior cricket development.
			Local priority	LBC	Cricket terracing in need of repair.	Seek funding to repair and restore the cricket terracing.	LBC, ECB	Strategic site	S-M	M	Improvements to the terracing will improve the playing experience give opportunities for spectators.
Peoples Park-Bells Close	11	Strategic priority	LBC	One of the most popular sites for informal sports, especially football.	Investigate opportunities to provide 5 a side goal post to encourage casual play away from formal pitches.	LBC, FA	Club Site	S	L	Informal recreation is important in Luton. 5 a side goals will increase provision for local junior and adult residents wishing only to take part in casual play.	

LUTON PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY PRIORITISATION LIST

Site	ID	Prioritisation Level	Management	Issue to be resolved	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Time-scale	Cost	Impact/benefits
Blundell Road Recreation Ground	12	Local priority	LBC	Pitches used solely by Luton United FC teams to their full capacity and club wish to expand.	Consider options for partnership working/lease with Luton United to provide greater on site presence and self-management opportunities and possible funding opportunities to improve the facility.	LBC & FA	Key Centre	S	M-L	Facilitate expansion of youth and adult ethnic minority football. Self-management will take some financial costs away from LBC, improved facility will help sustain use.
				Neighbourhood park site servicing the local community therefore recreation facilities other than sport need to be provided.	Seek funding to implement the site improvement plan identified through the Your Say, Your Way area based consultations, in particular improvements to access and site definition/signage.					Improved facilities for wider community use including increased DDA accessibility, and improved safety for vulnerable groups including women, the elderly and children..
Alder Crescent Recreation Ground (Solway Road)		Local priority	LBC	One poor quality adult and one poor quality youth 11 aside pitch. Potential loss of changing facilities at Saints Community Centre.	Seek opportunities to improve pitch quality (subject to facility provision) Ensure that access to alternative changing facilities is provided or consider transferring play to another site or pursue asset transfer.	LBC & FA	Key Centre	S	M	Enables further expansion and encourages ethnic minority youth and adult football, and retains community facilities including DDA accessibility.
									L	The closure of Saints Community Centre will leave pitches without changing facilities. Alternative facilities will allow play to continue at the site.
Barnfield Health & Fitness Suite And Barnfield College	5	Local priority	The Barnfield Federation	Community Use Agreements (CUA). Scope exists to improve quality of the site by addressing gradient issues and more flexible pitch layout. Key multi pitch site for FA.	Continue to ensure community use agreements are upheld by maintaining good working relationships with the College and Barnfield Federation. Approach College to look at ways to improve the Site and ensure it is sustainable for community use.	LBC, FA & Barnfield Federation	Education Site	S	L-M	Site has the potential to become a large sporting hub with partnership working.
Denbigh High School	24	Local priority	Education	The school has tennis courts which it would like to convert to netball courts in order to accommodate community demand.	Support the school to secure funding where necessary to convert the tennis courts to netball, as there is demand from the Luton & District League for additional courts at the site.	LBC, Denbigh School, Luton & District League, England Netball, LTA	Education Site	S	M	Could satisfy demand for additional netball courts.
Denbigh High Detached Playing Fields	25	Local priority	Education	Site not used by the School and so would consider leasing to a club. Site comprises one youth (11v11) and one mini (7v7) football pitches.	Establish a relationship with the school and consider potential clubs that could take on a lease in order to access funding.	FA, LBC & Denbigh High	Club Site	S	L	With a lease a club is able to apply for funding which could lead to pitch improvements. The site could become the home base for a club.
Luton Town Bowls Club	67	Local priority	Private	Significant spare capacity.	Work in partnership with the Club to increase membership.	LBC, Bowls England	Club Site	S	L	Maximising usage and increasing participation in the sport. Also provides social/health benefits and is a key sport for the elderly including people with disabilities.

**LUTON PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY
PRIORITISATION LIST**

Site	ID	Prioritisation Level	Management	Issue to be resolved	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Time-scale	Cost	Impact/benefits
Bushmead Primary School	16	Local Priority	Education	Spare capacity of one mini 5v5 pitch at peak time.	Consider site as reserve to service future demand.	LBC	Strategic Reserve	M-L	L	Strategic reserve allows the site to be used in the future if there is demand.

LUTON PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY PRIORITISATION LIST

North

Site	ID	Prioritisation Level	Management	Issue to be resolved	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Time-scale	Cost	Impact/benefits
Lancaster Avenue Recreation Ground	36	Strategic priority	LBC	Cricket ground over played by 28 matches per season. Some issues with resident property being damaged.	Work with clubs and residents to try to resolve H&S issues. Subject to funding to add five cricket strips to square to accommodate over play.	ECB & LBC	Key Centre	M	M	Meet shortfalls and accommodate over play.
				The site is used by Luton Town Ladies and has spare capacity for one match per week.	Use site to accommodate potential increases in girls' football and explore funding opportunities	Luton Town Ladies			L	Increased usage of the pitch to accommodate girls' football.
				Average quality tennis courts.	Work to secure potential funding and look at options to resurface tennis courts.	LBC, LTA			L-M	Improved court quality for use by the community and an increase in subsequent capacity/usage.
Lea Manor High School/ Lea Manor Recreation Ground	37	Local priority	LBC/ Education	Conversion of sand based AGP to 3G.	Support school to convert surface. Establish and maintain good relationships with the School.	FA, Active Luton, LBC	Education Site	S	L/M	Meet shortfall in 3G pitch provision and maximised community use, especially for football training.
				Three good quality netball courts on site currently not used for community use.	Work with the Luton netball league and England Netball to explore opportunities to use the site as a venue.	England Netball & Luton League, Active Luton, LBC			M	Maximise usage of the courts and shortfall in league venues addressed.
Cardinal Newman Secondary School	17	Local priority	Education	One standard quality adult pitch over played by 3.5 matches and one standard quality youth (11v11) pitch over played by 2 matches per week used by Bushmead Rovers.	Work with the School and club to consider options for improving pitch quality.	FA & School	Education Site	M-L	L	Improved pitch quality will increase site capacity and reduce overplay. In addition it will provide a better playing experience for users.
				Old redgra pitch of poor quality with poor drainage.	Consider the pitch for conversion to 3G or sand based surface AGP based on future needs.				H	Meet shortfall in AGP provision and make better use of this unused area.
Icknield High School	31	Local priority	Education	The cricket pitch at Icknield High School has one grass wicket; however, the outfield is not full size. The pitch is not currently available for community use.	Work with the School to open up use of cricket pitch and also look at options to extend the outfield. Explore the opportunities of providing a full sized cricket facility.	ECB, LBC & School	Education Site	S	M	Establishing community use and increasing the size of the pitch to accommodate junior over play from other sites.
				There are two senior rugby union pitches but currently there is no current community use of the facilities. The school would be willing to consider it if demand exists.	Work with School to open up access to rugby union pitches.	RFU, LBC & School			L	Establishing community use to accommodate over play from other sites.
Icknield Way Recreation Ground	32	Local priority	LBC	One standard quality youth 11v11 football pitch overplayed by one match per week.	Seek opportunities to improve pitch quality and implement access improvements identified in the Limbury Riverside Parks action plan, in particular the introduction of a circulation path and signage, subject to funding.	LBC FA ECB & Luton Friends of Parks and Green space	Key Centre	S-M	L	Increased site capacity for juniors including BME groups and girls football, and reduced overplay. In addition it will provide a better playing experience for users. Path would provide increased accessibility for people with mobility disabilities.

