

Hastings and Rother Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy
2023 – 2039



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A. Introduction – Brief, Scope, Vision and Aims

A1 Background

[1] The new Hastings Borough and Rother District Councils' Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy 2023 – 39 produced in line with Sport England's latest guidance is the follow-on document to the Rother and Hastings Playing Pitch Strategy 2016 and the Leisure Facilities Strategy 2009-20.

[2] Continuum Sport and Leisure Limited were commissioned jointly by the two councils to lead on the production of the new strategies for playing pitches and leisure facilities, following national guidance published by Sport England. Each authority in the country is encouraged to produce these types of documents to inform future decisions regarding the demand and supply of existing and new indoor and outdoor sports and leisure facilities in a given area. The strategy documents inform an action plan which details potential facility developments in the two adjacent local authority areas based on the demand and supply analysis. This action plan will be reviewed and adjusted where necessary on an annual basis by the Strategy Steering Group.

[3] The supply side information is generated through standard facility audits used for all levels of facility from park to elite sport, with findings then corroborated by the relevant national governing body of that sport. The demand side information is generated from surveys of current and potential users including local sports clubs as well as club and team data provided by the relevant governing bodies of sport and facility booking records where available. The two councils' leisure and planning service lead officers have provided context and a local perspective on their respective overarching visions and principles driving the new strategies and the outcome objectives.

[4] The resulting action plan is a guide on how enhanced and new facilities might be developed in the overall study area, pending funding confirmation and planning permission where necessary, where they might be developed and the lead organisation to meet identified demand, exploit opportunities that may arise and provide sustainable management and operational models. Often projects are delivered through the respective Borough/District Council or the sport's governing body engaging with voluntary, education or commercial partners. Each potential project identified in the action plan will be reviewed and re-evaluated considering the situation at the time. The strategy and action plan provide a 'snapshot' of the position at the time of writing. Factors on both the demand and supply side may have changed as well as the cost and viability of the project at the point when an individual project is being considered.

[5] When applying for funding to develop new facilities, Sport England, National Governing Bodies of Sport and most other funding organisations require evidence of the current demand and supply of facilities in an area to justify the proposed project. This strategy - developed and agreed in partnership with these same organisations - is the document that provides this information and is vital to the success of any future funding bid or support.

[6] Through the implementation of this strategy, the councils have a major role to play in providing access to sporting opportunities at a cost that is acceptable to the wider community. The councils both have a role to play as direct providers of entry-level facilities such as free-to-use multi use games areas and green space as well as pay and play summer and winter sports pitches and leisure facilities with changing and toilet facilities to allow clubs to play competitively.

[7] The councils also play an enabling role in developing better quality facilities by engaging and enabling community organisations through the asset transfer process to independently manage and operate existing and new facilities.

A2 Why the Strategies Have Been Developed

[8] The purpose of the strategies is to support the respective councils' corporate priorities in shaping the future of Hastings and Rother and most importantly contribute to the achievement of outcomes relating to improved health and increased physical activity levels of residents, establishing how to best meet their current and future health and wellbeing needs and encourage and support the continued independence of residents, contributing to the priority of making both Hastings and Rother better places to live and work.

[9] The councils' main reasons for producing these follow-on facility strategies and associated action plan are detailed below:

a. Planning Role

- The strategies will be part of the evidence base supporting the respective Hastings and Rother Local Plans.
- They will support strategic policies on green infrastructure¹, leisure, outdoor and indoor sports facilities and health and well-being in both plans which will run to 2039.
- They will feed into the work on any relevant Supplementary Planning Documents, Master Plans, Area Action Plans and Neighbourhood Plans.

¹ a network of natural spaces and corridors in a given area.

- They will provide evidence for Developer Contributions through s106 planning agreements (Hastings and Rother)/ CIL (Rother only) where viability indicates this is appropriate.

b. Operational Role

- They will help improve current asset management, which should result in more efficient use of resources and reduced overheads.
- Site specific Action Plans will identify sites where quality of provision can be enhanced.
- In the case of the PPS, an assessment of all pitches (in use and lapsed) will be undertaken to understand how pitches are used and whether the current maintenance and management regimes are appropriate or require change.

c. Sports Development

- They should identify which sites have community use and whether that use is adequately secured (e.g., through a lease or other form of legal agreement).
- The PPS should help identify where community use of school sports pitches is most needed to address any identified deficits in pitch provisions.
- The strategies should aid promotion of sports development helping unlock latent demand by identifying where lack of facilities might be a barrier to community participation and the formation of sports teams.

A3 Improvement Projects Achieved

[10] Both councils identified significant facility improvement needs and priority actions in the previous studies both in relation to the core provision for swimming and indoor sports and to outdoor sports facilities including playing pitches.

[11] In a number of cases, funding has been secured and the projects have been delivered. In the main, the delivered projects on local authority owned sites are relatively small-scale, affordable enhancements of existing facilities such as playing pitches and ancillary changing facilities.

[12] Examples in Hastings include an improved pitch layout and maintenance at Bexhill Road Recreation Ground and enhanced pitch maintenance at Sandhurst Recreation Ground. Both sites are owned and managed by the Borough Council. On school sites, pitch improvements have been made at The Ark Alexandra Academy both for rugby (as the home ground of Hastings and Bexhill RFC) and for cricket (a new non turf pitch).

[13] In Rother, Battle Town Council has improved drainage to the senior football pitch at Battle Recreation Ground with support from the local football club and the bowls club has improved its clubhouse.

[14] Crowhurst Parish Council has allocated funds for the refurbishment of the pavilion at Crowhurst Recreation Ground and Hurst Green Cricket Club has made improvements to the pavilion at Drewett Cricket Field.

[15] Similarly, the Guestling Bowls Club has improved its pavilion whilst the ancillary facilities for football at Guestling Recreation Ground have been

enhanced with minor maintenance works to the pavilion plus the addition of a new build external toilet block and car parking.

[16] In Icklesham, the Parish Council has invested in pitch improvement works identified as necessary at the Icklesham Recreation Ground and a local trust is progressing a project to replace the outdated pavilion used by the village football, and stoolball teams and Rye Cricket Club.

[17] Within Rye, the tennis club has made substantial investment over the last year (in partnership with the LTA) in court resurfacing and now provides high quality astroturf, artificial clay and grass courts. The non-turf pitches at Rye Cricket Salts and in Robertsbridge (The Clappers Recreation Ground) have also been resurfaced.

[18] There has also been significant progress on developing more accessible free-to-use outdoor facilities such as multi use games areas (e.g., at Beckley Recreation Ground in Rother), outdoor table tennis (e.g. Alexandra Park, Hastings) and a major new floodlit skate park in Bexhill.

[19] Other significant facility improvements since the 2016 PPS in Rother include a new 3G artificial grass pitch (AGP) at Battle Sports Centre and, at Bexhill College, provision of a rugby training and football compliant AGP in place of a former sand based AGP suitable for hockey.

[20] In the last year, new external funding of £92.5k has also been secured by Hastings Borough Council from the Lawn Tennis Association for the upgrade of the tennis courts in Alexandra Park during 2023 and from the Football Foundation as a pilot local authority to test the Foundation's football pitch enhancement programme (Pitch Power).

[21] Funding support from East Sussex County Council Public Health has been renewed until end of March 2025 for Active Hastings and Active Rother. Active Hastings works with more than 500 residents living in some of the most deprived wards in the country. Recent funding from PCN has helped to extend this successful programme with a new GP Link Worker and Youth Link Worker and social marketing posts. Active Rother and the Active Rother partnership uses the East Sussex County Council Public Health funding support to target inactive residents to be more active.

[22] Additionally, another key organisation helping develop local sport is Active Sussex and their links to Sport England funding programmes. This has included funding and resources directly and indirectly into the area in the last few years with initiatives supporting workforce development, funding for children & young people and those targeting inequalities in sport.

[23] Development proposals have also been submitted for the Horntye Park Sports Complex in central Hastings which include options for off-site replacement of the floodlit artificial grass hockey pitch, identified in the last Playing Pitch Strategy as in need of resurfacing. This key accessible site in Hastings has also had a new non-turf cricket pitch installed since the last PPS in 2016.

[24] In addition, since the last strategy was completed, the senior football club in the study area, Hastings United, has submitted a planning application to develop a new stadium pitch on the Council-owned Tilekiln Recreation Ground.

[25] The previous strategy identified issues of age and inefficiency with regard to the two main indoor public swimming pools in the study area – Summerfields Leisure Centre in Hastings and Bexhill Leisure Pool – and

recommended further work be carried out with a view to significant refurbishment works, upgrades to the plant or full replacement.

[26] Progress has been made with pre-planning work for enhanced swimming pool provision to serve residents and visitors which has included public consultation, options appraisals and feasibility studies.

[27] In Hastings, this work has focused on the future upgrade or replacement of Summerfields Leisure Centre. In Rother feasibility studies have included a previous review looking at the replacement of Bexhill Leisure Pool and Bexhill Leisure Centre - both of which have aged buildings and plant which are increasingly costly to operate and maintain - with a new destination combined 'wet and dry' leisure centre. This has been further assessed with Rother Council's 2023 own swimming pool review and strategy which has run in parallel with this overall report. However further progress in both of these major projects has slowed due in the main to the challenging financial environment exacerbated by the impacts of the Covid pandemic.

A4 Vision and Key Objectives

[28] The vision for the Hastings and Rother Playing Pitch Strategy and Built Facilities Strategy is to facilitate the creation of a sporting infrastructure across Hastings and Rother that provides residents of all ages, abilities and backgrounds with the opportunity to be active and play outdoor playing pitch and leisure facilities sports and recreational activities.

[29] The key objectives and actions of the Hastings and Rother Playing Pitch Strategy are as follows:

- To provide a carefully quantified and documented assessment of current and future needs for playing pitches and pitch sports within the study area and a breakdown for each Council focusing on quantity and quality issues within the supply and demand equation.
 - To provide information to assist asset management planning for the Playing fields and associated buildings owned by each council.
 - To provide information to assist in decisions associated with the provisions of public playing pitches.
 - To provide information to underpin the protection, enhancement and quality improvement of the existing pitch stock and ancillary facilities
 - To map out a process for improvements in community access to educational and non-local authority pitches to achieve an understanding on the nature of ownership of existing provision
 - To consider the on-going revenue implications of maintaining playing pitches for both Councils.
 - To undertake an exercise to classify pitches and associated facilities in the following categories:
 - Category A: Pitches to be developed (new construction)
 - Category B: Pitches to be retained
 - Category C: Pitches to be improved / renovated
 - Category D: Pitches to be considered for alternative sports uses
 - To develop specific action plans of sites to be improved from developer contributions. It will identify areas for new playing pitch provision associated with the sport and locality of the area of need.
 - To review the current supply of Artificial Grass Pitches for all sports and provide clear recommendations on where new pitches should be delivered.
 - To review the quantity and quality of changing room and ancillary support facilities on pitch sites and make recommendations to ensure they are fit for purpose.
 - To establish and review ownership of playing pitch sites (e.g., potential for transfer of ownership and/or management to user groups/ community organisations).
 - To review and identify lapsed/disused sites and assess what their future role should be (allocate for medium-long term future use: improve and bring back into use short-term: dispose of for another use).
 - The Steering Group will use a number of scenarios to test the adequacy of current secure pitch provision to meet existing and future demand.
 - Develop a process for regular updating and monitoring of the PPS by the strategy steering group.
- [30] The key objectives and actions of the Built Facilities Strategy include:
- A clear and overarching framework for the future provision of indoor sports facilities and non-pitch sports in the area to meet the needs of the population to 2040: reflecting the changing sporting needs and expectations of the growing and developing population.
 - Perform facilities needs analysis for indoor leisure and non-pitch sports.
 - Audit existing local provision.
 - Make broad operational and policy recommendations within the Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (ANOG) framework to demonstrate where facilities should be protected, enhanced or provided.

A5 The Extent of the Study Area

[31] The study area comprises the entirety of the Hastings and Rother local authorities to correspond with the Local Plans for the respective local authorities. Hastings is a largely urban borough enclosed within Rother District (characterised by several towns - Bexhill, Battle, Rye - and a large number of smaller rural villages and settlements) as shown in Figure A1 below.

[32] Significant built sports facilities and playing pitch sites located in neighbouring authorities to Rother that provide easy access for Rother residents have been taken into consideration in determining current and future facility needs in the study area. Similarly, in terms of demand, due consideration is given to any areas allocated for large scale new housing developments within the study area or close to the Rother boundary.

[33] The impact of 'displaced' demand is considered in relation to the sports and recreation facility needs in the study area. This includes both exported demand (i.e. Hastings and Rother residents and sports teams accessing facilities in neighbouring local authorities to Rother) and imported demand (residents and teams from neighbouring local authorities accessing sports facilities in Hastings or in the towns in Rother District). The neighbouring local authority areas to Rother are:

- Tunbridge Wells and Ashford- to the north
- Folkestone and Hythe – to the east
- Wealden and Eastbourne- to the west

[34] The Steering Group overseeing the development of this strategy agreed to work with a single study area in view of the geography and the transport

connectivity between Hastings and Bexhill (immediately to the west) in particular. As in 2016, it was agreed there is still no clear rationale to analyse the supply and demand balance of sporting infrastructure by geographical sub-areas within the two local authority areas.

[35] It was agreed that for planning and funding purposes, the expression and communication of identified priorities in the action plan should clearly identify the project sites by local authority area - i.e., whether in Rother District or Hastings Borough.

Figure A1 – The Study Area: Hastings and Rother map



A6 The Approach to Developing the Strategies

[36] The strategies aim to be robust, based on local needs (2023-2039) and deliverable. This objective is assured by adhering to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021.

[37] Para 98 of the NPPF states: *“Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate”.*

[38] The joint document for the Hastings and Rother study area comprises two parts - Playing Pitches (part 1) and Built Sports Facilities (part 2) – each with an action plan for implementation to address identified needs to protect, enhance and provide playing pitch and leisure facilities.

[39] The 2023 strategies also align directly with Sport England's national guidance for local authorities concerning the key planning stages and processes to follow to ensure that investment in sport and physical activity best meets local priority outcomes.

[40] Published in 2019, Sport England's Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance (SOPG) recognises that commitment from local authorities to the provision of physical activity. The Sport England SOPG also recognises local authorities are under increasing pressure to meet the growing needs of their communities with limited resources and using new approaches to commissioning services.

[41] Robust, evidence-based planning of affordable and sustainable sport and physical activity facilities and services towards delivery of strategic outcomes that are shared by all key agencies and local stakeholders is the basis of the SOPG approach. The key SOPG stages are set out below.

Hastings and Rother Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy 2023 – 39

PART 1 Playing Pitch Strategy

Natural turf and artificial turf pitches for cricket, football, hockey and rugby

PART 2 Built Facilities Strategy

Indoor and Outdoor Built Sports Facilities



[42] The Hastings and Rother Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy 2023 - 39 identifies shared strategic objectives and outcomes (Stage 1) and recommends key interventions by the two councils and their strategic partners to protect, enhance and provide sports facilities that will contribute to delivering the outcomes (Stage 3). The recommendations are based on insight into the sport, physical activity and community building needs and priorities of the Hastings and Rother community and place (Stage 2) and realistic assessment of the potential investment commitment required (Stage 4).

[43] The Consultant Team have also followed specific Sport England guidance for both the built facilities and playing pitch elements of the study as follows:

- Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (ANOG) for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities, Sport England (July 2014),
- Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance (October 2013).

[44] Sport England's ANOG guidance highlights the importance of undertaking detailed assessments of sports facility needs and the benefits of sports and physical activity within local authority areas (as well as considering the range of possible options and scenarios for meeting priority needs and achieving positive outcomes identified through this process), before making recommendations for future action. Specifically, the guidance recommends that local authorities:

1. *Recognise and give significant weight to the benefits of sport and physical activity.*
2. *Undertake, maintain and apply robust and up-to-date assessments of need and strategies for sport and physical activity provision, and base policies, decisions and guidance upon them.*
3. *Plan, design and maintain buildings, developments, facilities, land and environments that enable people to lead active lifestyles.*

[45] The guidance published by Sport England also advocates that strategic recommendations and action planning consider the following hierarchy of needs:

1. **Protect** existing sports facilities where these are sustainable and continue to perform a valuable role in meeting community needs;
2. **Enhance** existing facilities that meet these criteria but need improvement to continue to be of value; and, lastly,
3. **Provide** new or extended facilities where there is found to be substantial unmet needs currently or predicted for the future.

[46] Sport England's separate guidance specific to playing pitches details a ten-step methodology as illustrated below. This methodology has been followed in developing the strategy (i.e., to Step 8):



Ten Stage Approach to a PPS

- Stage A** - Step 1: Prepare and tailor the approach.
- Stage B** - Step 2: Gather supply information and views.
- Step 3: Gather demand information and views.
- Stage C** - Step 4: Understand the situation at individual sites.
- Step 5: Develop the current and future pictures of provision.
- Step 6: Identify the key findings and issues.
- Stage D** - Step 7: Develop the recommendations and action plan.
- Step 8: Write and adopt the strategy.
- Stage E** - Step 9: Apply and deliver the strategy.
- Step 10: Keep the strategy robust and up to date.

A7 Tailoring the Approach - What makes the study area different?

Population Growth

[47] Assessment of the needs for sports and leisure facilities in the study area needs to take into account the forecast growth in the populations of the two local authority areas over the period of the strategy. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) population projections for 2019 and 2039 are shown in Figure i.ii based on the 2014 baseline.

Figure A2 - ONS 2014 baseline Population Projections: Hastings and Rother 2022 and 2039

Year	Hastings	Rother
2022	93,049	98,049
2039	100,974	110,300
Population Growth	7,925	12,176

[48] The projected increase in population over the 17 years from 2022 to 2039 is significant at over 20,000, equating to 8.5% in Hastings and 12.4% in Rother. This level of population growth, if realised, will inevitably increase the quantity of demand for sports and leisure infrastructure over the strategy period.

Population Profile - gender, age, ethnicity

[49] According to the latest 2021 Census headline data released in June 2022, 51.5% of residents in Hastings and 52.5% in Rother are female. This compares to the average for England and Wales of 51.0% women.

[50] In terms of the age profile, the resident population in both local authority areas that make up the study area is older than the national average. The median age across England and Wales in 2021 was 40 years (up from 39 ten years previously). Within Hastings Borough the median age is 43 years. However, there is a marked difference in the age profiles of the two local authority areas with the median age in Rother ten years older than in Hastings at 53 years. Just under a third (32.4%) of the resident population of Rother are aged 65+ compared to roughly a fifth (20.2%) in Hastings.