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				Cricket ground over played by 1 match per season.	Add an additional cricket strip to square subject to funding..					L	Meet shortfalls and accommodate over play for existing customer base which is predominantly from BME groups.
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Site	ID	Prioritisation Level	Management	Issue to be resolved	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Time-scale	Cost	Impact/benefits
Leagrave Park (Sundon Park) Consideration must be given to protect the Scheduled Monument, areas of County Wildlife site designation and the Leagrave Park Heritage Lottery Funded plan agreed for the park.	39	Local priority	LBC	Seven standard quality adult football pitches with actual spare capacity of 5.5 pitches at peak time.	Reduce to six adult pitches and invest in other pitches to improve quality, subject to funding, also consider re-configuring the pitch to Gaelic football as future demand increases. Pursue multiple club sites	LBC	Key Centre	M	L	Usage is maximised and improved quality of pitches. Meets future demand for adult and junior, male and female Gaelic football.
				Need for two 11v11 youth pitches to accommodate overplay and future demand as required.	Convert two adult pitches to 11v11 if feasible.			S-M	L	Meets overplay and future demand for junior footballers.
				Cricket ground over played by five matches per season.	Add cricket strip to the square, subject to funding.				L	Accommodates over play thereby improving quality of pitch for players who are predominantly from BME groups.
				One good quality Gaelic football pitch.	Maintain good pitch quality.				L	Sustains future use of the pitch for Gaelic football for adults and juniors, males and females..
Lealands High School	41	Local priority	Education	Well used ¾ size AGP for football training.	Maintain good relationship with the School and continue community use. Ensure sinking fund is in place for resurfacing.	FA	Education Site	S-M	L	Sustains future use of the pitch for football training.
Sundon Park Junior School	74	Local priority	Education	Sundon Park Rangers Colts are the main users of the site. Pitches are standard and at capacity.	Maintain a good relationship with the School and look to secure a permanent agreement. If successful look to increase pitch quality.	FA, Club, Sport England, LBC	Education /Club Site	S	L	Future usage of the site secured. This will allow the Club to explore opportunities to improve pitch quality and therefore increase site capacity.

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East

Site	ID	Prioritisation Level	Management	Issue to be resolved	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Time-scale	Cost	Impact/benefits
Stopsley Common (Luton Regional and Lothair Road Recreation Grounds)	43/44	Strategic priority	LBC	Site is a District Park with various sporting and recreational uses and site designations (which are sometimes conflicting) including District Wildlife Site and pending classification as a site of importance by English Heritage. A holistic plan will be required for the whole site.	Pursue funding for master plan and related consultation.	LBC, CT, FA, ECB, LTA, Active Luton, & Conservation bodies	Strategic Site	M-H	M	Borough wide impact. Work in collaboration with all partners to develop a coherent plan for the whole site thereby identifying priorities for implementation.
Luton Regional Recreation Ground (Stopsley). Site is a District Park with various conflicting uses and site designations including District Wildlife Site and pending classification as a site of importance by English Heritage. A holistic plan will be required for the whole site.	44	Strategic priority	LBC	There is a planning condition in place which requires a new pavilion to be provided to support the 3 cricket and junior pitches at Luton Regional Recreation Ground following the demolition of the Regional Sports Centre.	Ensure that a new pavilion is provided and funding secured for running costs. Pursue funding for junior pitch improvements and relocations across Stopsley Common..	LBC, ECB, FA, England Netball & LTA	Strategic Site	S-M	M-H	Borough wide impact. Provision of new pavilion will support continued usage of the site for 3 cricket and junior football, and facilitates female football and cricket at this site. Moving and improving junior pitches to one new area will assist junior football development, tournaments and segregate adults and juniors across the Stopsley Common site.
				The six floodlit tennis courts are only used by the school since the leisure centre on the site, which managed the courts, has closed. Vandalism to the fencing and floodlights.	Explore possibilities of combined netball and tennis courts available for community use at Stopsley High School – due for installation in 2015. And or support Luton & Vauxhall Lawn Tennis Club in its aspirations to develop the site as a Beacon Tennis Site. The site is subject to exploring the master plan				L	Borough wide impact. Maximised usage of a popular, strategic site. Helps to address shortfall in league netball venues and helps to increase junior participation. Will encourage more people to play tennis.
Lothair Road Recreation Ground (Stopsley)	43	Strategic priority	LBC	Five poor quality adult football pitches with spare capacity and a need in the area for two cricket grounds to accommodate unmet, latent and future demand.	Transfer Wigmore football matches when facility closes. Explore the options of installing artificial cricket wickets and/or grass cricket pitch to accommodate demand from midweek and Sunday Leagues, subject to funding. Consider leasing to league/clubs.	LBC & ECB	Strategic Site	S-L	M	Maintain continuity for local football teams. Helps to address shortfall of cricket pitches and provides security of tenure/sustainability to a nomadic club. Possible reduction of LBC running costs. In addition transfer of football matches may have a likely impact on Inspire customers due to lack of parking facilities.