[51] It is apparent that the resident population of Hastings, whilst very predominantly White (93.8%) is more ethnically diverse than the resident population of Rother (97.1%). The largest ethnic minority group in both local authority areas is Asian (2.4% in Hastings and 1.2% in Rother).

Population Profile - Deprivation

[52] When planning facilities for active recreation it is important to consider deprivation levels within the catchment area. Deprivation affects the propensity and ability of the catchment population to participate in regular active recreation. Provision of appropriate sports and leisure facilities can also contribute to the regeneration of deprived areas. An awareness of how deprivation affects a local population can also influence how activities are delivered and what type of initiatives are launched to increase participation.

[53] Figure A3 illustrates Hastings and Rother rankings nationally according to the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). It also compares Hastings and Rother’s overall IMD ranking with that of the other local authorities in East Sussex. Local authorities are listed with their 2019 IMD and 2015 IMD ranking to show any changes.

Figure A3 - Deprivation in Hastings and Rother in comparison with other East Sussex Local Authorities (IMD 2019)

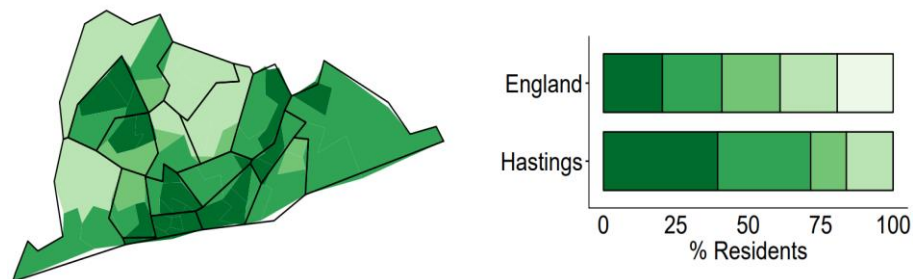
Local Authority	Rank Nationally 2019	Rank Nationally 2015
Lewes	194/317	198/317
Rother	135/317	143/317
Wealden	254/317	116/317
Eastbourne	106/317	116/317
Hastings	13/317	20/317

[54] Hastings is ranked 13th and Rother 135th most deprived out of 317 local authorities across England. Hastings is by far the most deprived out of the local authorities in East Sussex and is ranked in the top 5% of most deprived local authorities in the country. Hastings is the only local authority south of Birmingham in the most deprived decile. Figure i.vi also shows that the ranking has worsened over the past 4 years by 7 from 20/317 in 2015 to 13.317 in 2019.

[55] Hastings and Rother have a number of key strategic sites for sport and physical activity which are currently well placed to serve a number of priority areas. Summerfields Leisure Centre, Rye Sports Centre, Horntye Sports Complex, Tilekiln playing fields and Bulverhythe Recreation Ground are leading sites which provide key accessible opportunities for sport and physical activity.

[56] Any changes to these leading sites should be considered not only in terms of policy and protection (as detailed within this strategy) but also in terms of the catchments they serve across Hastings and Rother with the focus on ensuring all members of Hastings and Rother’s communities can have accessible and affordable opportunities to be physically active.

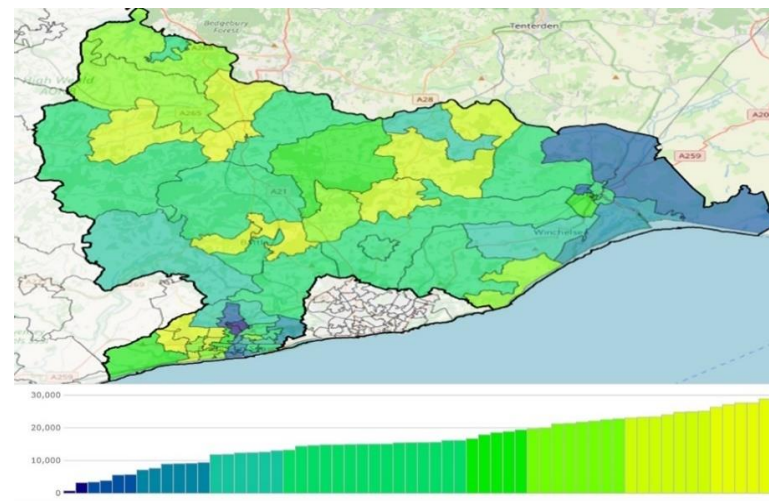
Figure A4 Deprivation within Hastings Borough by Ward



[57] Figure A4 above outlines the deprivation of each ward in Hastings. The darker points represent the more deprived wards. The scale to the right of shows the % of residents living in each level of deprivation in comparison to the national average. This shows that approximately 25% more residents live in an area of greatest deprivation in comparison to the average in England.

[58] The most deprived wards in Hastings include Hollington, Wishing Tree, Gensing and Central St. Leonards. In total, 9 neighbourhoods in Hastings are in the top 10 most deprived neighbourhoods in East Sussex. These wards are clearly areas that need to be considered a priority in the context of planning for locally accessible free-to-use facilities for sports and active recreation and as areas of focus for active lifestyles public health initiatives.

Figure A5 Deprivation within Rother District by Lower Super Output Area



[59] Figure A5 shows there are 6 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Rother amongst the most deprived 20% in England (dark blue areas). Four are in Bexhill, one in Rye and one in Eastern Rother. Again, these are areas that should remain priorities for planning of facilities and programmes for sport and active recreation that can positively impact on public health needs.

Population Profile - Health

[60] Hastings and Rother's Public Health Profile (2017-2021) states that, in Rother, life expectancy is higher than the national average but lower in Hastings where average life expectancy is under the average for both men and women.

[61] The following table (Figure A6) shows key Department of Health and Social Care public health indicators for the two local authority areas in comparison with the national averages for each measure.

[62] It is apparent from this table that, for eight of the eleven indicators, the health statistics for Hastings are significantly worse than the national average, whereas most of the Rother health statistics are better than the national average.

Figure A6 Public Health indicators in Hastings, Rother and England

Indicator	Hastings	Rother	England
Deprivation Score (IMD 2019)	34.3	19.8	21.7
% Children in low-income families (U16) (2020/21)	22.6	18.5	18.5
% Obese children (Year 6) (2021/22)	21.6	19.3	23.4
% Physically active adults (2020/21)	70.7	70.0	65.9
% Obese or Overweigh adults (2020/21)	63.7	66.8	63.5
% Estimated diabetes diagnosis rate (2018)	73.8	69.3	78.0
Life expectancy: male (2021)	76.4	79.8	78.7
Life expectancy: female (2021)	80.0	83.4	82.8
Under 75 mortality: cardiovascular (2021)	96.5	56.5	76.0
Under 75 mortality: cancer (2021)	148.9	115.1	121.5
% Estimated prevalence of common mental disorders in adults (2017)	20.2	15.8	16.9

[63] These statistics serve to highlight the significant public health challenges in Hastings in particular and to reinforce the priority need to ensure that more residents in the most deprived areas are close to free to access facilities and programmes that promote participation in active recreation among these cohorts.

[64] Figure A7 also serves to show that whilst Rother performs relatively well in comparison to Hastings and the national average, outperforming the national averages in eight of the eleven health indicators, the prevalence of adult and child obesity in Rother is however, above the national average.

A8 Tailoring the Approach - How does the population participate?

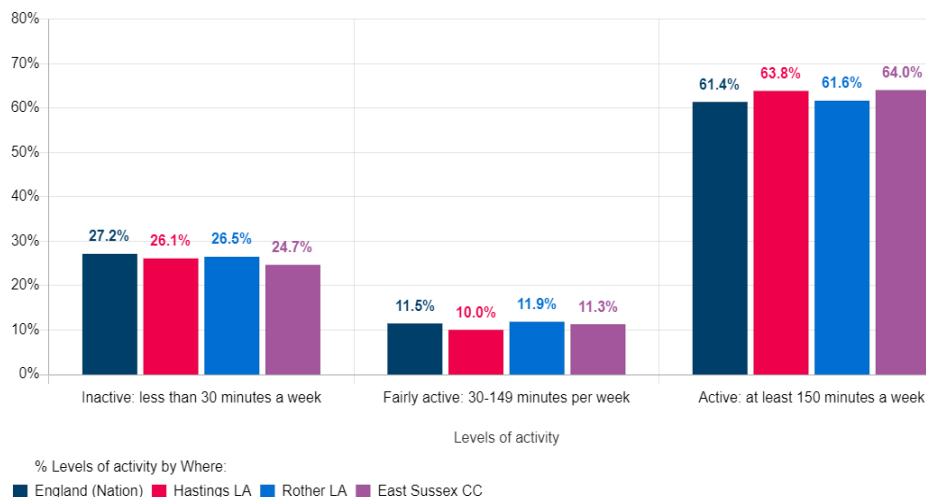
[65] Figure A7, taken from Sport England's latest Active Lives Survey results for the period November 2020 - 21, show that over a quarter of all adults in the study area are classed as 'inactive' - i.e. active for less than 30 minutes a week. This highlights the importance of provision of accessible and affordable facilities for sport and active recreation.

[66] Slightly fewer adult residents of Hastings and Rother (i.e. aged 16+) are physical 'inactive' (26.1% and 26.5% respectively) compared to the national average (27.2%). However, in both local authority areas, adult inactivity is higher than the East Sussex average (24.7%).

[67] Conversely, slightly higher proportions of adults in Hastings and Rother are considered 'active' (i.e. active at least 150 minutes a week) than nationally (61.4%) but that the proportion of 'active' adult residents in the study area (63.8% and 61.6% respectively) is lower than the average for East Sussex (64.0%).

Figure A7 Levels of Activity

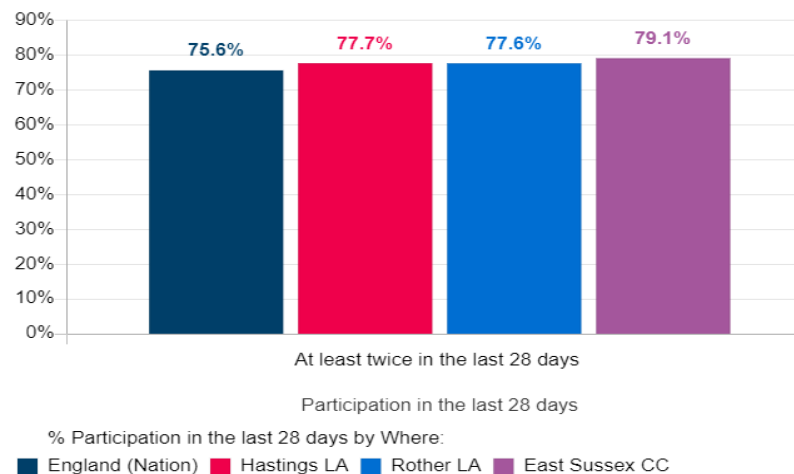
Levels of activity
Nov 20-21



[68] Regular participation – defined in the survey as participation at least twice in the last 28 days – is also lower among adults in Hastings and Rother than across East Sussex but higher nationally as shown in Figure A8.

Figure A8 Participation in the last 28 days

Participation in the last 28 days
Nov 20-21



[69] Figures A9 and A10 show the trend for these measures for both local authorities over the 10 runs of the Active Lives Survey to date.

[70] Since work began on the last PPS in 2015/16, the proportion of adults in Hastings borough classed as 'active' (at least 150 minutes a week) initially decreased by 4.2% (from 68% to 57.9%) but has since risen back to 63.8% rising slightly each year. Over the same period, the figure for 'inactive' (less than 30 minutes a week) has increased by 4.3% (from 21.8% to 26.1%). 'Active' adults in Rother have increased since Nov 15-16 by 2.9% (from 58.7% to 61.6%). Over the same period, 'Inactive' adults have decreased by 2.6% (from 29.1% to 26.5%).

Figure A9 Hastings Participation Trends

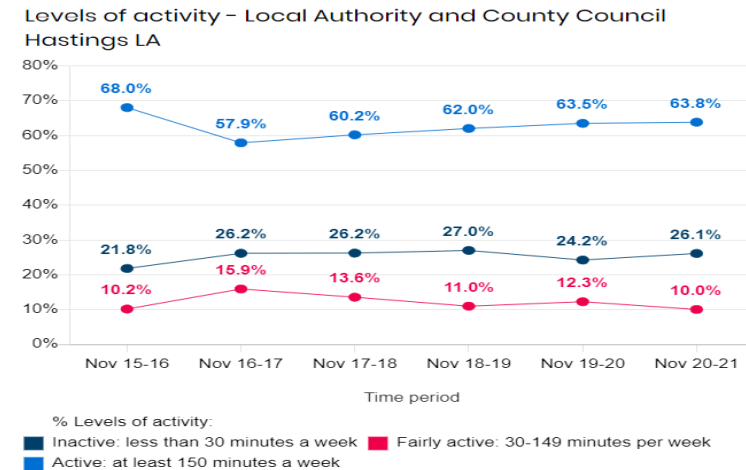
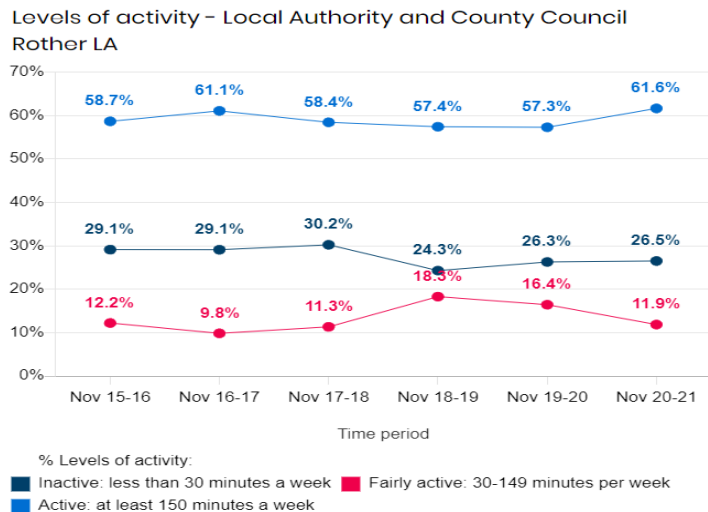


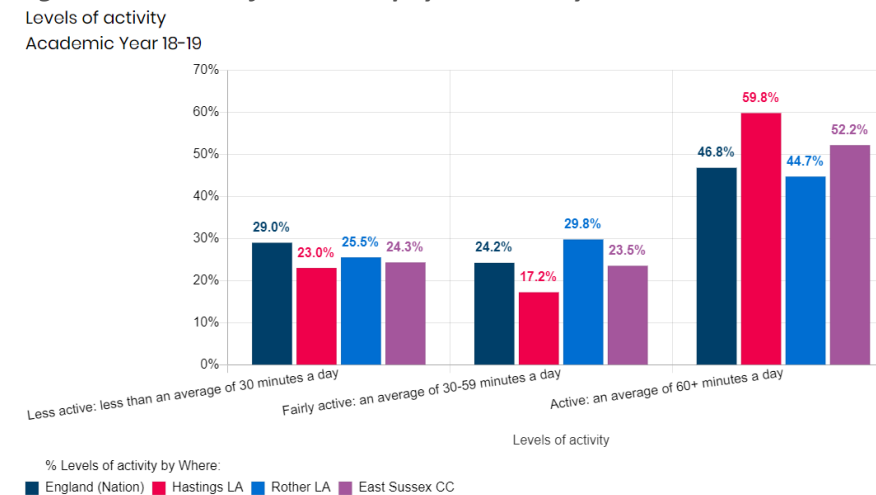
Figure A10 Rother Participation Trends



[71] The Active Lives Children and Young People Survey in 2020 (based on data collected in the academic year 2018/19) found that, in Hastings, 59.8% of children (aged 5-16) met the recommended level of physical activity (i.e. Active for an average of 60 mins or more daily either in or out of school). This is much higher than the national (46.8%) and regional average (52.2%). However, Rother fall below these national and regional averages with 44.7% of children being 'Active'.

[72] In terms of the 'Less Active' measure (i.e. Active for an average of less than 30 mins a day), the Hastings data shows 23.0% of children are 'Less Active' which is lower than Nationally (29.0%) and regionally (24.3%). The picture in Rother is slightly worse with their average (25.5%) being lower than nationally but higher than the average for East Sussex.

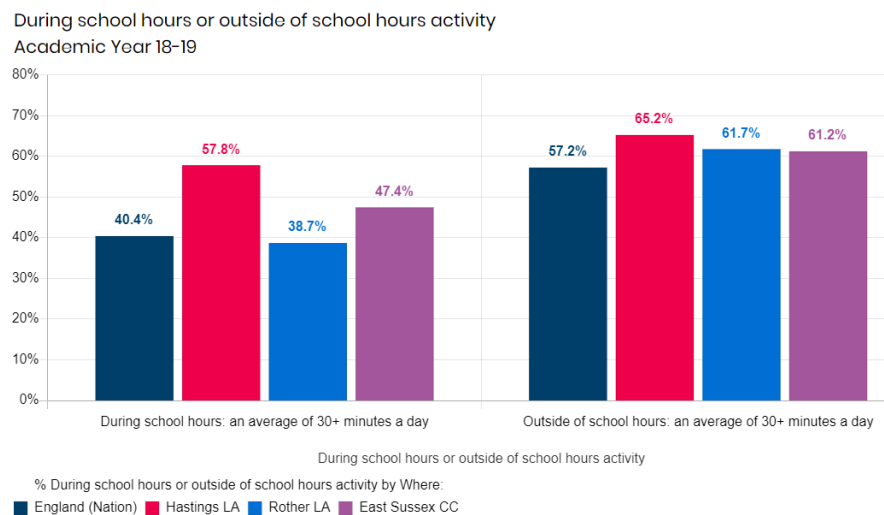
Figure A11 Levels of Children's physical activity



[73] Figure A11 considers the extent of activity by children during school hours and outside of school hours.

[74] The results for Hastings show that more children are taking part in regular physical activity during school hours (57.8%) than nationally (40.4%) and regionally (47.4%). However, the picture is very different in Rother where just 38.7% of children take part regularly in school and 61.7% outside school hours.