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				Changing facilities need upgrading.	Look at funding options and other possibilities for upgrading the facilities. The site is subject to exploring the master plan.				H	Improves quality of the facility thereby maximising usage to accommodate transfer matches from Wigmore. Includes improved access/toilet facilities for people with disabilities; and allows for separate female changing.
Crawley Green Recreation Ground	22	Local priority	LBC	Overplay of 0.5 matches per week on youth 11v11 pitch. Spare capacity of 1 match per week on adult pitch.	Transfer play from youth 11v11 to Rayhnam Way Recreation Ground. Increase usage of adult pitch.	LBC , FA, CGS&SC & Luton Friends of Parks and Greenspace	Strategic Site	S	L	Over play reduced and pitch quality sustained for adults and juniors, male and female.
		Strategic Priority	LBC	Explore upgrading of the site	Seek funding to create a master plan for the site to look at opportunities to meet community needs Consider resurfacing of floodlit courts to old netball pitch subject to funding.	LBC & Luton Friends of Parks and Greenspace		M	M	Borough wide impact. Upgrading of the site will help to maximise the usage of the site and improve access.

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Site	ID	Prioritisation Level	Management	Issue to be resolved	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Time-scale	Cost	Impact/benefits	
Ashcroft High School	3	Local priority	Education	Poor quality 3G AGP in need of resurfacing. Used by Crawley Green FC, etc. for training.	Explore the options with the School, Club and FA to resurface the pitch. Ensure a sinking fund plan is in place.	FA & Club	Education Site	M	M	Increases quality and ensures continued use of the pitch by Crawley Green FC.	
				There are four netball courts, three are of adequate quality but are in need of new posts. There are access issues at the site and the toilets are located some distance from the courts.	Work with the Luton Netball League and England Netball to explore opportunities to use the site as a venue.	England Netball, Luton League & LBC		S	L	Maximised usage of the courts and shortfall in league venues addressed.	
Ashcroft Road Recreation Ground	4	Local priority	LBC	Spare capacity on bowling green.	Work with the Club to increase membership to address the spare capacity on bowling green.	Bowls England	Club Site	S	L	Maximising usage and increasing participation in the sport. Also provides social/health benefits and is a key sport for the elderly including people with disabilities.	
Co-Op Luton Bowls Club	21	Local priority	Private	Spare capacity on bowling green	Site proposed for housing allocation in draft Local Plan subject to consultation. Site size suggests potential to retain some leisure use	Bowls England	Club Site	S	L	Redevelopment opportunity, releasing other social needs for housing but also mixed use potential to retain and improve leisure within the scheme. In addition this is a key sport for the elderly including people with disabilities.	
Putteridge High School	49	Local priority	Education	Two of the three courts are very good quality, one has had problems with leaves not cleaned away effectively. There are difficulties with hiring the courts on Sundays; currently they are only used on Saturdays.	Establish a relationship with the School and Luton Netball League to look at ways to increase access to the courts. Also, England Netball to investigate issue with third court.	LBC, England Netball	Education Site	S-M	L	Helps to address shortfall in league netball venues.	
				Large hard area which currently has a macadam/polymeric surface.	Consider the pitch for conversion to 3G or sand based surface AGP for future demand.	FA/England Hockey				M	Meets future demand for 3G pitch provision.
				LBC previously had planning permission to build a new school playing field on agricultural land to the East of the School.	Re-investigate the opportunities for a new playing field to accommodate both school and community use. Cricket pitches should be provided as a priority.					H	Helps to address cricket pitch shortfall.
Raynham Way Recreation Ground	51	Local priority	LBC	One junior 11v11 grass football pitch with no play this season.	To address uneven distribution of junior pitch play consider relocating to a site North of the town. Alternatively consider Crawley Green FC junior teams relocating here to free up part of Crawley Rec Ground for recreational use.	LBC & FA	Strategic Reserve	L	L	Accommodates demand expressed from over played sites in the Area for junior football for both girls and boys.	
Selsey Drive	52	Local priority	Education	One adult grass football pitch and one youth 11v11 pitch with no current play.	Stop maintaining the pitches for football and invest in other sites.	LBC & FA	Strategic Reserve	L	L	Releases funding to help improve quality/maintenance of other pitches.	
Wigmore Valley Park. Site identified as within the Century Business Park development area of the local plan.	65	Local priority	LBC	District Park site with three poor quality senior football pitches and one pitch with actual spare capacity each week.	To address low usage of 3 poor quality pitches, cease maintaining the pitches for football. Transfer play to Stopsley Common	LBC & FA	Strategic Reserve	S-M	M	Releases human resources to help sustain quality/maintenance of other pitches.	
					Explore opportunities for increased access and other sport provision as part of the Century Park development.					Development of site for the wider community including addressing access and security/lighting issues.	

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Site	ID	Prioritisation Level	Management	Issue to be resolved	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Time-scale	Cost	Impact/benefits
					Consider resident boxing club to vacate the building at the end of the lease, subject to the availability of an alternative more appropriate site, and explore lease with private company/nursery operator to enable reinvestment in other facilities.					Development of site for the wider community and attain rental income. Nursery would provide substantial benefits for children and parents. Site suitable for full DDA access as ground floor only.
Stopsley High School	75	Local priority	Education	As part of the Government's Priority Schools Building Programme the School is to be redeveloped and is likely to provide opportunities for new outdoor sports facilities.	Work closely with the School and Sport England to input into what facilities will be provided.	LBC, School & Sport England	Education Site	S-L	L	Opportunity to address shortfalls in grass pitches.