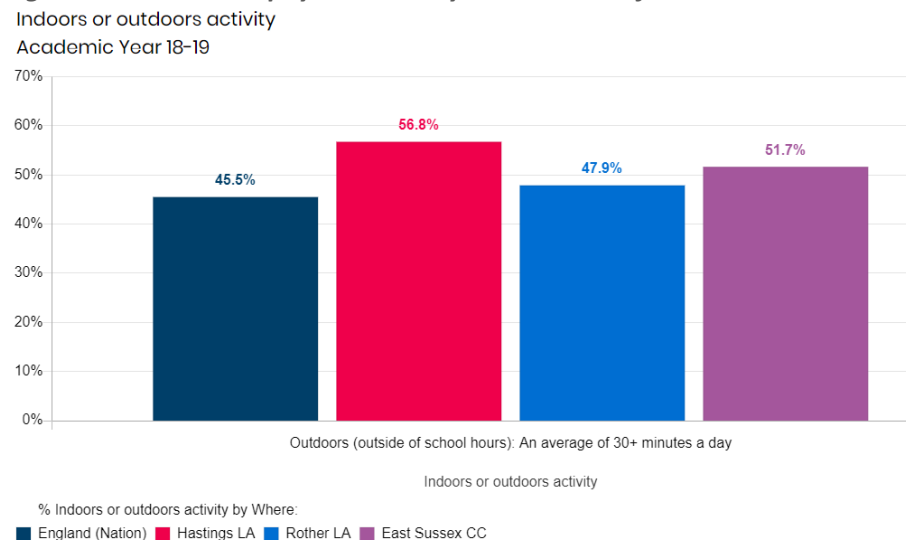
Figure A12 Children’s physical activity during school hours or outside school hours



[75] Finally, figure A13 shows that 56.8% of school children in the Hastings area were physically active outdoors outside of school hours for an average of at least 30 minutes a day in 2018/19. This is higher than the national

average (45.5%) and the average for East Sussex (51.7%). In Rother, children's physical activity outside of school hours is much lower than in Hastings at 47.9%.

Figure A13 Children’s physical activity outdoor out of school hours



A9 Consultation

Club Survey Overview

[76] To understand the current landscape of clubs in the Hastings and Rother area, data was collected from a survey which was distributed to the sports clubs in the area. By analysing the data, it is clear to understand the circumstances that clubs find themselves in and whether the current provision are meeting the demands of these sports organisations. A

summary of the results of the club survey is provided in this final section of the Introduction.

[77] 62 individual sports clubs responded to the invitation to complete the survey, these clubs are compiled of both indoor and outdoor sports. Figure A14 shows the spread of responses by sport. Several of the respondent sports clubs offer multiple sports.

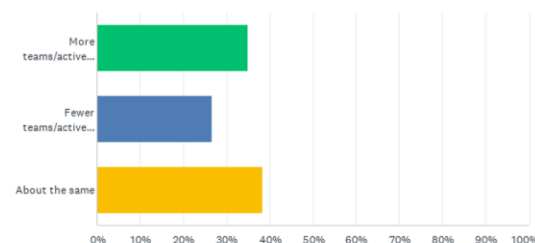
Figure A14 Club Survey Responses by Sport

Answer Choices	Responses	
Athletics	3.23%	2
Basketball	8.06%	5
Bowls	9.68%	6
Cricket	25.81%	16
Exercise, movement or dance	3.23%	2
Football	45.16%	28
Gymnastics	1.61%	1
Hockey	3.23%	2
Netball	3.23%	2
Rugby Union	3.23%	2
Squash	1.61%	1
Swimming	1.61%	1
Table Tennis	4.84%	3
Tennis	8.06%	5
Volleyball	3.23%	2
Other (please specify)	16.13%	10
Total Respondents		62

[78] Despite the major restrictions on movement and temporary closure of sports facilities over the past two years due to the Covid pandemic, Figure A15 shows that the sports clubs in the area have proved resilient with the majority reporting stable membership or growth currently compared to three years/seasons ago. Over a third of clubs have grown in the last three years, therefore, increasing the need and demand for sporting provisions.

Figure A15 Club Responses – Growth Trend last 3 years

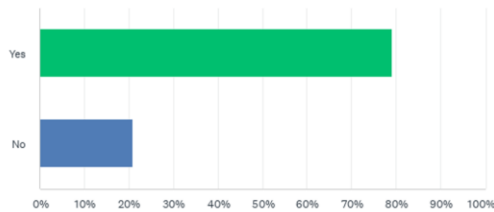
Q7 Does your Club/Association have more or fewer teams/active members than three seasons/years ago, or has the number of teams/active members stayed about the same?



[79] Looking to the future, figure A16 shows that almost 80% of the clubs surveyed were positive regarding plans for growth over the next three years/seasons, emphasising further the strength of the club sector in Hastings and Rother as well as likely rising demand. The rest of the respondents do not have any further plans to grow, this signals that there is a need to maintain the current provisions for these clubs to remain sustainable.

Figure A16 Future Growth

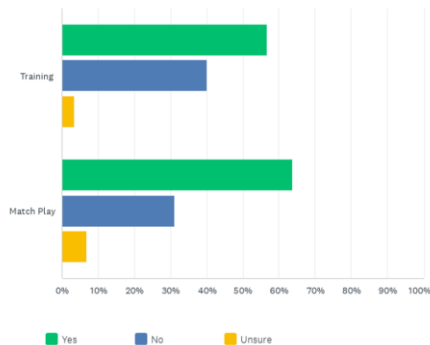
Q8 Does your Club/Association have plans to grow in the next three seasons/years?



[80] 40% of the clubs responded that they do not have sufficient programming time available at the sporting venues they access to meet current training demand from their memberships and 31% for match play as shown in figure A17. This shows the supply or availability of facilities and resources is not meeting the demand of the sports clubs, signalling for a need to increase accessibility and / or capacity of sport facilities.

Figure A17 Club Needs – Meeting Demand

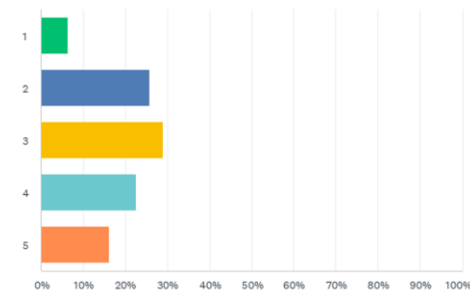
Q11 Is your current number of hours/pitches/evenings sufficient to meet the demand for your club's activities for training and match play?



[81] In terms of the quality of the stock of sports facilities available to the sports clubs in the area, figure A18 shows that just under 33% of those surveyed rated the playing facilities they use as 'poor' or 'very poor' and 28% as 'average'. Some clubs (16%) consider their main playing facilities to be 'very good'. This finding reflects the need to upgrade facilities and the increase of investments made in maintaining and enhancing the facility stock by Hastings Borough Council, Rother District Council, National Governing Bodies of sport, and the clubs themselves.

Figure A18 Club Response – Ratings

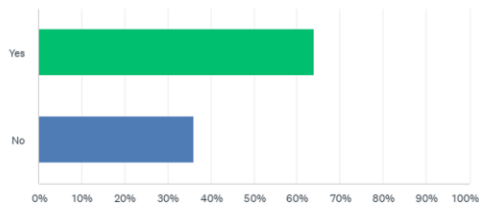
Q16 How do you rate the quality of your Club's/Association's main playing facilities, including playing surface? (1 being very poor and 5 being very good)



[82] Figure A19 below shows that around two thirds of sports clubs in the study area (64%) consider they need changes or improvements to their current main playing facilities to sustain or grow the membership of their club.

Figure A19 Main site – Need for improvements

Q18 Is there a need to change your Club's/Organisation's main playing facilities (e.g. relocate to another site /change facility layouts/ sizes or invest in floodlights) or to improve the quality to sustain or grow your club/Organisation?

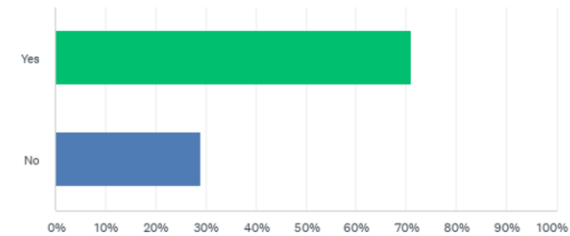


[83] The club surveyed cited a range of aspirations and facility needs to grow their clubs, individual club responses, from a range of sports, are included in the Appendix G

[84] Finally, Figure A20 shows that over 70% of the respondent clubs consider they need to improve their facilities to sustain the appeal of their club to existing members and to attract new members. This is particularly an issue for accommodating the growth of sports clubs as 34% sports clubs in the area have grown in the past three years. Therefore, whilst a high majority of clubs are keen to expand further, there appears to be a need to invest in the wider infrastructure for clubs such as ancillary / support facilities to enable this aspiration to grow.

Figure A20 Club Growth and Sustainability

Q19 Is there a need to improve/extend these facilities to sustain or grow your Club/Organisation?



Survey summary

[85] The club survey conducted has highlighted the position of clubs in Hastings and Rother and their provisions and accessibility to the community. Many clubs aspire to expand over the next three years, and they require further development of facilities to achieve these goals. The data has shown that many clubs are not currently in the position they would like to be and are not completely satisfied with the facilities that they have access to. Most clubs believe they are in need of funding to grow for a range of reasons, many of which are linked directly to facilities and improving the accessibility of provisions to members.

[86] A few of the challenges surrounding the facilities in Hastings and Rother have been mentioned in the survey through an 'additional comments' question. Through these comments, it is clear that there are barriers surrounding the lack of facilities, causing many of the clubs in the same locality to be ground sharing, preventing their growth. There are also

challenges around the quality of facilities amongst sports clubs in Hastings and Rother, this is resulting in teams folding and members leaving. Larger venues are in demand in the area as clubs struggle to have enough time for their growing memberships as the need for more sessions increase.

A10 Tailoring the Approach - Which pitch sports to include?

[87] The Councils originally agreed that the sports to be included in the Playing Pitch Strategy section are Football, Cricket, Rugby Union, Hockey, Stoolball, Tennis, Bowls, American Football and Baseball. Tennis and Bowls are included within Part 2 the Built Facilities Strategy. The Consultant Team through consultation and research did not find any American Football or Baseball activity within the study area.

[88] It was also agreed that the facilities to be included in the Built Facilities Strategy section are Swimming pools, Sports Halls, Gymnastics facilities, Indoor Bowls, climbing walls, Fitness facilities and other key outdoor sports including netball, athletics track and skate and BMX facilities. Within these sports and facilities, the strategy seeks as far as is practicable, to include consideration of all forms of play, whether:

- Club and league based (formal) play and training (including reference to indoor nets for cricket),
- Less formal programmed forms of the respective sports (e.g., friendly and recreational game formats outside the sport's governing bodies affiliated structures), and
- Un-programmed play by groups of residents, workers, students out of school.

A11 Management and Delivery

[89] The development of the strategies has been managed by the Hastings and Rother Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy Steering Group. The Playing Pitch Strategy Steering Group comprises of representatives from Rugby Football Union, Sussex County FA, English Cricket Board, Sussex Cricket, England Hockey, Lawn Tennis Association, Stoolball England, Football Foundation, Bowls England, British American Football Association, Baseball Softball UK and Active Sussex.

[90] Stakeholders which have been a part of both Steering Groups include Hastings and Rother Planning Policy Managers, Hastings Leisure Development Manager, Hastings Parks Manager, Rother Sports Development Officer, Sport England, East Sussex County Council Public Health Team and Continuum Sport and Leisure Ltd, the consultants appointed to co-ordinate the strategy development to the point of the recommendations and action plan.

A12 Cost of Living, Economic Impact and the Leisure Industry

[91] The strategy has been developed during an unprecedented time for the leisure industry and for community sport. Following the devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the industry and community sport had begun to look to recover with club participation nearing pre-Covid levels, general participation (fitness and memberships) at around 75-80% of pre-covid

levels. More recent research by Sported² has identified how the consequences of the economic climate are already being felt by community groups and how there are real concerns about a significant drop in engagement and participation rates from the young people they support. Their survey gathered data from 500 groups across the UK, and found that:

- **94%** of community sports groups across the UK admitted to fears about the impact of cost-of-living increases on their young people.
- **72%** of community sports groups have already been forced into changes to offset the impact of cost-of-living increases.
- **67%** of the groups surveyed expect the crisis will force many out of participating over the next six months – even when activities are free.
- **50%** increase in facility costs for many community clubs and organisations.
- **41%** of community organisations had seen a reduction in financial support available locally.

[92] The huge increases in operational costs for leisure facilities and community clubs is beginning to result in real challenges to maintain levels of activity for residents of both Hastings and Rother. Both Councils are acutely aware of this challenge and place even more importance on protecting those areas and spaces that provide this vital resource.

[93] This notable economic challenge is also being felt by the Council's themselves with on-going budget challenges from central government remaining in place and strain on both statutory and non-statutory services. Whilst a key focus of the overall strategy will be to protect the current facilities, itself a notable challenge, this however does not detract from the important role and function of both Councils to continue to look to improve

the service, the level and quality of provision and to meet the demands for sport and physical activity. Key challenges lie in retaining older and inefficient facilities which need investment or replacement and a longer-term vision for both Hastings and Rother which places the health and wellbeing of its residents and community at the heart of future investment, regeneration and planning decisions.

² Sported Insight Report: Cost of Living Crisis (September 22)



Hastings and Rother Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy
2023 – 2039

B. Part 1 Playing Pitch Strategy

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B - PPS Section 1 - Introduction

[94] This document is **Part 1 of the Hastings and Rother Playing Pitches and Built Facilities Strategies 2023-39**. Consistent with the previous sports facilities strategy, Part 1 includes facilities for the following playing pitch sports:

- Cricket
- Football
- Hockey
- Rugby

[95] Within these sports, the strategy seeks as far as is practicable, to include consideration of all forms of play, whether:

- Club and league based (formal) play and training (including reference to indoor nets for cricket),
- Less formal programmed forms of the respective sports (e.g., friendly and recreational game formats outside the sport's governing bodies affiliated structures), and
- Un-programmed play by groups of residents, workers, students out of school.

[96] In accordance with the national guidance for the development of playing pitch strategies, Section 2 sets out the findings of the assessment of needs for playing pitch facilities in the study area, both currently and in the future. The findings are presented in summary format and should be read in conjunction with separate appendices for each playing pitch sport that provide the findings of the detailed research and consultation undertaken. The section concludes with recommendations for the protection and enhancement of existing facilities and for the provision of new facilities

where considered necessary to address identified current or future needs to 2039.

[97] Section 3 sets a range of potential future change scenarios (e.g. loss of key playing pitch sites, new provision, substantial population growth in a particular area) and strategic scenarios for addressing identified needs (e.g. change of use from one pitch sport or pitch surface to another, greater community use of education playing pitches).

[98] The scenarios considered have emerged from discussion with the members of the Hastings and Rother Playing Pitch Strategy Steering Group and inform the policy recommendations and action plan that follow in Sections 4 and 5 respectively.

1.1 Trends in Participation in Pitch Sports

[99] Nationally, Sport England's Active Lives Survey (ALS) shows there is a general decline in self-reported regular participation (i.e., taken part at least twice in the last 28 days) in the leading playing pitch sports in England by adults (aged 16+). Further ALS data covering the period of movement restrictions imposed in response to the coronavirus pandemic indicate that this is likely to be the main cause of the decrease in regular adult participation in 2020/21.

- **Football** - down by 1.9% from 4.1% between May 2019 - May 2020 to 2.2% between May 2020 and May 2021. In the previous three years, adult football participation fell from 5.1% in 2016/17 to 4.6% in 2018/19.

- **Cricket** - down from 0.7% between May 2019 - May 2020 to 0.4% between May 2020 to May 2021. In the three previous years, adult cricket participation was consistent at 0.7%.
- **Rugby Union** - halved from 0.4% to 0.2% between May 2018 - May 2019 and May 2020 - May 2021. In the three previous years, adult participation was 0.5%.
- **Hockey** - decreased from 0.3% between May 2019 - May 2020 to 0.2% between May 2020 to May 2021. In the three previous years, adult participation fluctuated between 0.2% and 0.3%.

[100] Since the last assessment was carried out in 2016 there have been changes in both the supply of football pitches in the study area and in football demand. On the supply side, there has been the provision of new full sized 3G artificial turf pitches at Battle Sports Centre and Bexhill College Sports Centre (both in Rother District), as well as some improvements to the maintenance regime of grass pitches to improve drainage and conditions at Bulverhythe, Icklesham, Sandhurst Recreation Grounds and Northiam Playing Fields.

[101] There has been a significant increase in demand as the growth of football teams has increased by 21% (44 teams). The growth is attributed to clubs in Hastings (+61 teams) with Rother decreasing by 17 teams, however it should be noted most clubs have playing members from both local authority areas as Rother District surrounds Hastings Borough. The increase in Hastings is across all formats of football, but significantly in youth and mini soccer teams. In Rother there has been an increase in adult teams and formats of recreational provision including walking football, but a decrease in youth football and mini soccer.

[102] Since 2016 there also has been some change in the supply of cricket pitches in the study area, with 4 new non-turf pitches installed, 2 in Hastings and 2 in Rother. In accordance with the national trend, cricket demand has reduced significantly over this period with only 21 clubs in the area currently compared to 32 in the previous PPS, with a significant number of one team village clubs gradually declining over the period usually due to player availability or losing key volunteers.

[103] Demand for men's rugby and boys' youth rugby has remained broadly stable since the last assessment of needs for rugby union in 2016. There has been a change in the supply of rugby pitches with the loss of a grass pitch at Bulverhythe Recreation Ground, with the match demand being displaced to Ark Academy, home of Hastings and Bexhill RFC. There has been improvements to pitch quality on this site and Bexhill College now has a WR22 compliant 3G ATP, although it is at capacity with no community rugby usage.

[104] As far as hockey is concerned, participation at the one club in the study area - South Saxons HC - has recovered to pre-Covid levels and is again showing growth although constrained by lack of secured access to a suitable quality floodlit artificial grass pitch.

[105] It is apparent that implementation of the priority projects in the 2016 PPS - notably the provision of several new floodlit 3G artificial turf pitches - has gone a long way to sustaining and growing participation in playing pitch sports in the study area, most particularly football, accommodating increased demand from a combination of population growth and club development over this period.

[106] This update to the 2016 PPS identifies the priority facility enhancements and new provision that are likely to be necessary to continue to accommodate demand changes over the next planning period driven by both participation trends (notably more demand among women and girls and for recreational game formats) and by population growth.