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South

Site	ID	Prioritisation List	Management	Issue to be resolved	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Time-scale	Cost	Impact/benefits
Stockwood Park	55	Strategic priority	LBC	One standard quality Gaelic football pitch.	To seek funds to Improve pitch quality.	LBC, GAA	Key Centre	S	L	Sustains future use of the pitch and accommodates future demand For adults and juniors, male and female ethnic minority sport.
Stockwood Park Athletics Centre	56	Strategic priority	Active Luton	The need to protect and maintain the current standard of track at Stockwood Park. There is no separate throwing area.	Work with Active Luton and England Athletics to provide separate throwing area.	England Athletics & Active Luton		S	L	Borough Wide Impact Accommodates demand for a separate throwing area which is critical to retain the Grade A quality certificate of the track.
				Athletics track is able to accommodate increase in demand but the impact will be seen on maintenance and ancillary facilities which will need to be increased.	To seek to secure funds to improve ancillary facilities on and around the track to meet future demands	England Athletics & Active Luton		S	M	Borough Wide Impact Will accommodate increase of demand and retain the Grade A quality certificate of the track.
Stockwood Park Golf Centre	57	Strategic priority	Active Luton	The need to protect and maintain current standard of Stockwood Park Golf Course.	Work with Active Luton and England Golf to ensure that the quality of the Golf course is maintained.	England Golf & Active Luton		M	L	Ensures the current standard is maintained in the future.
Stockwood Park RFC	58	Strategic priority	Club	Rugby pitches over played significantly over played due to poor quality and training sessions taking place on match pitches. The University also use the pitches midweek.	Explore options to improve pitch quality and/or move training to another site. This could be through the creation of an IRB compliant AGP or a transfer to other grass pitch sites. Engage with the RFU and University to work in partnership.	RFU, University of Bedfordshire, Stockwood Park RFC & LBC	Club Site	M-L	M-H	Increased pitch carrying capacity for all sections of the community and shortfalls in dedicated training facilities met.
Venue 360	61	Strategic priority	Venue 360	Poor quality sand based AGP in need of resurfacing.	Work with Venue 360, England Hockey and clubs to resurface the pitch. Ensure sinking fund is in place for future replacements.	England Hockey, ECB, RFU, LTA, LBC & Luton Midweek Cricket League	Key Centre	S-M	H	Improved pitch quality to sustain continued use of the site for hockey.
				Cricket pitch with one artificial wicket and significant spare capacity.	Liaise with the Midweek Luton Cricket League to increase use the venue for cricket.			S	L	Accommodate unmet cricket demand.
Barnfield South Academy	6	Local priority	The Barnfield Federation	Grass pitches on site not available for community use despite a community use agreement being in place.	Liaise with the Barnfield Federation to ensure sustainable community use of the pitches.	Sport England, FA, Barnfield Trust & LBC	Education Site	S	L	Increased use of the site to meet shortfalls expressed.
Dallow Primary School	23	Local priority	Education	Three floodlit netball courts which have had problems with the court surface. The courts have been repainted but there are still issues. Previously well utilised site.	Address outstanding court issue and look to rectify, with the school and the academy on any outstanding problems in order to bring the courts back into use.	England Netball, Sport England, School & LBC	Education Site	S	L	Maximises usage and helps to address shortfall in league netball venues.
				Community use currently not taking place but this site was the subject of a SE grant award towards its facilities (MUGAs) and used to have community use. Sport England currently in	Liaise with Sport England to ensure that community use of the site takes place.				L	Maximised use of the site to accommodate a range of sports on the MUGA.

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Site	ID	Prioritisation List	Management	Issue to be resolved	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Time-scale	Cost	Impact/benefits
				process of discussing reinstating community use with the school.						
Farley Junior School	27	Local priority	Education	The School has aspirations to secure funding from Sport England to resurface the two existing MUGAs on site, removing the middle fencing separating them to form one large surface.	Support the School through the application process.	LBC & School	Education Site	S	L	Greater utilisation of the site to accommodate a range of sports.
Foxdell Recreation Ground	29	Local priority	LBC	Poor quality pitches. Conflict of adult and junior play and training at the site.	Improve pitch quality subject to further investigation of the issues of the site and funding.	LBC & Luton Friends of Parks and Green space	Club Site	S	L	Maximised use of the site with improved pitch quality. Develop junior including predominantly ethnic minority football.
Kingsway Recreation Ground	35	Local priority	61 FC	Pavilion leased to 61 FC. Site has poor changing and toilet facilities.	Support the Club when they are in a position to access funding for upgrade to changing facilities.	FA, Club & LBC & Luton Friends of Parks and Green space	Club Site	S-M	M	Upgraded changing will support continued usage of the site and improve DDA access.
Memorial Park	47	Local priority	LBC	Significant spare capacity on bowling green	Work with the Club to increase membership in order to address under use.	Bowls England & Luton Friends of Parks and Green space	Club Site	S	L	Maximising usage and increasing participation in the sport. Also provides social/health benefits and is a key sport for the elderly including people with disabilities.
Stockwood Park RFC Consideration must be given to protect areas of County Wildlife site designation (bat population)	58	Local Priority	Club	Need for floodlighting on main pitch and training pitch.	Work with the Club and the RFU to access funding and to install floodlighting.	RFU, University of Bedfordshire, Stockwood Park RFC & LBC	Club Site	M-L	M	Increases usage of the site to accommodate training for adult and junior rugby.
Venue 360	61	Local priority	Venue 360	One senior rugby pitch over played by 0.5 matches per week due to training sessions taking place on the pitch and midweek university matches.	Explore options to improve pitch quality and/or move training to another site. This could be through the creation of an IRB standard AGP or a transfer to other grass pitch sites (Also see KKP ref 58 above).	England Hockey, ECB, RFU, LTA, LBC & Luton Midweek Cricket League	Key Centre	S	M-H	Increased pitch carrying capacity and shortfalls in dedicated training facilities met.
				There is potential for two more courts to be created on the overflow car park land if required.	LTA to work with the Club to monitor increases in demand and the need for additional courts.			M-L	M	Meets future demand for access to tennis courts.

LUTON PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY PRIORITISATION LIST