1.2 Natural Turf Playing Pitches in Use

[107] The sites with natural turf playing pitches with community access and identified current use in Hastings and Rother are listed in Figure 1.1 and their locations shown in the map at Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.1: Natural Turf Playing Pitch Sites

Map Ref.	Site Name	H or R	Postcode	Sports and No. of pitches
1	Ark Alexandra Academy (William Parker)	H	TN34 2PG	Cricket (1), Football (3), Rugby (2)
2	Bulverhythe Rec. Ground	H	TN38 8AS	Football (10)
3	Dave Brown Memorial Playing Fields	H	TN35 5DX	Football (2)
4	Gibbons Memorial Fields	H	TN38 9LA	Football (1)
5	Hastings Academy	H	TN35 5DN	Football (1)
6	Hornbye Park Sports Complex	H	TN34 1EX	Cricket (2)
7	Helenswood Sports Centre	H	TN37 7PS	Football (1)
8	Sandhurst Rec. Ground	H	TN34 2SW	Cricket (1), Football (5)
9	St Pauls COE Academy	H	TN37 6RT	Football (1)
10	The Firs (Education Futures Trust)	H	TN34 2AX	Football (1)

Figure 1.1: Natural Turf Playing Pitch Sites

Map Ref.	Site Name	H or R	Postcode	Sports and No. of pitches
11	The Pilot Field	H	TN34 2AX	Football (1)
12	The St Leonards Academy	H	TN38 8HH	Football (3)
13	Tilekiln Rec. Ground	H	TN38 9RT	Football (3)
14	Ashburnham Sports Field	R	TN34 2PG	Cricket (1)
15	Arthur Herdman Pavilion and Rec. Ground	R	TN32 5TA	Football (1)
16	Battle Abbey Senior School	R	TN33 0AD	Football (2)
17	Battle Rec. Ground	R	TN33 0HD	Football (2)
18	Battle Sports Centre	R	TN33 0HT	Cricket (1), Football (1)
19	Bellfield	R	TN5 7BN	Football (1)
20	Bexhill Academy	R	TN39 4BY	Football (1)
21	Bexhill College	R	TN39 4EN	Football (1)
22	Brightling Cricket Pitch	R	TN32 5HH	Cricket (1)
23	Bodiam Rec. Ground	R	TN32 5UB	Football (2)
24	Broad Oak (Brede) Rec. Ground	R	TN32 5UB	Football (1), Cricket (1)
25	Buckwood School	R	TN35 4LT	Football (1)
26	Burwash Common Pavilion	R	TN19 7NA	Cricket (1)
27	Catsfield Playing Fields	R	TN33 9DH	Cricket (1), Football (1)
28	Crowhurst Rec. Ground	R	TN33 9AR	Cricket (1), Football (2)
29	Flimwell Playing Fields	R	TN5 7PA	Cricket (1)
30	George Meadow	R	TN33 0AB	Cricket (1)
31	Guestling Playing Field	R	TN35 4LT	Football (3)

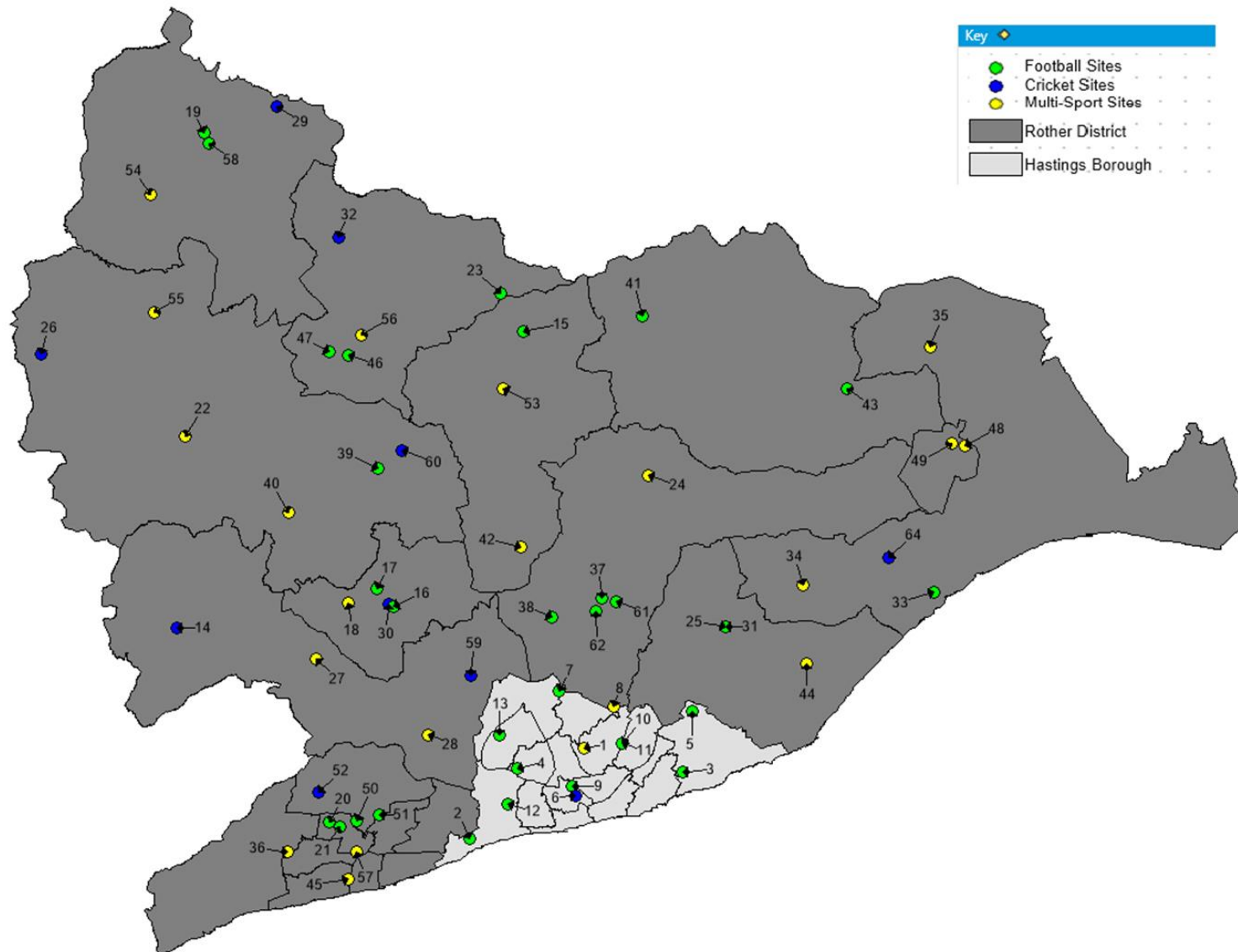
Figure 1.1: Natural Turf Playing Pitch Sites

Map Ref.	Site Name	H or R	Postcode	Sports and No. of pitches
32	Hurst Green Cricket Ground (Drewett Cricket Field)	R	TN19 7PL	Cricket (1)
33	Harbour Field	R	TN36 4LX	Football (3)
34	Icklesham Rec. Ground	R	TN36 4BS	Football (1)
35	Iden Park	R	TN31 7XD	Cricket (1), Football (1)
36	Little Common Rec. Ground	R	TN39 4PH	Cricket (1), Football (6)
37	Mill Lane Playing Fields	R	TN35 4QQ	Football (2)
38	Moat Shaw	R	TN33 0RY	Football (2)
39	Mountfield United FC	R	TN32 5LY	Football (1)
40	Netherfield Rec. Ground	R	TN33 9PY	Football (1)
41	Northiam Playing Fields	R	TN31 6LS	Football (1)
42	Oaklands Park	R	TN33 0FB	Cricket (1), Football (3)
43	Peamarsh Village Rec. Ground	R	TN31 6UW	Football (1)
44	Pett Recreation Ground	R	TN35 4HG	Cricket (1)
45	Polegrove Rec. Ground	R	TN39 3EX	Cricket (1), Football (3)
46	Robertsbridge Village Hall Playing Fields	R	TN32 5DG	Football (1)
47	Robertsbridge Community College	R	TN32 5EA	Football (2)
48	Rye Rugby Club	R	TN31 7LS	Football (3), Rugby (1)

Figure 1.1: Natural Turf Playing Pitch Sites

Map Ref.	Site Name	H or R	Postcode	Sports and No. of pitches
49	Rye Cricket Salts	R	TN31 7LN	Cricket (1), Football (1)
50	Sidley Rec. Ground	R	TN39 4BL	Football (1)
51	Sidley Sports Ground	R	TN39 5ER	Football (1)
52	St. Marys Rec. Ground	R	TN39 5JE	Cricket (1)
53	Staplecross Playing Fields	R	TN32 5QH	Football (1)
54	Stonegate Cricket Ground	R	TN5 7DX	Cricket (1), Football (1)
55	Swan Meadow Playing Field	R	TN19 7ER	Cricket (1), Football (1)
56	The Clappers Rec. Ground	R	TN32 5NY	Cricket (1), Football (1)
57	The Down (Bexhill Down)	R	TN39 4HS	Cricket (1), Football (1)
58	Ticehurst Rec. Ground	R	TN5 7BB	Football (1)
59	The Walcott Ground	R	TN33 0SL	Cricket (1)
60	Vinehall School	R	TN32 5JL	Cricket (1)
61	Westfield Cricket Club	R	TN35 4SL	Cricket (1)
62	Westfield Playing Field	R	TN35 4QE	Football (1)
63	Westfield Downs	R	TN35 4SL	Football (2)
64	Winchelsea Cricket Club	R	TN36 4AA	Cricket (1)

Figure 1.2 Map of Natural Turf Playing Pitch Sites



1.3 Natural Turf Playing Pitches Not in Use

[108] There are further pitches on school playing fields in the study area that are not available for community use. At most of these school sites, there is no clear potential to open them up for community use.

[109] The following football and/or cricket sites shown in Figure 1.1 are not currently available for community team use or remain available but have not been used for some years:

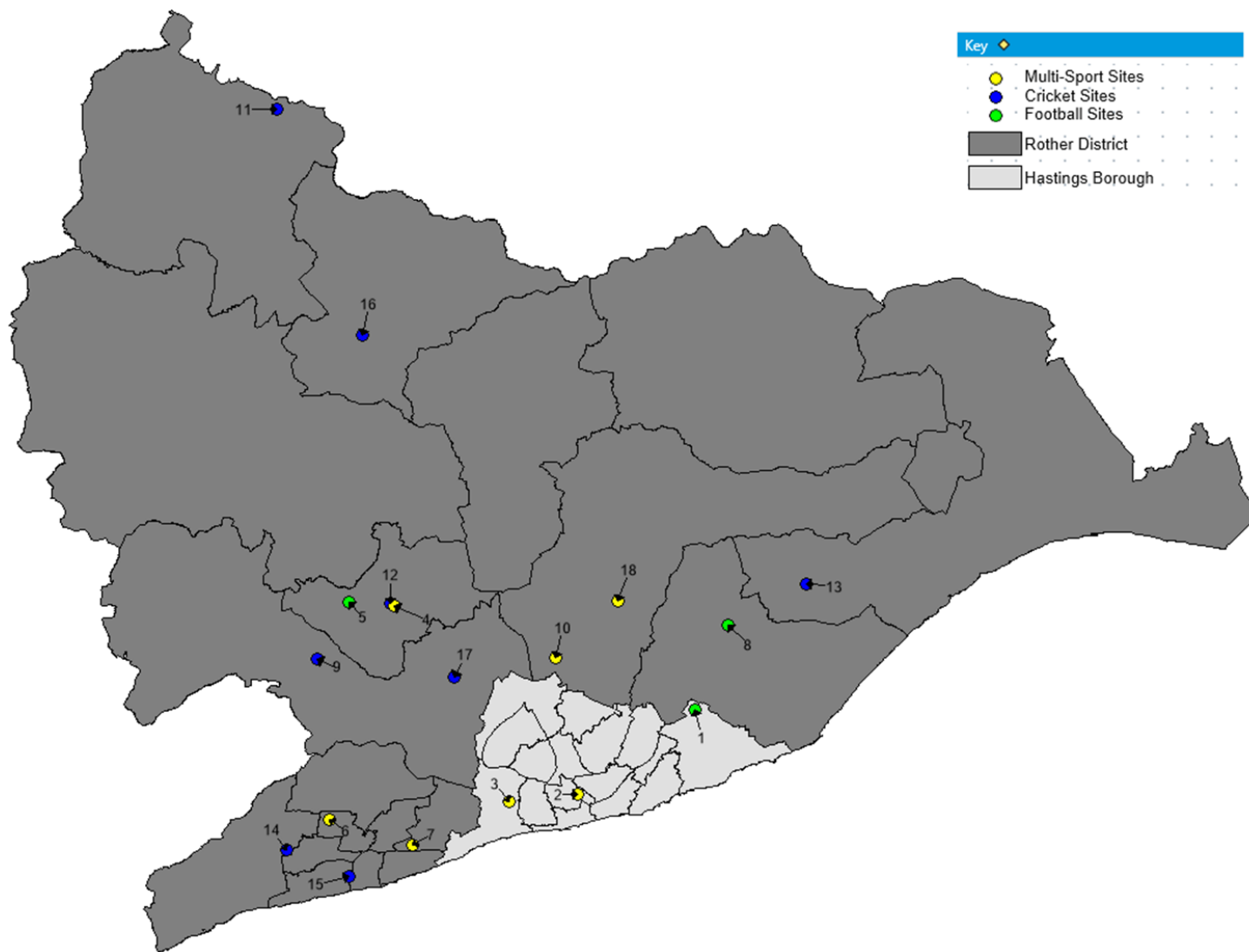
- Broad Oak (Brede) Recreation Ground – previously used for youth football and cricket. The site has no ancillary facilities and is now only used as school playing field and general recreation.
- Mill Lane Playing Fields – a private garden used for matches by Westfield Youth, likely to become unavailable as house is up for sale.
- Moat Shaw – Private land used by Hasting Athletic during the 21/22 season but no longer available.
- Rye Salts - a cricket ground, which previously included football pitches but has not been used by football teams for a number of seasons.
- Sidley Sports Ground – The ground was closed in 2013 and brought by a developer. Applications for housing on the site have been made and refused and dismissed on appeal. The sports ground was formerly identified a key site for community football and is identified in the Rother Local Plan DaSA for a new floodlit 3G ATP and in the current Local Football Facilities Plan (LFFP) for a new floodlit 3G AGP and changing rooms.

- Oaklands Park, Battle, not been used for the last few years, but the parish council is in discussion with a club about possible use.
- Stonegate Cricket Ground, not been used for the last 2 years.

[110] Additional Sites have been identified within Hastings from Sport England which are considered below.

Site references	Addressed in 2023 Strategy	Actions / Issues
HL2 - Harrow Lane	Former playing fields site. Not identified in supply of pitches and no longer playing fields.	At the time of this strategy HBC have granted planning permission and the site is now under construction. Provision of open space and mitigation for access to informal recreation form part of the development.
HL7 – former St Leonards Academy site.	Main grass site (open space) not identified in supply of pitches as not playing fields. MUGA at HL7 Darwell close is mentioned in Football assessment under facilities for informal football to protect or mitigate / re-provide.	Retention of the MUGA forms part of the development.
HL 112 – former Helenswood school.	Not identified in the supply as not playing fields.	None

Figure 1.4 Map of Artificial Turf Playing Pitch Sites



1.4 Artificial Turf Playing Pitches in Use

[111] Sites with artificial grass playing pitches with community access and use (and the sports the sites provide for) are listed in Figure 1.3 and their locations shown in the map at Figure 1.4. For cricket, NTP means Non Turf Pitch which is an artificial strip located adjacent to a fine turf table or as a standalone wicket instead of a fine turf wicket table, this type of facility is used mainly for junior and low level adult cricket.

1.5 Artificial Turf Playing Pitches Not in Use

[112] No unused AGPs have been identified in the study area. However, community hockey is not played at Bexhill Academy due to a lack of access to toilets or changing facilities for community users. There is also a current risk of loss of use of the one remaining hockey pitch at Horntye Sports Complex due to the poor quality of the playing surface and proposals for development at this site.

Figure 1.3: Artificial Turf Playing Pitch Sites

Map Ref.	Site Name	H or R	Postcode	Type	Pitch sport(s)
1	Hastings Academy	H	TN35 5DN	3G	Football
2	Horntye Park Sports Complex	H	TN34 1EX	Sand, NTP	Cricket, Hockey, Football
3	St Leonards Academy	H	TN38 8HH	Sand	Hockey, Football
4	Battle Abbey Senior School	R	TN33 0AD	Sand	Hockey, Football
5	Battle Sports Centre	R	TN33 0HT	3G	Football,
6	Bexhill Academy	R	TN39 4BY	Sand	Hockey, Football
7	Bexhill College Sports Centre	R	TN40 2JG	WR22 3G	Rugby, Football
8	Buckswood School	R	TN35 4LT	3G	Football
9	Catsfield Playing Fields	R	TN33 9DH	NTP	Cricket
10	Claremont Preparatory and Nursery School	R	TN37 7PW	Sand	Hockey, Football
11	Flimwell Playing Fields	R	TN5 7PA	NTP	Cricket
12	George Meadow	R	TN33 0AB	NTP	Cricket
13	Icklesham Rec. Ground	R	TN36 4BS	NTP	Cricket
14	Little Common Rec. Ground	R	TN39 4PH	NTP	Cricket
15	Polegrove Rec. Ground	R	TN39 3EX	NTP	Cricket
16	The Clappers Rec. Ground	R	TN32 5NY	NTP	Cricket
17	The Walcott Ground	R	TN33 0SJ	NTP	Cricket
18	Vinehall School	R	TN35 4SL	Sand	Cricket, Hockey

PPS Section 2 – Key Findings and Issue by Sport



B - PPS Section 2 - Key Findings and Issues by Sport

[113] The key findings of the detailed Assessment of Need studies for the four major playing pitch sports played in Hastings and Rother are summarised in this section. The detailed Assessment of Need reports of findings (covering Stages B and C of Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance) and supporting site-specific audit reports have been checked and challenged by representatives of the relevant sport's governing bodies and are appended as follows:

- Appendix A: Cricket - Assessment of Need and Site Audit
- Appendix B: Football - Assessment of Need and Site Audit
- Appendix C: Hockey - Assessment of Need and Site Audit
- Appendix D: Rugby - Assessment of Need and Site Audit

2.1 Summary Findings by Sport

[114] This section provides an overall summary by sport of supply, planned and proposed changes to supply, current and latent demand covering the following leading questions as part of the Playing Pitch Strategy methodology.

- What are the main characteristics of the current supply of and demand for provision?
- Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet current demand?
- Is the provision that is accessible of sufficient quality and appropriately maintained?

- What are the main characteristics of the future supply and demand for provision?
- Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet future demand?

2.2 Cricket

Cricket

[115] What are the main characteristics of the current supply of and demand for provision?

- 27 fine turf pitches are identified as available for community cricket across Hastings and Rother in 2022, on 26 playing pitch sites. There are 8 non-turf pitches available for use across 8 sites. There has been a reduction in the number of sites available for cricket since the last PPS where 38 pitches were available across Hastings and Rother, but an increase in non-turf pitches with a further 4 available (2 in Hastings and 2 in Rother).
- 21 clubs were identified in Hastings and Rother through the consultation, there are 28 adult men's sides entered to compete in affiliated Saturday cricket leagues cricket in 2022, 4 clubs offer mixed adult provision and 4 also have female specific adult cricket. There are 11 Sunday teams and 6 T20 teams. The larger traditional clubs – Hastings Priory, Battle, Bexhill, Crowhurst Park and Westfields CC - all have increased junior sections, with either formal teams, junior coaching or by providing All Stars or Dynamos sessions. Where possible, the clubs use their outfield and NTPs to cater for this demand.
- In total it is estimated that, in the 2022 season, there are 41 men's teams (aged 18+), 4 women's teams, and 6 adult mixed teams; 20 boys' teams (aged 7-18), 2 girls' teams (7-18yrs) and 3 mixed junior teams playing cricket matches in the study area mainly at weekends. A large proportion

Cricket

of these teams also train on a midweek evening in season. Most of the senior teams will also train indoors pre-season in January/February.

[116] Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet current demand?

- No clubs are displaced outside of the study area, but there is a number of clubs being displaced between Hastings and Rother e.g. Sidley CC displaced from Rother to Hastings after former site Sidley Sports Ground was closed. The club are currently looking to develop new facilities back in Rother at St Marys Rec Ground. Hastings Priory CC has been displaced from Hastings to Rother following the proposed development at Hornty Park Sports Complex to Claremont Prep and Nursery School.
- Generally, the cricket clubs in Hastings and Rother benefit from good security of access. The majority either own or lease their home grounds or have established hire / maintenance agreements with a local authority. However, 4 clubs are reliant on hiring facilities at schools or on grounds in private ownership with no security of access beyond a single season. Overall, the assessment of facility needs shows that the playing capacity of the available fine-turf pitches in the study area largely meets the current demand from Hastings and Rother based clubs and teams.
- However, the distribution of the available supply of pitches does not currently align with the locations where there is greatest demand. As a result, some sites are overused and the larger clubs such as Bexhill CC and Westfield CC are unable to grow due to a lack of fine turf playing capacity at their home grounds or close by. Provision for Hasting Priory CC also needs to be accommodated, either back at Hornty with an investment into the facilities or suitable alternative accessible provision, along with facilities for informal play (such as NTPs) in central Hastings should Hornty

Cricket

be redeveloped. The development of St Mary's Recreation ground as a new site for Sidley CC back in Rother should also be a priority.

[117] Is the provision that is accessible of sufficient quality and appropriately maintained?

- Despite the provision of several new non-turf pitches since 2016, capacity issues remain for clubs to accommodate all their teams including junior and short format cricket. Additional NTPs could help to alleviate some of this pressure at Westfield Cricket Ground and Pett Rec Ground.
- The quality of the cricket pitches at open access Council sites such as Sandhurst Rec Ground, Polegrove Rec Ground and Little Common needs to be improved. The cricket squares are subject to heavy usage and the outfielders accommodate extensive use for general recreation and dog walking as well as by other sports and events. Improved pitch maintenance and quality would increase the playing capacity enabling the cricket clubs that are based at these grounds to continue to grow.
- The non-turf practice net systems are in need of upgrading at key cricket sites such as Polegrove Rec Ground.
- There are a number of key sites where investment into pavilions is required including new provision at Sandhurst Rec Ground, Westfield CC and The Walcott Ground and refurbishment at Polegate Rec Ground.

[118] What are the main characteristics of the future supply and demand for provision?

- To meet cricket demand from 20,101 (Hasting's 7,925 and Rother 12,176) additional residents (as currently forecast³) and assuming current levels of cricket demand by age group for matches and training in the peak period,

³ ONS 2014-based housing-led population projections (Released December 2015)

Cricket

the PPC indicates that the equivalent capacity of +1.93 additional cricket pitches will be needed in the study area.

[119] Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet future demand?

- There is sufficient accessible and secured community use provision in the study area to meet future demand once a new pitch is created at St Mary's Recreation Ground (Bexhill) and the existing parish sites at Oaklands Park and Stonegate Cricket Ground are re used for cricket. The facilities at Horntye Park Sports Complex need to be retained or suitable alternative accessible provision must be provided for Hastings Priory CC, along with facilities for informal play in central Hastings such as nets.
- An additional 2 NTP's should be provided to support the growth of junior sections at Westfield Cricket Ground and Pett Rec Ground and investment into new pavilions is required including new provision at Sandhurst Rec Ground, Westfield CC and The Walcott Ground and refurbishment at Polegrove Rec Ground.

2.3 Football

Football

[120] What are the main characteristics of the current supply of and demand for provision?

- There have been changes to the facilities for football in Hastings and Rother since the last facility review in 2016 with the provision of new full sized floodlit 3G Artificial turf pitches at Battle Sports Centre and Bexhill College Sports Centre, as well as some improvements to the maintenance regime of grass pitches to improve drainage and conditions at Bulverhythe, Icklesham, Sandhurst Recreation Grounds and Northiam Playing Fields.

Football

- 85 grass pitches are identified as available for community football across Hastings and Rother, on 46 operational playing pitch sites. A number of these are over-marked to accommodate smaller sided games (e.g., 9v9 on 11v11 or 5v5 on 7v7). A further site, Westfield Downs, is currently being built and will provide one senior pitch, one mini soccer pitch and a clubhouse from April 2023. As such from 2023/24, there will therefore be 87 pitches available to community teams across 47 playing pitch sites.
- There are further pitches on school playing fields in the study area, however at most of these school sites, there is no clear potential to open up community use.
- In addition, there are several unsecured/ unused sites that may present opportunities for reinstatement such as Rye Cricket Salts that used to accommodate youth football but has not been used recently. A closed site Sidley Sports Ground is a key site for football and been identified in the Local Football Facility Plan for a new 3G AGP and changing rooms.
- Key trends in football demand identified in 2016 have continued to impact. These include sustained growth in the recreational game (including veteran and walking football) and in youth football and mini-soccer with increasing numbers of girls playing particularly in mixed mini-soccer teams. From a low base there has been also growth in women football and in disability football. The Covid 19 pandemic and the resulting restrictions also impacted very significantly towards the end of season 2019/20 and throughout 2020/21. However, football demand has largely recovered to pre-pandemic levels in 2021/22.
- In April 2022, Hastings and Rother had a total of 47 affiliated clubs (including separately constituted youth sections of adult clubs) registered to Sussex FA

Football

with 254 teams all playing home fixtures on pitches in the study area. This is an increase of 44 teams - nearly 21% - since the previous audit in 2016 when 210 affiliated teams were registered to Hastings and Rother.

[121] Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet current demand?

- It appears that, for affiliated adult football, there is sufficient overall available supply of adult natural turf pitches to meet current demand.
- However, for youth/mini soccer football and training, shortfalls remain. Pinch points continue to be experienced by several clubs, particularly on Sunday mornings for match play and midweek early evenings for squad training, which constrains the growth aspirations of these clubs and contributes to unmet demand, particularly for girl's football. Several clubs have youth teams playing matches across several different sites, training on grass pitches and others are displaced playing home fixtures outside the study area. To meet the shortfall in current supply investment is needed into full sized floodlit 3G pitches at key sites suitable for both match play and training as detailed in the Action Plan Section 5 of the PPS.

[122] Is the provision that is accessible of sufficient quality and appropriately maintained?

- The football AGPs are good quality, many with newly laid playing surfaces. Most of the grass pitches are of a poor-quality suffering from poor natural drainage, compaction of the ground and overuse, thereby limiting the playing capacity of these pitches. To address this issue on a large scale it would require significant additional investment in maintenance works at the frequencies required to effectively aerate and de-compact the playing surfaces of the poor-quality natural turf pitches.

Football

- The delivery of the grass pitch improvements recommended by the Grounds Maintenance Association through the Football Foundation's Pitch Power pitch assessment reports would go a long way to improving the playing capacity at the three key sites assessed (Bulverhythe, Sandhurst and Tilekiln rec. Grounds). In most cases, this will necessitate increased revenue investment in enhanced pitch maintenance regimes supported by grant funding from the Football Foundation's Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund.
- New, or upgraded pavilions are required at a number of sites to accommodate existing demand and better cater for growth in women and girl's football such as dedicated toilets, changing and officials' facilities. These include Battle Rec, Bulverhythe Rec, Dave Brown Memorial Playing Fields, Guestling, Icklesham Rec, Sandhurst Rec, Sidley Rec, The Down (Bexhill Down).

[123] What are the main characteristics of the future supply and demand for provision?

- Future demand for football facilities is likely to grow substantially to 2039 increasing pressure on the existing supply. By 2039, assuming current levels of participation per capita and the forecast population growth, application of Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator tool indicates there will be a requirement to accommodate approximately 14 more match equivalent sessions a week in season plus around 27 additional weekly training slots.
- The growth plans of the football clubs in the area will also place further pressure on pitch supply. Twenty-one clubs responding to survey in 2022 indicated they have aspirations to increase the number of teams they run over the coming seasons provided the necessary volunteer time and pitches for matches and training can be secured.

Football

[124] Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet future demand?

- Over the period of the strategy to 2039, to address forecast population growth, unmet demand identified by clubs including particularly for women and girls' football, and to deliver on the FA's strategy to transfer more affiliated competitive football to 3G surfaces, further secured provision of 3G AGP pitches is needed.
- Investment in five additional full sized FA registered 3G AGP's to be located key areas to facilitate training and match play demands of large youth clubs should be the priority over the plan period.
- Additional natural turf pitches are also likely to be required for match play by 2039 in light of the increase in demand and the limits on the potential for increasing the capacity in the peak period of the existing secured supply by improvements to quality.
- Rother District Council expects areas of housing growth to be proportionate to each settlement's sustainability and population, i.e., new development in the towns and well-connected villages. Hastings Borough Council are not anticipating the level of housing growth predicted and therefore expect a lower population growth, however there will still be increased and on-going demand due to general population growth, growth aspirations of clubs and the likely increase in demand in women and girl's provision.

2.4 Hockey

Hockey

[125] What are the main characteristics of the current supply of and demand for provision?

- There is currently one full sized sand based artificial grass pitch (AGP) in the study area currently available and used for community hockey at Horntye Park Sports Complex which is in a poor condition. A second full sized pitch is available at Bexhill Academy however there is no access to toilets or changing rooms and as such this pitch has no community hockey use.
- Since the last assessment for the 2016 PPS the sand-based pitch at Bexhill College Sports Centre has been upgraded to provide a rugby training and football compliant 3G playing surface.
- Player affiliation data by age provided by England Hockey in recent seasons suggests demand for hockey is back to pre-covid levels.
- There is only one hockey club in the area South Saxons HC which caters for both youth and adult players, the club has 8 adult teams and a growing youth section but is currently constrained by the lack of security of access to a suitable pitch. The club currently hires the poor-quality pitch at Horntye Sports Complex on a season-by-season basis. This pitch is at risk of closure.

[126] Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet current demand?

- There is sufficient provision in the area to meet current demand. However, access to the provision is not secure beyond a single season. In addition, the provision is of poor quality and at risk from development proposals.

Hockey

[127] Is the provision that is accessible of sufficient quality and appropriately maintained?

- The pitch quality at Horntye Park Sports Complex is poor and has resulted in the site being closed for a period of time, whilst further inspections were carried out. The pitch needs to be resurfaced or, if closed, suitable alternative provision secured for South Saxons HC.

[128] What are the main characteristics of the future supply and demand for provision?

- The club has plans to grow over the next 3 years subject to having a home venue to train and play. They could increase to run up to another 2 Saturday sides and could expand further if the proposal by England Hockey to move junior teams to a Sunday goes ahead.
- Forecast population growth to 2039 of over 20,101 based on 2014 ONS housing-led projections, is estimated to generate little demand for additional pitches.

[129] Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet future demand?

- Whilst the club has aspirations to grow, it is not beyond the capacity of one full sized sand dressed AGP, as such there is no demand for additional supply in Hastings and Rother, however there is an urgent need to provide suitable provision for South Saxons HC to ensure their future, as well as to protect the current supply of sand dressed pitches to support delivery of school activity and outreach work within the area.

2.5 Rugby

Rugby

[130] What are the main characteristics of the current supply of and demand for provision?

- Since the last assessment of needs for rugby union in 2016, there has been a change in the supply of rugby pitches with the loss of a grass pitch at Bulverhythe Recreation Ground, with the match demand being displaced to Ark Academy, home of Hastings and Bexhill RFC. There have been improvements to pitch quality on this site and Bexhill College now has a WR22 compliant 3G ATP, although it is at capacity with no community rugby usage.
- Between the three rugby clubs playing in Hastings and Rother, there are a total of 4 regular adult men's Saturday league sides and a veteran's team. Hastings and Bexhill RFC have junior sections offering both youth boys age grade rugby and mini rugby for boys. There is currently no women and girls rugby teams although Hastings and Bexhill RFU are offering sessions in local schools and running a girls junior training session in partnership with Active Hastings. Rye RFU is considering establishing a recreational offer for women. Given the lack of provision for women and girls at present across Hastings and Rother, it is likely some of the demand for Women's and girls' rugby will be displaced outside of the study area to clubs such as Heathfield and Waldron RFC who currently provide these sessions.

[131] Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet current demand?

- The rugby clubs based in the area have good security of access to the facilities they use for home matches, with both Hastings and Bexhill RFC and Rye FC having long leases on their facilities. Only St Leonards Cinque Ports RFC have to hire pitches for home matches.

Rugby

- Overall, there are sufficient rugby pitches in Hastings and Rother to meet current demand for matches. However, the training provision for clubs in the area is not sufficient.

[132] Is the provision that is accessible of sufficient quality and appropriately maintained?

- Whilst the drainage is good, the maintenance at both sites could be improved further to increase capacity. Hastings and Bexhill RFC pitches are used over capacity for match play and training, so it is important they maintain their current levels of maintenance as a minimum, if not improve it to accommodate all their demand.
- There is no need for improvements to auxiliary changing and parking facilities in the area, but both clubs have identified the need for improved floodlighting solutions in a recent RFU Facility Needs questionnaire and the RFU deem the training area at Hastings and Bexhill RFC as not compliant.

[133] What are the main characteristics of the future supply and demand for provision?

- To meet rugby demand from 20,101 additional residents (as currently forecast⁴) and assuming current levels of rugby demand by age group for matches and training in the peak period, the equivalent capacity of +0.5 additional natural turf full size equivalent rugby pitches for matches will be needed in the study area with sufficient floodlit provision to accommodate an additional 0.55 hours a week of training use.

[134] Is there enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet future demand?

Rugby

- The current unused capacity at Rye RFC and an increased maintenance programme at Rye RFC could accommodate the extra demand, but improved access to training provision is needed for Hasting & Bexhill RFC to support the growth aspirations of the club. This could be met by improving access to the Rugby ATP at Bexhill College Sports Centre, which is currently at capacity with football (see figure 3.1) or by the provision of a new 3G ATP at Ark Academy to cater for both football and rugby with secured rugby usage for Hasting & Bexhill RFC.
- Rother District Council expect areas of housing growth to be proportionate to each settlement's sustainability and population, i.e. new development in the towns and well-connected villages. Hastings Borough Council are not anticipating the level of housing growth predicted by these figures and therefore expect a lower population growth.

2.6 Summary

[135] In summary, much has been achieved in the years since the current playing pitch strategy was prepared. In terms of artificial grass pitches, a new 3G pitch has been installed at Battle Sports Centre whilst, at Bexhill College, a sand based AGP has been upgraded to provide a rugby training and football compliant 3G playing surface to the benefit of these sports but to the detriment of community hockey. Improvements have also been made to the pitch quality at Ark Academy used at weekends by Hastings and Rother RFC. For cricket, new and upgraded artificial grass wickets have been provided supporting the growth of junior sections at several clubs.

⁴ ONS 2014-based housing-led population projections (Released December 2015)

[136] In addition, many relatively small-scale, affordable enhancements have been made to existing natural turf playing pitches and supporting ancillary facilities. Examples in Hastings by the borough council include an improved pitch layout and maintenance at Bulverhythe Recreation Ground and enhanced pitch maintenance at Sandhurst Recreation Ground. Although further improvements are needed to increase pitch quality.

[137] Town and parish councils in Rother have also made significant facility improvements to recreation ground facilities since 2016, some in partnership with local groups and sports clubs. Just three such examples are Battle Recreation Ground (pitch drainage, clubhouse improvements), Crowhurst Recreation Ground (pavilion works) and Icklesham Recreation Ground (pitch improvements).

[138] Although there has been disruption to the established patterns of participation in all four of the major playing pitch sports caused by Covid 19 mitigation measures, demand for places to play has recovered well. Within the study area, demand now appears to be exceeding pre-pandemic levels in all four main playing pitch sports, in the younger age groups most particularly.

[139] The detailed assessments undertaken into supply and demand factors have shown that, notwithstanding the new AGPs and enhanced playing pitch facilities since 2016, there remain pinch points and some key issues around quality and security of pitches for community club use and the distribution of available pitches in relation to the locations of the largest clubs. These are mainly capacity for youth football fixtures (for the larger clubs this necessitates playing home matches across two or more playing pitch sites) and for midweek training.

[140] There are also unmet facility aspirations for several of the larger football and cricket clubs including the senior football club, Hastings United, which wishes to relocate from The Pilot Field and develop a stadium pitch and AGPs at Tilekiln Recreation Ground. For hockey, there is also a particular issue of security of pitch access for the South Saxons club and risk of permanent closure of a key site in Central Hastings - Horntye Sports Complex.

[141] With population growth of more than 20,000 forecast by 2039 - the end of the new Local Plan period - it is clear that, without plans to further increase the capacity of the supply - particularly for football - (and/or to secure access to some of the existing closed supply), these pinch points will come under increasing pressure as new housing developments are delivered. Further playing pitch capacity will need to be secured in order to maintain and improve opportunities for existing and future residents to take part in playing pitch sports for their health and wellbeing.

[142] The summary conclusions of the assessment of current and future playing pitch needs are:

- There is no secure capacity for club hockey in the study area and the current (unsecured) provision at Horntye Sports Complex is in poor condition and in need of resurfacing or replacement in a suitable accessible location.
- There is insufficient secure capacity for youth/ junior football on Sundays and for midweek training. To address forecast population growth, unmet demand identified by clubs (particularly for women and girls' football), and to deliver on the FA's strategy to transfer more

affiliated competitive football to 3G surfaces, further secured provision of 3G AGP pitches is likely to be required.