West

Site	ID	Prioritisation List	Management	Issue to be resolved	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Time-scale	Cost	Impact/benefits
Challney Girls High School	18	Strategic priority	Education	Unused cricket pitch with one artificial wicket. School also has aspirations to install a grass cricket square at the site.	Work with the ECB and the School to identify clubs that could use a potential cricket square and support any funding applications.	ECB, School & LCB	Education Site	S	M-H	Increased use of the site to meet shortfalls expressed in cricket.
Former Electrolux Playing Field (Addington Way Open Space)	28	Local priority	LBC	Former company sports ground now owned by LBC and has been used in the past as a training ground by Luton Town FC but use will conclude in one year's time. Consideration therefore also needed to provide ancillary facilities.	Seek opportunities to convert pitches into a cricket square and work with ECB to consider clubs. Partnership working required to consider best use of the site.	LBC & ECB & FA	Club Site	S-M	H	Bringing back into use a disused site to help address shortfalls in cricket and/or football.
Beechwood Primary School	10	Local priority	Education	School was required to complete a community use agreement for playing fields as a requirement of a planning permission; however, currently there is no community use at the Site.	Work with the School to allow access for community use.	Sport England & LBC, School	Education Site	S	L	Increased use of the site to meet shortfalls expressed.
Challney Girls High School	18	Local priority	Education	Despite a community use agreement being in place the Luton Netball League reports that attempted access to the courts for senior matches has been unsuccessful.	Liase with the School and Sport England to ensure access for the Luton Netball League.	England Netball	Education Site	S	L	Helps to address shortfall in league netball venues.
Challney High School for Boys and Community College	19	Local priority	Education	The School has three tennis courts, however, these are disused and there are plans to convert them into a grass pitch. A new rugby pitch is also proposed on the site of the former girls' school building.	Liase with the School and Sport England to have input into what facilities will be provided. Work with RFU to consider scope for rugby.	LBC & RFU	Education Site	M	L	Potential to help address shortfalls identified for rugby pitches due to over play.
Kent Athletic Sports & Social Club	34	Local priority	Private	The 1 st team (football) cannot progress in the league as they would require a spectator stand.	Work with the Club and FA to create a long term strategy to meet league requirements to a level of standard of a Step 5 facility ideally also suitable for league cup finals. Source funding to help enable the club provide for step 5 pitch.	FA	Club Site	L	H	This would allow the football club to progress into a higher league, therefore creating further sustainability for the Club.
Lewsey Park	42	Local priority	LBC	A disused hard porous pitch.	Consider feasibility to convert disused all-weather pitch to 3G artificial pitch and work with partners to seek funding opportunities.	LBC & Sports Governing Body & Luton Friends of Parks and Green space & Lewsey TARA, Active Luton	Key Centre	L	H	Meets current needs and/or future demand for 3G pitch for adults and juniors, could also accommodate separate girls teams as pavilion has separate changing facilities. Disabled accessibility improved.
				Four adult football pitches with two matches of spare capacity at peak time.	Consult on feasibility of reducing to three adult pitches and keep fourth pitch as strategic reserve.			S-L	L	Retains spare capacity to act as strategic reserve to accommodate future demand.

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Site	ID	Prioritisation List	Management	Issue to be resolved	Recommended actions	Partners	Site hierarchy tier	Time-scale	Cost	Impact/benefits
				Well used artificial grass wicket well used for informal play and last man stands	Ensure sufficient funds to continue to maintain artificial wicket for informal play, particularly in the event of further vandalism/theft.			S-L	L	Meets informal demand for cricket – existing customer base is predominantly from BME groups.

LUTON PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND PRIORITISATION LIST

PART 6: CONCLUSIONS

The Playing Pitch Strategy seeks to provide guidance for planning decisions made across Luton in the eight years up to 2021. By addressing the issues identified in the Assessment Report and using the strategic framework presented in this Strategy, the current and future sporting and recreational needs of Luton can be satisfied. The Strategy identifies where there is a deficiency in provision and identifies how best to resolve this in the future.

It is important that this document is used in a practical manner, is engaged with partners and encourages partnerships to be developed, to ensure that outdoor sports facilities are regarded as a vital aspect of community life and which contribute to the achievement of Council priorities.

The production of this Strategy should be regarded as the beginning of the planning process. The success of this Strategy and the benefits that are gained are dependent upon regular engagement between all partners involved and the adoption of a strategic approach. The Strategy is intended to be flexible and regularly updated using the accompanying database tools provided. An overarching action plan is intended to be developed in order to meet the current and future demands of playing pitch provision, a wide range of organisations will have a role in implementing the action plan with lead from Luton Borough Council.

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PART 7: MONITORING AND REVIEW

It is important that once the strategy is adopted that the plan becomes a live document so that progress against the actions can be reviewed and monitored. We recommend that there is regular monitoring (i.e. quarterly).

The Council should ensure that a process is put in place to track progress with implementing the recommendations and action plan. This process should involve regular liaison with the pitch sport NGBs.

A PPS should be subject to a full review every three years. However, regular monitoring and updating of key supply and demand data could extend its life to five years and limit the resource needed to carry out a full review. Keeping the supply and demand information up to date annually will reduce the amount of work required in the long term. Demand for pitches is often subject to annual change and even a three year period will see significant changes in both the supply of and demand for provision.

Alongside the regular steering group meetings a good way to keep the strategy up to date and maintain relationships may be to hold annual sport specific meetings with the pitch sport NGBs and other relevant parties. These meetings could look to update the key supply and demand information, if necessary amend the assessment work, track progress with implementing the recommendations and action plan and highlight any new issues and opportunities.

These meetings could be timed to fit with the annual affiliation processes undertaken by the NGBs which would help to capture any changes in the number and nature of sports clubs in the area. Other information that is already collected on a regular basis such as pitch booking records for local authority and other sites could be fed into these meetings. The NGBs will also be able to indicate any further performance quality assessments that have been undertaken within the study area. Continuing the bi-annual discussions with the football league secretaries/FA will be useful to pick up any specific issues and/or enable a review of the relevant club details to be undertaken.

The steering group should regularly review and refresh area by area plans taking account of any improvements in pitch quality (and hence increases in pitch capacity) and also any new negotiations for community use of education sites in the future.

It is important that the Council maintains the data contained with the accompanying Playing Pitch Database. This will enable it to refresh and update area by area plans on a regular basis. The accompanying databases are intended to be refreshed on a season by season basis and it is important that there is cross-departmental working, including for example, grounds maintenance and sports development departments, to ensure that this is achieved and that results are used to inform subsequent annual sports facility development plans. Results should be shared with partners via a consultative mechanism.

LUTON PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY STRATEGY AND PRIORITISATION LIST

APPENDIX ONE: STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The objectives within this Strategy have been developed via the combination of information gathered during consultation, site visits and analysis. They reflect key areas to be addressed over its lifetime. However, implementation must be considered in the context of financial implications and the need for some proposals to also meet planning considerations.

National context

The provision of high quality and accessible community outdoor sports facilities at a local level is a key requirement for achieving the targets set out by the Government and Sport England. It is vital that this strategy is cognisant of and works towards these targets in addition to local priorities and plans.

The following section summarises the key strategic documents relevant to this Strategy and link, where appropriate, to the aims and objectives set out later.