- Additional natural turf pitches may also be required for football match play by 2039 in light of the limits on the potential for increasing the capacity in the peak period of the existing secured supply by improvements to quality. However, this potential need for future grass pitches would potentially be offset by the development of the proposed new floodlit 3G AGPs (as detailed within the Action Plan Section 5), as these pitches have much higher carrying capacities than grass pitches. This will require on-going review by the Steering Group.
- There are supply distribution issues for cricket clubs in relation to the locations where there is greatest demand (Hastings, Bexhill, Westfield) and risk of loss of the pitch at Horntye Sports Complex in Central Hastings for Hastings Priory Cricket Club.
- Grass pitch maintenance and floodlight improvements are the main needs for community club rugby going forward. As well as securing sufficient midweek floodlit training time on the rugby compliant AGP at Bexhill College or the development of a new rugby compliant AGP at Ark Academy with secured rugby usage for Hastings and Bexhill RFC.
- Protection of all existing playing field sites for community sport and formal sports provision or for informal recreational activity.

[143] Section 3 considers a range of scenarios and options to increase the playing capacity to meet these identified needs.



PPS Section 3 – Scenario Testing

B - PPS Section 3 - Scenario Testing

3.1 Introduction

[144] As part of the Strategy Development process a number of scenarios have been considered along with their potential implications on the future picture of provision for the leading playing pitch sports in both local authority areas. The Steering Group has used a number of scenarios to test the adequacy of the current secure pitch provision to meet existing and future demand. These scenarios have also been considered in relation to setting the priorities for future enhancement and provision detailed in the action plan for playing pitches and in the overall Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy action plan at Section 5.

Strategic Multi -sport Multi Pitch Sites (MU)

[145] Hastings and Rother has a number of leading multi-sport sites which serve a wide range of sport and activity. These grounds are designated as Outdoor Sports Facilities and are primarily protected and maintained for sports use only with the presumption that the sites be developed in favour of outdoor sport to enhance existing activities and facilities.

[146] The Playing Pitch Strategy process of consultation and analysis has highlighted a number of important improvements and potential investment needs across these sites. The coordination of these opportunities with the National Governing Bodies, resident sports clubs and the Council will be required as well as funding opportunities and the specification and capacity of these important sites. Whilst the specific actions and timings are dealt with in the action plan set out in Section 5 the actions and priorities for these leading multi-sport sites carry additional importance given the leading

sports within this Playing Pitch Strategy and the influence on levels of participation across the study area.

Population Growth

[147] Rother District Council expect areas of housing growth to be proportionate to each settlement’s sustainability and population, i.e., new development in the towns and well-connected villages. Hastings Borough Council are not anticipating the level of housing growth predicted by these figures and therefore expect a lower population growth.

Protection of Current Provision

[148] This playing pitch strategy places significant emphasis on the need to retain the current stock of community sports provision and where sites are under a direct threat of loss or development which leads to a loss of sports provision equivalent / suitable alternative provision should be secured in an accessible location or mitigation provided of equivalent value to continue to provide for community sport in the catchment.

Scenario	Potential impact
3. 2 Improved quality of sites	<p>[149] Before considering the provision of new playing fields it is important to first consider the potential for increasing capacity of existing sites (particularly those grounds owned or leased by community clubs) as these have resources and structures in place (e.g., grounds maintenance, coaching) and an established sporting identity developed over many years.</p> <p>[150] Improving the quality of ancillary facilities can also have an impact on attracting under-represented groups to all pitch sports.</p>

Scenario	Potential impact
	<p>Cricket</p> <p>[151] Sussex Association of Cricket Grounds was created to improve pitches in the County and support clubs and grounds persons with training, advice and accessed to subsidised specialist machinery to existing sites with fine turf cricket pitches.</p> <p>[152] Priority projects for quality improvements to fine turf and artificial turf pitches as well as to practice nets and to pavilions are identified in the Action Plan that follows.</p> <p>Football</p> <p>[153] As identified in the 2019 Local Football Facility Plan improving the quality of key natural turf pitches on those key sites in greatest demand for Sunday morning adult football, youth football and mini-soccer would have significant impact on increasing overall playing capacity.</p> <p>[154] If all 47 pitches on the 23 sites rated as poor (including the 18 pitches on the identified 3 key sites for Pitch Power quality assessment) were improved to 'standard' quality, a further 68 match equivalent sessions could be programmed on these sites across adult and youth football and mini soccer. If further improved to a 'good' quality 126 match equivalent sessions would be created. However, sustaining higher playing capacity will require ongoing commitment to enhanced pitch maintenance at these sites which is challenging in the context of local authority budgets particularly for the open access sites where informal use also takes place.</p> <p>[155] With respect to artificial grass pitches for football there are currently only two 3G AGPs in the area accredited as meeting the quality standard for affiliated league match use.</p>

Scenario	Potential impact
	<p>Hockey</p> <p>[156] To maintain the current levels of playing capacity in the area the priority is to secure access to a floodlit sand dressed AGP for South Saxons HC to support the continuation of the club and enable further growth.</p> <p>[157] This could be achieved through the resurface of Horntye Sports Complex or via suitable alternative accessible provision with long term security of access for the club. It is important to also retain Bexhill Academy as a sand dressed pitch and work with the school to enable community hockey usage.</p> <p>Rugby</p> <p>[158] Both clubs in the area need to enhance their pitch maintenance programme to maximise the capacity of their pitches to support further growth of the clubs (especially Hastings and Bexhill RFU). Both clubs have also identified a need for improvements to their floodlighting options for training.</p>
3.3 More community use at education sites	<p>[159] As in most areas, community use of pitches on education sites in Hastings and Rother helps to meet the demand for pitch sports. School pitches in the area are particularly important to community hockey and football, and to a lesser but still significant extent for cricket and rugby.</p> <p>Cricket</p> <p>[160] Community cricket is played on good quality facilities at Ark Academy and Claremont Prep and Nursery, whilst there is a history of community club use on both sites the clubs do not have security of access beyond seasonal hire agreements. Planning conditions</p>

Scenario	Potential impact	Scenario	Potential impact
	<p>include a community use agreement that should secure Hastings Priory CC's future at Claremont.</p> <p>[161] One education site in the study area which has potential capacity for more community use is Vinehall School.</p> <p>Football</p> <p>[162] Expanding the playing capacity for community football on education sites - in particular youth football and mini-soccer and adult team training - on education 3G AGPs has been a notable success of the 2016 strategy (e.g. at Bexhill College and Battle Sports Centre).</p> <p>[163] In addition, should football demand growth trends continue (particularly in the girls and women's game), it will be important to maximise the opportunities afforded for playing fields at existing schools with playing fields not currently used by the community, as well as future new and expanded schools in the study area. However currently the only school grass pitches not being used are mainly on primary school sites. Most have single small sided pitches and lack easy access to welfare and changing facilities.</p> <p>[164] Hastings Academy and Buckswood school could increase community usage to include match play but would need to register the sites on the FA Pitch Register, and in the case of Hastings Academy the pitch would need resurfacing to meet the requirements.</p> <p>Hockey</p> <p>[165] South Saxons HC, the only hockey club in the area, has no security of access currently and the venue is at risk of development.</p>		<p>[166] Any mitigation for the proposed development needs to provide security of access for the club to enable it to continue in the first instance and then grow further.</p> <p>[167] Improving the access to ancillary facilities at Bexhill Academy would enable the site to be used for community hockey.</p> <p>Rugby</p> <p>[168] There is little potential (or needs case) for further use of education sites in the study area for community rugby match provision. The RFU favours grounds secured by clubs either freehold or on long leases. Hastings and Bexhill RFC has good security of access at Ark Academy.</p>
		<p>3. 4 Change of use from one sport or pitch type to another</p>	<p>Cricket</p> <p>[169] In the case of cricket, the needs assessment supports retention of the existing supply of fine turf pitches to provide sufficient capacity to accommodate forecast growth from population change and investment in developing the women and girl's game. However, now that lower league adult cricket can be played on non-turf pitches (NTPs), there is a needs case for more NTPs at cricket grounds (either on existing fine turf cricket tables or, where there is sufficient land, as junior pitches separate from the cricket table). A well-maintained NTP has a playing capacity of up to 60 adult match equivalent sessions or 80 junior sessions in a season compared to 5 adult/7junior for a fine turf strip.</p> <p>[170] Provision of a NTP at Pett Rec. Ground and Westfield Cricket Ground are identified as priorities in the cricket Assessment of Need (Appendix A) to increase capacity for development aligning with the respective cricket clubs' development plans.</p>

Scenario	Potential impact
	<p>Football</p> <p>[171] Further match play capacity in the peak period of evening and weekends (including midweek training capacity) could be secured at key locations across the study area (Hastings x 2, Bexhill, Rye, Mid / North Rother) if a natural turf pitch was changed to a floodlit compliant 3G playing surfaces. However this would require significant investment and planning approval.</p> <p>[172] If the needs of the hockey and cricket clubs at Horntye Sports Complex are mitigated for elsewhere the site could be a potential location for a full sized 3G AGP to ensure some form of community sporting provision is retained on the site <i>(see 5.3 Key Strategic Sites for more information)</i></p> <p>Hockey</p> <p>[173] To continue to meet existing demand for community hockey in Hastings and Rother it is important that any proposal to convert an existing sand based ATP to 3G recognised to be protected in the PPS needs to be resisted unless re-provided at a suitable location.</p> <p>[174] Further hockey capacity could be achieved at Bexhill Academy if the regular football bookings were to be relocated from this pitch to 3G football pitches, enabling capacity for hockey to be increased substantially, particularly in the evenings.</p> <p>Rugby</p> <p>[175] Capacity for Rugby Training could be achieved at Bexhill College if some of the regular football bookings were moved to other 3G pitches. This would support the club's growth and development as well as prevent the over play of their grass pitches / training areas.</p>

Scenario	Potential impact
3.5 Lose availability of a key site or sites	<p>[176] The loss of availability of Horntye Sports Complex, without sufficient mitigation to would have a very significant adverse impact on the provision and opportunities for hockey and cricket in the area. Football usage on site included informal and commercial groups rather than affiliated clubs. Even with sufficient mitigation for the resident clubs, the site is a key sporting facility for the area of Hastings and some form of sporting provision should be retained on the site.</p> <p>[177] Pilot Field is a key stadium venue for Hastings United which without investment or an alternative site being identified, the future sustainability and development of the club could put in jeopardy in the Hastings area. Community football in Hastings and Rother is far less reliant on sports grounds in private ownership, key multi-pitch sites that would have an significant impact on football participation include Bulverhythe, Sandhurst and Tilekiln Recreation ground in Hastings and Little Common and Polegrove Recreation Ground and Oaklands Park in Rother. Sidley Sports Ground has been closed since it was brought by a developer in 2013. Applications for housing on the site have been made and refused and dismissed on appeal.</p> <p>[178] Both rugby clubs have good security of access on their grounds.</p> <p>[179] Most cricket clubs have good security of tenure on their home grounds. Two key sites for community Cricket under ownership of the Rother District include Polegrove and Little Common Recreation Ground, due to the size of the clubs based at these grounds, the loss of these sites would have significant impact on their ability to continue their level of provision. Sidley CC is</p>

Scenario	Potential impact	Scenario	Potential impact
	<p>currently looking to secure a lease on St Mary’s Recreation Ground which will then secure this site and enable further development of the club.</p> <p>[180] These sites are considered further in the Action Plan in Section 5.</p>		<p>Provision of new playing pitches at one or more of these identified opportunity sites would have a substantial impact on addressing the identified future needs of clubs for pitches and training provision in the study area for these sports.</p>
<p>3.6 New pitches in study area</p>	<p>[181] In the course of developing the strategy, the following main opportunity sites for new playing pitches have been identified (subject to detailed feasibility assessment):</p> <p>Cricket</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o St Marys Rec Ground – new square and pavilion o Claremont Prep and Nursery – new square and pavilion <p>Football</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Westfield – 1 adult, 1 mini soccer pitch and pavilion (in development) o Sidley Recreation Ground - Levelling up funding has been awarded for a new community hub at including improved toilets, changing room facilities and a 3G football pitch o Worsham (NE Bexhill) – 1 adult, 2 Junior pitches and pavilion o Kiteye Farm (N Bexhill) – new pitches (number to be determined) o New 3G provision in key areas, Hastings (Ark Academy, Summerfields LC or Tilekiln), Bexhill (Sidley Sports ground, Gunters Lane or Bexhill Leisure Centre), Mid / North Rother (Robertsbridge Community College), Rye (Rye College). <p>Hockey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Claremont Prep and Nursery – new sand dressed AGP 	<p>3.7 Significant increase in demand in a specific part of the study area.</p>	<p>[182] Allocation of housing provision is likely to be distributed relatively evenly across the study area, with growth connected to current towns and well-connected villages. As such there is unlikely to be a significant demand in a specific part of the study area, but a general increase in the already populated areas, so it is key to ensure there is sufficient provision in the areas for current and future demand.</p> <p>[183] Without further provision of playing pitches, future development will result in a shortfall of supply if not supported by new provision. Enhancement to existing pitches and increased use of existing education pitches alone will not provide sufficient additional capacity to accommodate the level of increased demand likely to be generated by the additional population.</p> <p>[184] These proposals significantly strengthen the needs case for more playing pitch capacity, and in particular 3G provision within the areas of Hastings, Bexhill and Rye.</p> <p>[185] Hastings Borough Council are not anticipating the level of housing growth predicted and therefore expect a lower population growth, however there will still be increased and on-going demand due to general population growth, growth aspirations of clubs and the changing nature of the different sports.</p>

Scenario	Potential impact
<p>3.8 Significant demand growth in a particular sport, gender or age group</p>	<p>[186] The governing bodies of football, cricket and rugby all have a clear strategic focus on delivering more opportunities for women and girls to play and compete. As identified in the detailed assessments of future need for each sport, it is demand growth in this gender that is likely to be the most significant over the next planning period.</p> <p>[187] Hastings and Rother has community clubs in all four playing pitch sports of the necessary size and proven commitment to deliver in this key area. This is evidenced by the growth in women and girls’ teams since the last playing pitch strategy in 2016 and detailed in the assessment of need reports appended.</p> <p>[188] In hockey, equal opportunities and participation by gender is already in place at South Saxons Hockey Club. The area of greatest demand growth is likely to continue to be among junior teams.</p>

3.9 Summary

[189] In summary, the scenarios that present the greatest opportunities for the Council and its partners to address the playing pitch facility needs identified in Section 2 of this PPS are:

- [190] *Increase in demand in specific area* - The housing growth areas present significant opportunity to secure development contributions to address identified local infrastructure needs for community playing pitches. The priority should be to secure off site contributions to enhance the playing capacity at existing strategic multi-sport or sport

specific playing pitch sites with existing ancillary provision and established site management and that are easily accessible from these areas without a car.

- [191] *Quality improvements* - improving the quality of key natural turf pitches on those key sites in greatest demand for Saturday cricket, Sunday morning adult football, youth football and mini-soccer - and, crucially, sustaining the improved quality by means of enhanced ongoing maintenance regimes - would have significant impact on increasing overall capacity. Improvements to floodlighting provision is needed for Rugby training to enable safer sessions to be undertaken.
- [192] *Change of Playing Surface* - Provision of more football full sized 3G AGP capacity to cater for training and youth league match play (in place of grass if necessary) at key locations across the study area (Hastings x 2, Bexhill, Rye, Mid / North Rother) - would have a positive impact not just on meeting future increases in demand for football but also by preventing overuse of grass pitches and freeing up capacity for hockey training and community programmes on the sand based AGPs at Bexhill Academy and Vinehall School.
- [193] *New pitches* – New Cricket provision at St Mary’s Rec, Claremont Prep and Nursery enables Sidley CC and Hasting Priory CC to have dedicated provision on one site. The development of pitches in Bexhill at Worsham provides additional capacity for growth in demand in the area. Additional FA / WR22 compliant 3G AGPs across the area as identified will meet current club training needs and alleviate overplay on key sites in the study area.

- [194] *More community use at education sites* - Increasing the number of artificial pitches on education sites would impact very significantly on meeting future needs for community sport. To maximise the community benefit, any new education facility should be developed alongside a voluntary club partner and include a formal Community use Agreement as a condition of any planning permission. Also, schools with grass sports pitches not currently available for community use should be encouraged to allow use of facilities outside of school hours.



PPS Section 4 - Action Plan

B - PPS Section 4. Action Plan

4.1 Introduction

[195] This final section of the Playing Pitch Strategy sets out an initial action plan for delivering the priority playing pitch facility projects for enhancements and new provision. The projects have been decided by the Steering Group after considering a range of future scenarios and their impacts (Section 3), and the strategic recommendations in Section 4.

[196] These projects have been prioritised as having the best potential to impact against the shared objective outcomes of the organisations represented on the Hastings and Rother Playing Pitch Steering Group to improve health and wellbeing by ensuring all residents have access to good quality facilities for sport and physical activity.

[197] Figure 4.1 and 4.2 presents the projects for each area in alphabetical order categorised by sport with a reference to their potential to be progressed either in the short term (defined as within 2 years approximately) the medium term (defined as within 2-5 years) or longer - for example projects dependent on acquisition of land, the outcome of wider area development planning or large-scale review of options, feasibility and viability.

[198] Figure 4.3 and 4.4 identifies sites where there are opportunities for providing or extending community sports opportunities pending funding and relevant permissions.

[199] Figure 4.5 and 4.6 identifies those sites that are not identified either in Fig 4.1/4.2 (for enhancement or new provision) or 4.3/4.4 (opportunity

sites) but are in need of protection for community sport through the planning system. The omission of any playing pitch site from this Playing Pitch Strategy is not an endorsement by the Council, Sport England or the relevant national governing body of that sport of its disposal.

[200] In accordance with the published guidance for the preparation of playing pitch strategies, it is recommended that each Council convene and chair periodic meetings of the Playing Pitch Strategy Steering Group to review, progress and update the Action Plan and the priority ranking of projects to reflect material changes in the picture of supply and demand and changing scenarios. The updates to the Action Plan should in turn inform periodic updates of both Council's priorities for investment through capital grant and loan programmes and should be published as an addendum to the evidence base.

[201] Where capital budget sums are shown for new provision, these are indicative estimates derived from Sport England Facility Cost Guidance Sheet (Quarter 3, 2022) or cost estimates provided by the sport's governing bodies. Actual costs will need to be determined as part of project specific feasibility studies.

[202] The action plan is a guide to how facilities might be developed, pending funding confirmation and planning permission where necessary, where and whom they might be developed by to meet identified demand, exploit opportunities that may arise and provide sustainable management and operational models often through engaging with either voluntary or commercial partners. Each potential project must be evaluated considering the current situation, as the strategy and action plan whilst planning ahead, provides the position at the time of writing; so, factors on both the demand

and supply side may have changed as well as the cost and viability of the project at the point when a specific project is being considered.

4.2 Categorisation and Identification of Sites

[203] Sites are categorised in action plan as follows.

A – Pitches to be developed (new construction)

B – Pitches to be retained

C – Pitches to be improved / renovated

D – Pitches to be considered for alternative sports uses.

Protection of sites

[204] This playing pitch strategy places significant emphasis on the need to retain the current stock of community sports provision and where sites are under a direct threat of loss or development which leads to a loss of sports provision equivalent / suitable alternative provision should be secured in an accessible location or mitigation provided of equivalent value to continue to provide for community sport in the catchment.

Strategic Multi -sport Multi Pitch Sites (MU)

[205] Hastings and Rother has a number of leading multi sport sites which serve a wide range of sport and activity. These grounds are designated as Outdoor Sports Facilities and are primarily protected and maintained for sports use only with the presumption that the sites be developed in favour of outdoor sport to enhance existing activities and facilities.

[206] The Playing Pitch Strategy process of consultation and analysis has highlighted a number of important improvements and potential investment needs across these sites. The coordination of these opportunities with the

National Governing Bodies, resident sports clubs and the Council will be required as well as funding opportunities and the specification and capacity of these important sites. Whilst the specific actions and timings are dealt with in the action plan set out below the actions and priorities for these leading multi-sport sites carry additional importance given the leading sports within this Playing Pitch Strategy and the influence on levels of participation across the study area.

[207] This action plan from the PPS forms part of the wider Indoor and Outdoor Sports Strategy Action Plan for its full delivery covering indoor and outdoor community sports facilities in Hastings and Rother.

[208] Identifying features:

- Comprise a number of pitches and accommodate more than one sport
- Used by several organisations and clubs
- Pitches available for club and/or community use on a season long or pay and play basis
- Grounds spatially distributed across the area in order to facilitate good access to facilities
- Adequate and appropriate car parking to cater for users

Sport Specific Priority Sites

[209] These sports grounds are also designated as Outdoor Sports Facilities and are protected and maintained for sports use only whilst demand exists for a particular sport or sports, with the presumption that the sites be developed in favour of outdoor sport to enhance existing activities and facilities. Playing as well as ancillary facilities will be either maintained or developed to meet the required standards laid down by the relevant national governing body of that sport. Future developments could include the rebuilding of pavilions and /or changing rooms to ensure the facilities

meet league standards for a given sport. Current provision could also be enhanced by developing a single sport site to become dual purpose e.g. a football ground might be developed to include a cricket wicket, to allow for year-round use of the site.

[210] Identifying features:

- Priority use for winter or summer sport
- These sites can be either club owned and operated, Council or Parish Council facilities operated under lease by a club.
- Discontinuity of provision would cause major issues for the delivery of the specific sport(s)

Accessible and Affordable Provision

[211] The development of new facilities such as 3G AGPs should be supported by a sound business case including accessible and affordable hire charges for community football clubs particularly junior clubs. Fees and charges should where possible replicate match-based charges (e.g. similar to grass pitch hire) so as not to excluded or restrict access to such facilities.

4.3 Key Strategic Sites – Future Development and Protection of Accessible Community Sport

Hastings

Pilot Field

[212] Hastings Council recognise the importance of Hastings United FC remaining in the borough. The Council also recognise the extended role that the club has with the many junior teams directly linked to and affiliated with the club. The stadium needs investment in order to continue to meet the

FA ground grading requirements or an alternative site needs to be developed. Any loss / redevelopment of Pilot Field would need to ensure the current facilities were reprovided and enhanced at a suitable site elsewhere in the borough. Suitable sites other than playing fields could be considered, but if the alternative site identified is a playing field, then mitigation for the loss of that playing field or enhancement for community sport would also need to be provided and justified.

Tilekiln Recreation Ground

[213] Tilekiln is a significant site for the provision of youth and adult football in the area. The action plan identifies options to improve the quality of the playing pitches on site to increase capacity as well as investigate the viability of the development of a community football hub including 3G ATP provision. The Council would need to ensure this site continues to provide access for local football clubs and community sport as part of any future site development planning and management. Other options could be justified so long as they provide sufficient benefit to enhance community sport provision.

Horntye Sports Complex

[214] Hastings Council recognise that the current situation at Horntye is not sustainable, but also that the needs and demand identified within this Playing Pitch Strategy would mean any loss of this site for community sports facility in this vital central location would have a notable and detrimental impact on provision within Hastings.

[215] At the time of this Playing Pitch Strategy being published the current proposals would provide an alternate location for the hockey and cricket clubs but does not provide sufficient mitigation for reinvestment into other sites within Hastings to provide on-going suitable community access to both

grass pitches and artificial pitches. Given the other demands and limited sites within Hastings this puts further pressure on the need to retain this important community sports site. The on-going viability of continuing to provide indoor sport (with the cost of refurbishment and suitability of the building) is also a concern.

[216] As part of the delivery of the proposed projects within the Action Plan, the Council are keen to explore more suitable options and opportunities for the retention of outdoor pitch provision at Horntye which would require additional planning and viability testing.

Bulverhythe Recreation Ground

[217] This site is a key community sports site for residents and community clubs within both Hastings and Rother. The border between the two authorities lies within the site and whilst Hastings is the landowner responsible for maintenance of the pitches, planning responsibility for improvements to pavilions and changing provision is under the management of Rother.

[218] Investment has been made into the site since the last Playing Pitch Strategy, but the increased demand identified within this strategy highlights the need to invest further into the pitch quality alongside providing a solution for the changing provision and pavilions on site. The site would appear to lend itself to a single pavilion suitable for all clubs and community users potentially working in partnership with the Discovery Centre and café currently on site and would provide an opportunity for the wider promotion of other outdoor activities and opportunities for physical activity linked to Combe Valley Country Park and the recreation ground. Both Councils would need to work together for any investment into this key site.

Ark Academy

[219] The school site has been identified as a key site for on-going provision of community sport for football, cricket and rugby. Investment into the site is proposed in the Action Plan and Hastings Council should continue to support the future development and protection of community use at the site.

Rother

Polegrove Recreation Ground

[220] This site provides a venue for key clubs in the district for both football and cricket, as well as recreational and event space in a key part of Bexhill. The stadium grandstand and changing rooms are in need of upgrade to support the Senior Club to continue achieve the ground grading requirements they need for Step 6 of the National league System. The playing pitches also need investment to cope with the growing demands of youth football and cricket using the site as well as recreational demand. Due to the increased growth of both the cricket and football clubs, the council may wish to consider relocating one of the clubs onto one of the further opportunity sites, should a suitable site be identified, this would protect the site from further overuse and enable more recreational activities to take place.

Little Common Recreation Ground

[221] This site provides for both Senior Football (Step 5 of the National League System), youth football and adult cricket. At the time the site visits were done, some of the football pitches were rated poor, but end of season works to goal mouths have improved the capacity of the pitches. However, with the demand of the site for youth football as well as recreational use the current levels of pitch maintenance need to be protected for the future.

[222] The cricket square would benefit from enhanced pitch maintenance and the location of the open basketball net causes issues for usage of the NTP, it would be worth investigating to see if this can be relocated to provide cricket nets in this area and reorganise the space to accommodate all outdoor activities.

Figure 4.1 Actions for Hastings

Site	Timescale	Main sport(s)	Action(s)	Category	Lead	Partners	Cost
Ark Academy (MU)	Medium	Football Cricket Rugby	Development of new 3G FA / WR22 compliant AGP (subject to planning/ funding) Retain Square for community use Work with Rugby club to improve floodlit provision for training and improve maintenance on pitches	A B C	Academy	FF / FA / LA ECB RFU Active Sussex	£1.130m approx
Summerfields Leisure Centre development	Long	Football	Development of new 3G AGP (subject to planning/ funding) Explore the potential to locate the pitch in the White Rock Gardens.	A	LA	FF / FA	£1.075m approx
Bulverhythe Rec	Medium	Football	Pavilion refurbishment / replacement solutions to be determined and assessed. Improve maintenance of pitches in line with Pitch Power recommendations	C	LA	FF / FA	tbc
Dave Brown Memorial PF	Long	Football	Support club to apply for funding to improve grass pitches and refurbish pavilion.	C	Club	FF / FA / LA	tbc
Darwell Close MUGA	Short	Multi Use	Seek contributions to replace provision or provide suitable alternative to loss.	A	LA		tbc
Gibbons Memorial Fields	Medium	Football	Support club to apply for funding to improve grass pitches.	C	Club	FF / FA / LA	tbc
Hastings Academy	Long	Football	Resurface 3G AGP and register on FA pitch register to allow league play. Retain grass pitch	C	Academy	FF / FA / LA / Active Sussex	£200k approx
Horntye Sports Complex (MU)	Short	Cricket Hockey Other Sports	If no suitable alternative option is delivered for Hastings Priory CC along with suitable mitigation for the loss of a central community sports facility within Hastings, then the site should be retained for Cricket - with suitable maintenance of wickets and the provision of new nets. If no suitable alternative option is delivered for South Saxons HC along with suitable mitigation for the loss of a central community sports facility within Hastings, then the site should be retained for Hockey and community sport with a resurfaced AGP If the Council deem the current plans and planning as unsuitable, then further work to identify a sustainable solution to retain outdoor community sports provision at Horntye should be assessed and planned.	B/C B/C D	Trust / LA Trust / LA Trust / LA	ECB EH Other Sports	tbc £500k approx

Figure 4.1 Actions for Hastings

Site	Timescale	Main sport(s)	Action(s)	Category	Lead	Partners	Cost
Sandhurst Rec Ground (MU)	Medium	Football / Cricket	Pavilion replacement Improve the maintenance of football pitches in line with PitchPower recommendations Once investment is completed on the site the Council could investigate options to secure the site for community club use.	A C	LA	FF / FA / ECB	£755k approx
St Leonards Academy	Long	Football	Retain grass pitches. Possible provision of 3G AGP, should the Summerfields leisure centre development not go ahead.	B/C	Academy	FF / FA / LA / Active Sussex	£1.075 m approx
Site to be identified	Short	Stoolball	Identify a dedicated site suitable for Stoolball within the area.	D	LA	NGB / clubs	tbc
The Firs (MUGA)	Long	Baseball / Football / Informal Recreation	Resurface of sand dressed MUGA. Retain grass pitches.	B/C	Trust / LA	FF / FA	£50k approx
The Pilot Field	Short	Football	Stadium improvements needed for spectator provision or alternative provision secured for Hastings United FC.	C	Club	FF / FA / LA	tbc
Tilekiln Rec Ground	Short	Football	Look at the feasibility of increasing pitch quality and capacity through improved maintenance.	C	LA	FF / FA	tbc
Tilekiln Rec Ground	Medium	Football	Continue to investigate the viability of the development of a community football hub including 3G AGP provision.	A	LA	FF / FA / club	tbc
Torfield School (MUGA)	Long	Informal Recreation	Resurface of sand dressed MUGA	C	School / LA	FF / FA / Active Sussex	£50k approx

Figure 4.2 Actions for Rother

Site	Timescale	Main sport(s)	Action(s)	Category	Lead	Partners	Cost
Arthur Herdman Rec. Ground	Medium	Football	Improve maintenance of pitch.	C	Ewhurst PC / LA	FF / FA	tbc
Battle Abbey Senior School	Ongoing	Hockey	Work with school to retain space to be available for community hockey use. (training / junior development).	B	School / LA	EH / Active Sussex	tbc
		Football	Improve maintenance of pitches and increase community use	C			
Battle Rec Ground	Long	Football	New Changing provision needed.	A	Battle TC / LA	FF / FA	£755k approx
			Improve maintenance of pitches	C			
Battle Sports Centre	Medium	Football Cricket	Improve maintenance of pitches and resurface 3G AGP in 2025 Retain Cricket Square	C/B	School / LA	FF / FA / ECB	£200k approx
Bexhill option for 3G	Medium	Football	Development of new 3G AGP (subject to planning/ funding) either Sidley Sports Ground (Rother) or Bexhill College (Gunters Lane) or Bexhill Leisure Centre.	A	LA	FF / FA	£1.075 m approx
Bexhill Academy	Short	Hockey	Retain as sand dressed and work with school to open up for community hockey use with changing provision	B	Academy / LA	EH / Active Sussex	officer time
Bodiam Rec Ground	Medium	Football	Investigate future demand to re-establish pitches with improved maintenance for use	C	Bodiam PC / LA	FF / FA	tbc
Burwash Common Pavilion	Medium	Cricket	Improved maintenance of Cricket square and outfield	C	Trust / Burwash PC	ECB	tbc
Buckwood School	Medium	Football	Level and improve maintenance of grass pitch. Work with school to add pitch to FA 3G pitch register for league play.	C	School / LA	FF / FA / Active Sussex	tbc
Claremont Prep and Nursery School (MU)	Medium	Cricket	If a new pitch and pavilion is delivered, planning conditions include a community use agreement that should secure Hastings Priory CC's future at Claremont along with other community access.	A	School / LA	ECB / Club / Active Sussex	officer time
		Hockey	If a new pitch is delivered, planning conditions include a community use agreement that should secure South Saxon's future at Claremont along with other community access.	A	School / LA		

Figure 4.2 Actions for Rother

Site	Timescale	Main sport(s)	Action(s)	Category	Lead	Partners	Cost
Guestling Playing Fields	Long	Football	New Changing provision needed Improve maintenance of pitches	A	Guestling PC / LA	FF / FA	£755k approx
Hurst Green Cricket Ground (Drewett Cricket Field)	Long	Cricket	New / improved changing provision needed	A/C	Club	ECB / LA	£290k approx
Icklesham Rec	Long	Football Cricket	New Changing provision needed Retain NTP	A B	Icklesham PC / LA	FF / FA / ECB	£755k approx
Iden Park	Long	Football Cricket	Investigate future demand to re-establish pitch with improved maintenance for use Retain Cricket Square	A B	Iden PC/ LA	FF / FA ECB	tbc
Little Common Rec Ground (MU)	Short	Football Cricket	Improve maintenance on pitches	C	LA	FF / FA ECB	tbc
Mid / North Rother option for 3G	Long	Football	Development of new 3G AGP (subject to planning/ funding) TBC possible Robertsbridge Community College	A	LA	FF / FA	£1.075 m approx
Mountfield FC	Medium	Football	Work with club to improve maintenance of pitch	C	Club / LA	FF / FA	tbc
Northiam Playing Fields	Long	Football	New pavilion and changing provision needed.	A	Northiam PC / LA	FF / FA	£755k approx
Oaklands Park	Long	Cricket Football	Investigate future demand to re-establish square for use Retain football pitches	A B	Sedlescombe PC / LA	ECB FF / FA	tbc
Pett Rec Ground	Medium	Cricket	New NTP and nets	C	Pett PC / Club	ECB	£65k approx
Polegrove Rec (MU)	Short Medium	Football Cricket	Structural improvements needed to the Grandstand and refurbishment / replacement of changing rooms. Improved maintenance of Cricket Square, new nets	C A/C	LA / Club	FF / FA ECB	tbc £40k +

Figure 4.2 Actions for Rother

Site	Timescale	Main sport(s)	Action(s)	Category	Lead	Partners	Cost
Robertsbridge Community College	Medium	Football	Work with school and user club (Robertsbridge Juniors) to investigate improvements needed to grass pitches.	C	College / Club	FF / FA / Active Sussex	tbc
Robertsbridge Village Hall	Medium	Football	Work with club to improve maintenance to pitches	C	Club / Robertsbridge PC	FF / FA	tbc
Rye option for 3G	Long	Football	Development of new 3G AGP (subject to planning/ funding) poss. Rye College	A	LA	FF / FA	£1.075 m approx
Rye Rugby Club	Medium	Rugby	Work with club to improve floodlit provision for training and improve maintenance on pitches. Retain football pitches	C	Club	RFU / FA	tbc
		Football		B		FF / FA	
Sidley Rec. Ground	Medium	Football	Refurbish pavilion Improve maintenance of grass pitch	C	LA / Heart of Sidley	FF / FA	LUF
Staplecross Playing Fields	Medium	Football	Improve maintenance of grass pitch	C	Ewhurst PC / LA	FF / FA	tbc
St Mary's Recreation Ground	Short	Cricket	New pitch to be developed with changing provision.	A	LA	ECB	£330k + £290k approx
Stonegate Cricket Ground	Long	Cricket	Investigate future demand to re-establish square for use Retain football pitches.	A	Ticehurst PC / LA	ECB	tbc
		Football		B		FF / FA	
The Clappers Rec. Ground	Medium	Football	Improvements to grass pitch maintenance	C	Robertsbridge PC / LA	FF / FA	tbc
The Down (Bexhill Down)	Long	Football / Cricket	Enlarge pavilion to include showers Improvements to grass pitch maintenance	C	LA	FF / FA / ECB	tbc

Figure 4.2 Actions for Rother

Site	Timescale	Main sport(s)	Action(s)	Category	Lead	Partners	Cost
The Walcott Ground	Short	Cricket	Work with club to provide new pavilion and changing provision	A	Club	LA / ECB	£290k approx
Ticehurst Rec Ground	Medium	Football	Improvements to grass pitch maintenance	C	Ticehurst PC / LA	Ff / FA	tbc
Vinehall School	Ongoing	Hockey	Work with school to retain spaces to be available for community hockey use (training / junior development).	B	LA / School	EH / Active Sussex ECB / Active Sussex	tbc
		Cricket	Investigate need for community use of school cricket pitch	B			officer time
Westfield Cricket ground	Short	Cricket	Work with club to support development of new pavilion and changing facilities and NTP.	A	Club / Westfield PC	LA / ECB	£290k approx
Westfield Downs	Short	Football	Provide new facility for Westfield FC. Pavilion, 1 x 11v11 and 1 x 7v7 pitch.	A	Westfield PC / Club	LA / FA	£755k + £135k approx

Further Opportunity Sites

Figure 4.3– Further Opportunity sites – Hastings

Site	Sport	Action	Lead
Education sites to open for community use	All sports	Work with Active Partnership to identify schools to open for community use or extend their current provision through the opening schools' facilities programme.	Schools / Active Sussex