Sport England: A Sporting Habit for Life (2012-2017)

In 2017, five years after the Olympic Games, Sport England aspires to transforming sport in England so that it is a habit for life for more people and a regular choice for the majority. The strategy will:

- ◀ See more people starting and keeping a sporting habit for life
- ◀ Create more opportunities for young people
- ◀ Nurture and develop talent
- ◀ Provide the right facilities in the right places
- ◀ Support local authorities and unlock local funding
- ◀ Ensure real opportunities for communities

Sport England Strategy (2011/12 – 2014/15)

The vision is for England to be a world leading sporting nation where many more people choose to play sport. There are five strategic themes including:

- ◀ Maximise value from current NGB investment
- ◀ Places, People, Play
- ◀ Strategic direction and market intelligence
- ◀ Set criteria and support system for NGB 2013-17 investment
- ◀ Market development

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Sport England Youth and Community Strategy 2012 – 2017

Launched in January 2012 the strategy sets out how Sport England will invest over one billion pounds of National Lottery and Exchequer funding during the five year plan period. The investment will be used to create a lasting community sport legacy by growing sports participation at the grassroots level following the 2012 London Olympics.

The aim by 2017 is to ensure that playing sport is a lifelong habit for more people and a regular choice for the majority. A specific target is to increase the number of 14 to 25 year olds playing sport. To accomplish these aims the strategy sets out a number of outcomes:

- ◀ 4,000 secondary schools in England will be offered a community sport club on its site with a direct link to one or more NGBs, depending on the local clubs in a school's area.
- ◀ County sports partnerships will be given new resources to create effective links locally between schools and sport in the community.
- ◀ All secondary schools, who wish to do so, will be supported to open up, or keep open, their sports facilities for local community use and at least a third of these will receive additional funding to make this happen.
- ◀ At least 150 further educational colleagues will benefit from a full time sports professional who will act as a College Sport Maker.
- ◀ Three quarters of university students aged 18-24 will get the chance to take up a new sport or continue playing a sport they played at school or college.
- ◀ A thousand of our most disadvantaged local communities will get a Door Step Club.
- ◀ Two thousand young people on the margins of society will be supported by the Dame Kelly Holmes Legacy Trust into sport and to gain new life skills.
- ◀ Building on the success of the Places People Play, a further £100 million will be invested in facilities for the most popular sports.
- ◀ A minimum of 30 sports will have enhanced England Talent Pathways to ensure young people and others fulfil their potential.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out planning policies for England. It details how these changes are expected to be applied to the planning system. It also provides a framework for local people and their councils to produce distinct local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities.

The NPPF states the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It identifies that the planning system needs to focus on three themes of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. A presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key aspect for any plan-making and decision-taking processes. In relation to plan-making the NPPF sets out that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs.

The 'promoting healthy communities' theme identifies that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs and quantitative and qualitative deficiencies and surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform what provision is required in an area.

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As a prerequisite the NPPF states existing open space, sports and recreation sites, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- ◀ An assessment has been undertaken, which has clearly shown that the site is surplus to requirements.
- ◀ The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.
- ◀ The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

In order for planning policies to be 'sound' local authorities are required to carry out a robust assessment of need for open space, sport and recreation facilities. The methodology to undertake such assessments should still be informed by best practice including Sport England's 'Towards a Level Playing Field' (TALPF) and 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17'. Despite PPG17 being replaced by the NPPF, the Companion Guide still offers relevant guidance about undertaking a needs assessment.

A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England

Sport England is a statutory consultee on planning applications that affect playing fields. It is Sport England's policy to object to any planning application, which will result in the loss of a playing field, unless it meets one of five exceptions as defined in 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England'. Protection of playing fields was enhanced in 1998 with Circular 9/98 (replaced in 2009 by Circular 02/09), which stipulates that where a local authority is minded to grant planning permission against Sport England's advice on land owned by a local authority or used for educational purposes, then the application should be referred to the Secretary of State.

The FA National Game Strategy (2011 – 2015)

The Football Association's (FA) National Game Strategy provides a strategic framework that sets out key priorities, expenditure proposals and targets for the national game (i.e., football) over a four year period. The main issues facing grassroots football are identified as:

- ◀ Growth and retention (young and adult players)
- ◀ Raising standards and behaviour
- ◀ Better players
- ◀ Running the game
- ◀ Workforce
- ◀ Facilities

'The National Game Strategy' reinforces the urgent need to provide affordable, new and improved facilities in schools, clubs and on local authority sites. Over 75% of football is played on public sector facilities. The leisure budgets of most local authorities have been reduced over recent years, resulting in decaying facilities that do not serve the community and act as a disincentive to play football. The loss of playing fields has also been well documented and adds to the pressure on the remaining facilities to cope with the demand, especially in inner city and urban areas.

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The growth of the commercial sector in developing custom built five-a-side facilities has changed the overall environment. High quality, modern facilities provided by Powerleague, Goals and playfootball.net for example, have added new opportunities to participate and prompted a significant growth in the number of five-a-side teams in recent years.

The FA National Facilities Strategy (2013 – 2015)

The recently launched National Facilities Strategy sets out the FA's long term vision for development of facilities to support the National Game. It aims to address and reflect the facility needs of football within the National Game. The National Game is defined as all non-professional football from Steps 1-7 of the National League System down to recreational football played on open public space. The role of facilities will be crucial in developing the game in England. One of the biggest issues raised from 'the Big Grassroots Football Survey' by that of 84% respondents, was 'poor facilities'.

The FA's vision for the future of facilities in England is to build, protect and enhance sustainable football facilities to improve the experience of the nation's favourite game. It aims to do this by:

- ◀ Building - Provide new facilities and pitches in key locations to FA standards in order to sustain existing participation and support new participation.
- ◀ Protecting - Ensure that playing pitches and facilities are protected for the benefit of current and future participants.
- ◀ Enhancing - Invest in existing facilities and pitches, ensuring that participation in the game is sustained as well as expanded.

The Strategy commits to delivering in excess of £150m (through Football Foundation) into facility improvements across the National Game in line with identified priorities:

- ◀ Natural grass pitches improved – target: 100
- ◀ A network of new AGPs built – target 100
- ◀ A network of refurbished AGPs – target 150
- ◀ On selected sites, new and improved changing facilities and toilets
- ◀ Continue a small grants programme designed to address modest facility needs of clubs
- ◀ Ongoing support with the purchase and replacement of goalposts

It also commits to:

- ◀ Direct other sources of investment into FA facility priorities
- ◀ Communicate priorities for investment across the grassroots game on a regular basis
- ◀ Work closely with Sport England, the Premier League and other partners to ensure that investment is co-ordinated and targeted

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England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) Champion Counties Strategic Plan 2014 – 2017

The England and Wales Cricket Board unveiled a new strategic plan in May 2013 which seeks to deliver successful England teams at all levels, to produce a vibrant domestic game as well as increasing participation during the period 2014-17. It builds on the 2005 plan, Building Partnerships and the subsequent 2009 initiative, Grounds to Play.

The plan will take advantage of local partnerships developed in earlier plans and support local delivery of priorities through the County network. It targets operational excellence to make maximum use of scarce resources and facilities during a time of economic austerity.

Among the targets set under the four pillars of Effective Governance, Vibrant Domestic Game, Enthusiating Participation and Successful England teams, which are relevant to the playing pitch strategy, are:

- ◀ An increase in participation as measured by Sport England's Active People Survey from 183,400 to 197,500
- ◀ Expand the number of clubs participating in NatWest CricketForce from 2,000 to 2,200
- ◀ Increase the number of cricket's volunteers to 80,000 by 2017
- ◀ Expand the number of participants in women's and disabilities cricket by 10% by 2017
- ◀ To increase the number of TwelfthMan members from 220,000 to 250,000 by 2017
- ◀ Complete an approved Community Engagement programme with all 18 First Class Counties and MCC
- ◀ For each £1 provided in facility grants through the 'Sport England Whole Sport Plan Grant Programme' ensure a multiplier of three with other funding partners
- ◀ Provide a fund of £8.1m of capital investment to enhance floodlights, sightscreens, replay screens, power sub-stations and broadcasting facilities at First Class County venues
- ◀ Provide an interest-free loan fund to community clubs of £10 million
- ◀ Qualify and engage 50 Level 4 coaches to support the development of professional cricketers
- ◀ Expand the number of coaches who have received teacher level 1, 2 or 3 qualifications to 50,000
- ◀ Provide a fund of £2 million for community clubs to combat the impact of climate change
- ◀ Introduce a youth T20 competition engaging 500 teams by 2017

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The Rugby Football Union National Facilities Strategy (2013-2017)

The recently launched RFU National Facility Strategy 2013-2017 provides a framework for development of high-quality, well-managed facilities that will help to strengthen member clubs and grow the game in communities around them. In conjunction with partners, this strategy will assist and support clubs and other organisations, so that they can continue to provide quality opportunities for all sections of the community to enjoy the game. It sets out the broad facility needs of the sport and identifies investment priorities to the game and its key partners. It identifies that with 470 grass root clubs and 1500 players there is a continuing need to invest in community club facilities in order to:

- ◀ Create a platform for growth in club rugby participation and membership, especially with a view to exploiting the opportunities afforded by RWC 2015.
- ◀ Ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of rugby clubs, through supporting not only their playing activity but also their capacity to generate revenue through a diverse range of activities and partnerships.

In summary the priorities for investment which have met the needs of the game for the Previous period remain valid:

- ◀ Increase the provision of changing rooms and clubhouses that can sustain concurrent adult and junior male and female activity at clubs
- ◀ Improve the quality and quantity of natural turf pitches and floodlighting
- ◀ Increase the provision of artificial grass pitches that deliver wider game development

It is also a high priority for the RFU to target investment in the following:

- ◀ Upgrade and transform social, community and catering facilities, which can support the generation of additional revenues
- ◀ Facility upgrades, which result in an increase in energy-efficiency, in order to reduce the running costs of clubs
- ◀ Pitch furniture, including rugby posts and pads, pitch side spectator rails and grounds maintenance equipment

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England Hockey Board (EHB) 2013-2017 Strategy – ‘A Nation where Hockey Matters’

EHB’s 2013-2017 strategy is called “A Nation where Hockey Matters”. The strategy builds on the successful system improvement (talent and participation), product development, and profile and brand building that has taken place in the sport over the last four years.

EHB’s mission is to provide inspirational leadership to ensure:

- ◀ Growth in participation - Increase the number of people participating in hockey to ensure a vibrant and secure future for the sport.
- ◀ International success - Continue to raise the performance bar of athlete and coach development to maintain world level standards and create positive role models for the sport.
- ◀ Increased visibility - Deliver high profile quality domestic and international events that attract increased spectator numbers, TV coverage, and sponsorship.
- ◀ Enhanced infrastructure - Enhance the playing experience by improving facilities, coaching, officiating and the support to volunteers, clubs and all our stakeholders.
- ◀ A strong and respected NGB - Continue to maintain high governance standards and diversify sources of income to reduce reliance on grants.

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APPENDIX TWO: FUNDING PLAN

Funding opportunities

In order to deliver much of the Action Plan it is recognised that external partner funding will need to be sought. Although seeking developer contributions in applicable situations and other local funding/community schemes could go some way towards meeting deficiencies and/or improving provision, other potential/match sources of funding should be investigated. Below is a list of current funding sources that are relevant for community improvement projects involving sports facilities.

Awarding body	Description
Big Lottery Fund http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/	Big invests in community groups and to projects that improve health, education and the environment
Sport England : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Facilities Fund • Sportsmatch • Small Grants • Protecting Playing Fields • Inspired Facilities • Strategic Facilities Fund http://www.sportengland.org/funding.aspx http://www.sportengland.org/funding/our-different-funds/strategic-facilities/	Sport England is keen to marry funding with other organisations that provide financial support to create and strengthen the best sports projects. Applicants are encouraged to maximise the levels of other sources of funding, and projects that secure higher levels of partnership funding are more likely to be successful.
Football Foundation http://www.footballfoundation.org.uk/	This trust provides financial help for football at all levels, from national stadia and FA Premier League clubs down to grass-roots local development.
Rugby Football Foundation - The Loans Scheme http://www.rfu.com/microsites/rff/index.cfm?fuseaction=loans.home	The Loans Scheme helps finance projects that contribute to the retention and recruitment of rugby players. Projects eligible for loans include: 1. Club House Facilities: General structural improvements, general refurbishment, storerooms and offices, kitchen facilities, training areas. 2. Grounds (other than pitches): Car parking facilities, ground access improvements, fencing, security measures.
Rugby Football Foundation - The Grant Match Scheme http://www.rfu.com/microsites/rff/index.cfm?fuseaction=groundmatch.home	The Grant Match Scheme provides easy-to-access grant funding for playing projects that contribute to the recruitment and retention of community rugby players. Grants are available on a 'match funding' 50:50 basis to support a proposed project. Projects eligible for funding include: 1. Pitch Facilities – Playing surface improvement, pitch improvement, rugby posts, floodlights. 2. Club House Facilities – Changing rooms, shower facilities, washroom/lavatory, and measures to facilitate segregation (e.g. women, juniors). 3. Equipment – Large capital equipment, pitch

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Awarding body	Description
	maintenance capital equipment (e.g. mowers).
EU Life Fund http://ec.europa.eu/environment/funding/intro_en.htm	LIFE is the EU's financial instrument supporting environmental and nature conservation projects throughout the EU.
EH Capital Investment Programme (CIP)	The CIP fund is for the provision of new pitches and re-surfacing of old AGPs. It forms part of EH's 4 year Whole Sport's Plan.
National Hockey Foundation http://www.thenationalhockeyfoundation.com/	The Foundation primarily makes grants to a wide range of organisations that meet one of our chosen areas of focus: Young people and hockey. Young people and sport in Milton Keynes. Enabling the development of hockey at youth or community level. Smaller Charities.

Protecting Playing Fields

SE launched a funding programme; Protecting Playing Fields (PPF) as part of its Places People Play Olympic legacy mass participation programme and is investing £10 million of National Lottery funding in community sports projects over the next three years (2011-2014).

The programme is being delivered via five funding rounds (with up to £2 million being awarded to projects in each round). Its focus is on protecting and improving playing fields and developing community sport. It will fund capital projects that create, develop and improve playing fields for sporting and community use and offer long term protection of the site for sport. Projects are likely to involve the construction of new pitches or improvement of existing ones that need levelling or drainage works.

Sport England's 'Inspired Facilities' funding programme will be delivered via five funding rounds and is due to launch in Summer 2011 where clubs, community and voluntary sector groups and local authorities can apply for grants of between £25k and £150k where there is a proven local need for a facility to be modernised, extended or modified to open up new sporting opportunities.

The programmes three priorities are:

- ◀ Organisations that haven't previously received a Sport England Lottery grant of over £10k.
- ◀ Projects that are the only public sports facility in the local community.
- ◀ Projects that offer local opportunities to people who do not currently play sport.

Besides this scheme providing an important source of funding for potential voluntary and community sector sites, it may also providing opportunities for Council to access this funding particularly in relation to resurfacing the artificial sports surfaces

Strategic Facilities Fund

Facilities are fundamental in providing more people with the opportunity to play sport. The supply of the right facilities in the right areas is key to getting more people to play sport. Sport England recognises the considerable financial pressures that local authorities

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are currently under and the need to strategically review and rationalise leisure stock so that cost effective and financially sustainable provision is available in the long-term. Sport England has a key role to play in the sector, from influencing the local strategic planning and review of sports facility provision to investing in major capital projects of strategic importance.

The Strategic Facilities Fund will direct capital investment into a number of key local authority projects that are identified through a strategic needs assessment and that have maximum impact on growing and sustaining community sport participation. These projects will be promoted as best practice in the delivery of quality and affordable facilities, whilst demonstrating long-term operational efficiencies. The fund will support projects that bring together multiple partners, including input from the public and private sectors and national governing bodies of sport (NGBs). The fund is also designed to encourage applicants and their partners to invest further capital and revenue funding to ensure sustainability. Sport England has allocated a budget of circa £30m of Lottery funding to award through this fund (2013-17).

Key features which applications must demonstrate are:

- ◀ A robust needs and evidence base which illustrates the need for the project and the proposed facility mix
- ◀ Strong partnerships which will last beyond the initial development of the project and underpin the long-term sustainability of the facility
- ◀ Multi-sport provision and activity that demonstrates delivery against NGB local priorities
- ◀ A robust project plan from inception to completion with achievable milestones and timescales.

Lottery applications will be invited on a solicited-only basis and grants of between £500,000 and £2,000,000 will be considered.

The Strategic Facilities Fund will prioritise projects that:

- ◀ Are large-scale capital developments identified as part of a local authority sports facility strategic needs assessment/rationalisation programme and that will drive a significant increase in community sports participation
- ◀ Demonstrate consultation/support from two or more NGBs and delivery against their local priorities
- ◀ Are multi-sport facilities providing opportunities to drive high participant numbers
- ◀ Are a mix of facility provision (indoor and/or outdoor) to encourage regular & sustained use by a large number of people
- ◀ Offer an enhancement, through modernisation, to existing provision and/or new build facilities
- ◀ Have a long-term sustainable business plan attracting public and private investment
- ◀ Show quality in design, but are fit for purpose to serve the community need
- ◀ Have effective and efficient operating models, combined with a commitment to development programmes which will increase participation and provide talent pathways.

Projects will need to demonstrate how the grant will deliver against Sport England's strategic priorities. The funding available is for the development of the capital infrastructure, which can contribute to the costs of new build, modernisation or

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refurbishment and purchasing of major fixed equipment as part of the facility development.

Funder's requirements

Below is a list of funding requirements that can typically be expected to be provided as part of a funding bid, some of which will fall directly out of the Playing Pitch Strategy:

- ◀ Identify need (i.e., why the Project is needed) and how the Project will address it.
- ◀ Articulate what difference the Project will make.
- ◀ Identify benefits, value for money and/or added value.
- ◀ Provide baseline information (i.e., the current situation).
- ◀ Articulate how the Project is consistent with local, regional and national policy.
- ◀ Financial need and project cost.
- ◀ Funding profile (i.e., Who's providing what? Unit and overall costs).
- ◀ Technical information and requirements (e.g., planning permission).
- ◀ Targets, outputs and/or outcomes (i.e., the situation after the Project/what the Project will achieve)
- ◀ Evidence of support from partners and stakeholders.
- ◀ Background/essential documentation (e.g., community use agreement).
- ◀ Assessment of risk.

Indicative costs

The indicative costs of implementing key elements of the Action Plan can be found on the Sport England website:

http://www.sportengland.org/facilities_planning/design_and_cost_guidance.aspx

The costs are for the development of community sports facilities and are based on providing good quality sports facility for the 2nd Quarter 2011. These rounded costs are based on schemes most recently funded through the Lottery (and therefore based on economies of scale), updated to reflect current forecast price indices for 1st Quarter 2010 provided by the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS), prepared by Technical Team Lead of Sport England.

New work output is forecast to fall a little in 2011 as the cuts in public sector spending start to make their mark, partly mitigated by private sector output starting to recover more strongly. It is anticipated that there will be a return to sluggish growth in 2012, as public sector cuts deepen. The BCIS forecast is for tender prices to rise by 2.8% in the year to 4th quarter 2011, rising by 3.1% over the following year.