Figure 4.4 – Further Opportunity sites - Rother

Site	Sport	Action	Lead
Kiteye Farm (N Bexhill)	Football or outdoor recreation	DaSA Policy BEX3a requires provision of at least 2.64 hectares of outdoor sports facilities as part of the North Bexhill development. The PPS identifies the need for additional provision in the area, the nature of the facilities and suitability of the site for sports pitches or as a key site for outdoor recreation should be determined through the planning application.	LA / developer
Northeye (W Bexhill)	Football or Cricket	DaSA Policy BEX10 requires provision of a full-sized adult football pitch or a senior cricket pitch with associated pavilion and parking facilities, to replace the existing pitch, as part of redevelopment of the site for housing. This PPS identifies the need for additional provision in this area for a senior football or cricket ground, consultation should be undertaken with existing sports clubs and governing bodies to understand specific league requirements which will determine what can feasibly be delivered.	LA
Worsham (NE Bexhill)	Football	2.4 hectares of outdoor sports facilities (3 pitches (1 senior, 2 junior)) and 2 team changing pavilion secured by s106 as part of the new community. There is a need to coordinate provision with proposed school and community centre to maximise usage and sustainability of site for the future. S106 also reserves land for an additional full-size pitch or a kickabout area at the eastern end of the development. The PPS has not identified the reserve land as a preferred location for additional formal sports pitches due to the absence of ancillary facilities, and as such it is recommended that the alternative informal kickabout area be pursued.	LA / developer
St Richard's Catholic College, Bexhill	Pitches	Investigate the options to open the facilities for community use.	College / RDC / Active Sussex

Figure 4.4 – Further Opportunity sites - Rother

Education sites to open for community use	All sports	Work with Active Partnership to identify schools to open for community use or extend their current provision through the opening schools’ facilities programme.	Schools / Active Sussex
New School Sites – Rother (as part of Worsham Development)	Pitches	Ensure community use of facilities is included as part of any new development through planning policy.	HBC / RDC / Active Sussex

Other Sites for Protection

Fig. 4.5 Other Playing Pitch Sites for Protection - Hastings

Site	Sport
Alexandra Park - MUGA	Informal Recreation
Helenswood Sports Centre	Football
St Pauls COE Academy	Football

Fig. 4.6 Other Playing Pitch Sites for Protection - Rother

Site	Sport
Ashburnham Sports Field	Cricket
Bexhill College Sports Centre	Football / Rugby 3G
Board Oak (Brede) Rec Ground	Informal Recreation
Catsfield Playing Fields	Cricket / Football
Crowhurst Rec Ground	Cricket / Football
Flimwell Playing Fields	Cricket
George Meadow	Cricket
Harbour Field	Football
King Georges Field (Johns Cross)	Cricket

Fig. 4.6 Other Playing Pitch Sites for Protection - Rother	
Netherfield Rec. Ground	Football
Peasmarsh Village Rec. Ground	Football
Robertsbridge Cricket Ground	Cricket
Rye Cricket Salts	Cricket
Rye Sports Centre	Football 3G (Small)
Swan Meadow (Burwash) Playing Fields (MU)	Cricket / Football
Westfield Playing Field	Football
Winchelsea CC	Cricket

PPS Section 5 - Conclusion



PPS Section 5 - Conclusion

[223] This Playing Pitch Strategy replaces the strategy published in 2016 and forms part of the evidence base to inform the update of the Local Plans for Hastings and Rother to 2039.

[224] Since the last Playing Pitch Strategy was published, the capacity of the secured playing pitches available to residents of the study area and its catchment area has increased substantially as the priority actions identified in the strategy have been delivered, for example the new AGP for football at Battle Sports Centre and a football and rugby compliant AGP at Bexhill College Sports Centre. There has been a change in the supply of rugby pitches with the loss of a grass pitch at Bulverhythe Recreation Ground, with the match demand being displaced to Ark Academy, home of Hastings and Bexhill RFC, where there has been improvements made to the pitch quality. There have also been new and upgraded cricket artificial wickets and improvements to grass pitch layouts, drainage and some changing pavilions at playing field sites used by community clubs right across the study area. There is also new playing pitch provision in development for cricket and football in Westfield.

[225] The two Councils has also continued to encourage local schools to facilitate access to their playing fields out of hours for community club use such as at Bexhill College, Ark Academy, Robertsbridge Community College, Buckswood School, Hastings Academy and St Leonard's Academy. A number of Community Use Agreements have been secured through the planning process, ensuring that school facilities are available to local sports groups at an affordable price out of school hours and there is potential to do more in this regard in future.

[226] Demand for playing pitch sports has recovered well following the movement restrictions resulting from the pandemic. The review has found

that, despite the increases in provision since 2016, shortfalls remain in secured playing pitch capacity for hockey and youth football and that the current shortfall will be increased as housing allocations in the two local authorities new emerging Local Plans to 2039 are determined and delivered.

[227] In common with all local authorities, Hastings and Rother Councils have had to manage cuts to their budget since the last playing pitch strategy was adopted alongside a series of unexpected challenges including the Covid pandemic.

[228] Despite these challenges, the vision of both Council's remains to work with residents, partner organisations, businesses, the voluntary sector and staff to make Hastings and Rother an even better place to live, work and visit.

[229] Ensuring all residents have access to good quality facilities for sport and recreation - including the four primary playing pitch sports - remains an important goal.

[230] This updated Playing Pitch Strategy, and the overall Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2023 to 2039, has identified the likely impact of the population growth currently projected on future demand for pitches for team games and training for the leading pitch sports as well as the potential impact of trends in the key sports, particularly growth in participation by women and girls.

[231] Over the new local plan period to 2039, population growth and participation trends in the sports together evidence a needs case for further playing pitch provision and further enhancement to existing key sites. The two Councils, alongside the network of town and parish councils across Rother district, have a track record of supporting sports projects since the last 2016 strategy. This new strategy is focused on retaining that

momentum and addressing a number of current and emerging issues for playing pitch clubs and key sites. The strategy is also an acknowledgement that this process needs to remain as an on-going focus to meet the growing demands from the needs of changing participation and growing population within Hastings and Rother.

[232] Playing Pitches and outdoor sports provision play a critical role in the health and wellbeing of residents and just as the 2016 strategy identified, continued protection and strategic enhancement of the current stock and the identified priorities for new investment required should remain a key priority for the two Councils.

Hastings and Rother Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy - 2023 – 2039

B. Part 2 Built Facilities Strategy



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BFS Section 1 Introduction

Section 1 Introduction

[233] This document is Part 2 of the Hastings and Rother Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy 2023-39. Consistent with the previous facilities strategies, Part 2 includes the following built sports facilities:

- Swimming pools (not including open water swimming)
- Sports halls (and any locally relevant sport and community centres)
- Gymnastic facilities
- Indoor Bowls
- Fitness facilities (including fitness studio space and fitness gyms)
- Tennis and Netball courts
- Boxing, judo and other martial arts venues
- Squash courts
- Climbing
- Bowls and Croquet greens
- Athletics, Running and walking for leisure
- Cycling, BMX and Skate Parks

[234] Community Activity Halls (under 3 badminton courts in size) are referenced in the sports halls section of the report, where identified as being suitable, available and used regularly by the local community for indoor sports (e.g. dance, keep fit, yoga, short mat bowls, martial arts). Examples of this type include The Pretious Sports Hall Northiam which has two courts used for formal sport and physical activity.

[235] Significant specialist large-scale sports facilities in neighbouring authorities with good access for Hastings and Rother residents have been taken into consideration in determining current and future facility needs. Facility types in this category include: indoor athletics, indoor tennis and cycling provision.

[236] The methodology follows current national guidance published by Sport England - *Assessing Needs & Opportunities Guide (ANOG) for Indoor &*

Outdoor Sports Facilities, Sport England (July 2014). In accordance with ANOG guidance, Section 2 sets out a detailed analysis of facility supply, demand and accessibility factors by sport facility type (informed by the use of available sports facility planning tools) along with a summary of consultation findings to identify club and NGB facility priorities in the study area. The section concludes with recommendations for the protection and enhancement of existing facilities and for the provision of new facilities where considered necessary to address identified current or future needs to 2039.

[237] Section 3 sets out overarching sports facility planning policy recommendations. These ensure that the strategy continues to play a leading role in the on-going provision of high-quality built sport facilities and meet priority needs through the planning process.

[238] Section 4 provides a delivery plan related to the potential priority projects and facility needs for sport and recreation identified in Section 2. This initial action plan will be subject to periodic review and update over the life of the strategy.

BFS Section 2 Sport Specific Analysis



Section 2 - Sport Specific Analysis

Swimming

What's changed since the Leisure Facilities Strategy 2009-20

[239] The previous strategy identified issues of age and inefficiency with regard to the two main indoor public swimming pools in the study area – Summerfields Leisure Centre in Hastings and Bexhill Leisure Pool – and recommended further work be carried out with a view to significant refurbishment works, upgrades to the plant or full replacement.

[240] Progress has been made with pre-planning work for enhanced swimming pool provision to serve residents and visitors which has included public consultation, options appraisals and feasibility studies.

[241] In Hastings, this work has focused on the future upgrade or replacement of Summerfields Leisure Centre. In Rother feasibility studies have included a previous review looking at the replacement of Bexhill Leisure Pool and Bexhill Leisure Centre - both of which have aged buildings and plant which are increasingly costly to operate and maintain - with a new destination combined 'wet and dry' leisure centre. This has been further assessed with Rother Council's 2023 own swimming pool review and strategy which has run in parallel with this overall report. However further progress in both of these major projects has slowed due in the main to the challenging financial environment exacerbated by the impacts of the Covid pandemic.

[242] In recognition of the considerable length of time since the original assessment of swimming pool needs was carried out in 2009, the baseline needs case for swimming pools was re-tested in September 2022 using the Sport England Facilities Planning Model (FPM) to inform and update the councils' plans to replace their key leisure centres.

[243] Separate standard one-year FPM assessments were carried out by Sport England of Swimming Pool provision for Rother District Council and for Hastings Borough Council based on pool supply data and the populations at 2022. It is therefore important to note that the FPM report findings are based on the current picture of supply and demand and take no account of projected population growth across the study area.

Sport England's Facility Planning Model

[244] The overall aims of the two FPM assessments are to provide an up-to-date assessment of need and an evidence base for swimming pools in Hastings and Rother respectively in the year 2022 based on the current population in each local authority and across the wider study area. The FPM assessment identifies the overall public demand for swimming pools in each borough as well as the extent to which this demand is satisfied by the available and accessible supply. The assessments also detail how much of the demand for swimming in each local authority area is unmet and the extent to which the available pools are used to their comfortable capacity in the peak hours.

[245] It is important to note that the FPM is a spatial management tool in that the assessments are based on catchment areas, so include the impacts of the supply of pools in neighboring local authorities and the distribution of their populations. In this way, using the Hastings FPM assessment as the example, the most attractive facility for some residents of Hastings may be located in Rother or another district (known as exported demand). Conversely, for residents of Rother or another local authority, their most attractive swimming pool may be in Hastings (known as imported demand).

[246] Whilst the FPM swimming pool assessments are made separately for Hastings and Rother, the report findings reference both the close similarity in the findings for each local authority and the importance of close cooperation and strategic planning in relation to any changes to swimming pool provision across the whole of the Hastings and Rother study area.

Headline strategic overview from the FPM analysis

[247] The headline strategic finding is that a high level of both Hastings and Rother’s demand for swimming pools in 2022 can be met by the existing available supply. The levels of unmet demand in the current population do not support a needs case for additional new swimming pools to be provided in either local authority in the short term.

[248] In both authority areas, most of the unmet demand that exists currently for swimming is a result of residents living outside the catchment area of a pool i.e. not due to a lack of available capacity at the existing pools.

Supply of swimming pools in Hastings and Rother

[249] Supply is defined as the supply or capacity of the swimming pools available for community and club use in the weekly peak period. Supply is expressed in the number of visits that a pool can accommodate in the weekly peak period and in square metres of water. The total supply and available supply are different because of the hours available for community use in the weekly peak period.

[250] The weekly peak period is when the majority of visits take place and when users have most flexibility to visit. The peak period for swimming pools is one hour on weekday mornings, one hour weekday lunchtimes, five and a half hours on weekday evenings, and seven and a half hours on weekend days. This gives a total of 52.5 hours per week. The modelling and recommendations are based on the ability of the public to access pool facilities during this weekly peak period.

[251] The swimming pool facilities that meet the criteria to be included in the FPM modelling are listed in Figure 2.1 below and the locations of the current swimming pools (green diamonds) are shown in Figures 2.2 (Hastings) and 2.3 (Rother).

Figure 2.1: Details of Swimming Pools in Hastings and Rother included in Runs

Hastings Site	Operation	Facility Type
Bannatyne Health Club	Commercial	4-lane
Summerfields Leisure Centre	Public	6-lane Learner
Rother Site	Operation	Facility Type
Battle Abbey Prep School	Educational	6-lane
Bexhill Leisure Pool	Public	4-lane/leisure
Crowhurst Park	Commercial	Leisure
Rye Sports Centre	Public	4-lane

[252] **Hastings:** There are three individual swimming pools spread across two sites in Hastings. Summerfields Leisure Centre has a 25m six-lane pool and a learner pool. It can accommodate all swimming activities at the community level of participation. The activities are:

- Learn to swim.
- Casual recreational swimming.
- Lane and fitness swimming.
- Swimming development by clubs.

[253] Bannatyne Health Club is a single swimming pool site with a 20m four-lane pool. It is available to the centre membership for recreational swimming.

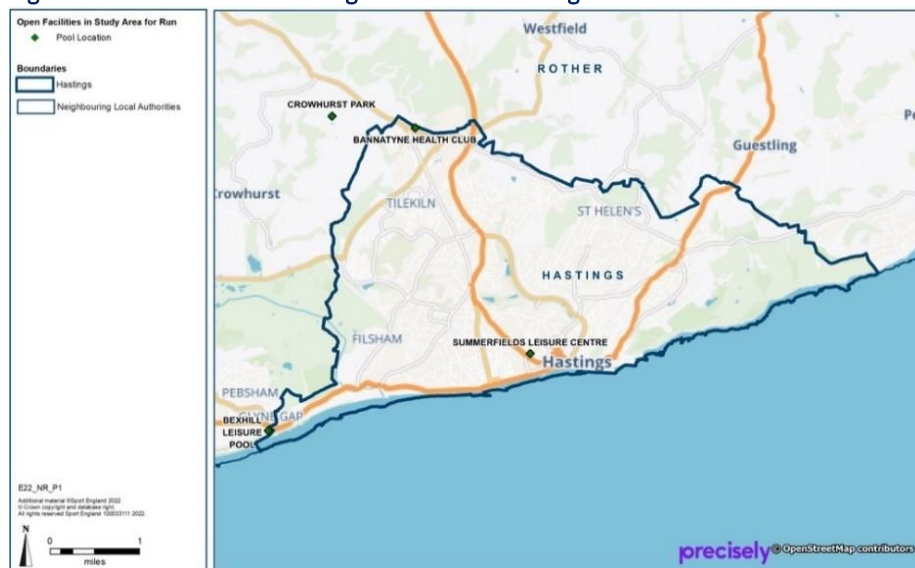
[254] Both pool sites are available for either the maximum or close to the maximum 52.5 hours in the weekly peak period applied in the FPM. Therefore, there is no scope to increase capacity at these sites without new pools – should this be required and identified from the demand assessment. Summerfields Leisure Centre can accommodate significantly more visits

(3,406) in the weekly peak period than Bannatyne Health Club (1,400 visits). Summerfields Leisure Centre accounts for 71% of the water space available for community use in the peak period in the Borough.

[255] Summerfields Leisure Centre is 42 years old. It was refurbished in 2005 when Bannatyne Health Club was built. Bannatyne Health Club has not been modernised.

[256] Summerfields Leisure Centre is in the south of the Borough, close to Hastings town centre, and Bannatyne Health Club is on the northern boundary with Rother District. Bexhill Leisure Pool, in Rother District, is very close to the Borough's western boundary and is accessible to Hastings residents.

Figure 2.2 Location of Swimming Pool Sites in Hastings



[257] **Rother:** there are four swimming pool sites in Rother, each has one main pool. There are no learner pools in the District. There are three 25m pools:

- Bexhill Leisure Pool has four lanes (an L Shaped pool)
- Rye Sports Centre is a four-lane pool but is the smallest in the District.
- Battle Abbey Prep School is the largest pool and has six lanes.

[258] Crowhurst Park is a free-form pool with 324 sqm of water, making it the second-largest swimming pool in the District.

[259] The public centres - Bexhill Leisure Pool and Rye Sports Centre - provide for all swimming activities:

- Learn to swim (Bexhill Leisure Pool).
- Casual recreational swimming.
- Lane and fitness swimming (although limited by L shape of pool).
- Swimming development by clubs.

[260] The scale of the public leisure centre pools limits the activities that can be provided at any one time.

[261] Battle Abbey Prep School provides for hire by swimming clubs for club development and by community groups. It is not available for public recreational pay and swim.

[262] Crowhurst Park provides for recreational swimming by the centre membership.

[263] Overall, in terms of providers, it is balanced provision, with two public leisure centre sites providing for all swimming activities, one commercial site providing for recreational swimming through membership, and one educational site providing for swimming club development and community hire.

[264] The public leisure centres have the smallest pools in the District. However, because of their availability, they have the second- and third-largest capacities in the weekly peak period: 1,979 visits at Bexhill Leisure Pool and 1,750 visits at Rye Sports Centre.

[265] Battle Abbey Prep School is available for 13 hours in the weekly peak period. Despite it being the largest pool in scale, the limited availability means it has the smallest capacity of any site, at 813 visits in the weekly peak period.

[266] Crowhurst Park is available for 52.5 hours in the weekly peak period and has the largest capacity, at 2,835 visits in the weekly peak period.

[267] In terms of the age of the public pools Bexhill Leisure Pool was built in 1990 and last refurbished in 2007. Rye Sports Centre was built in 2003. The school pool at Battle Abbey is by far the oldest facility built in 1980 with new plant investment (2018/19) but limited other refurbishment since. The commercial leisure pool at Crowhurst Park was built in 1995 and last refurbished in 2008.

[268] Rye Sports Centre is located in the east of the District. The other three sites are located on or very close to the boundary with the Borough of Hastings and are therefore accessible to Hastings' residents. There is one swimming pool site in Hastings – the commercial Bannantyne Health Club – close to the boundary with Rother.

[269] Excluded from the FPM calculations is a 6-lane indoor pool 20m pool and learner pool at Claremont Senior School, in Bodiam, whilst it is not available for general public access it does have a swim school based on site offering children and adult lessons. At the time of writing this strategy Rye pool has been temporarily closed due to increasing energy cost, with a review planned in Spring 2023.

Figure 2.3 Location of Swimming Pool Sites in Rother



Demand for swimming pools

[270] The FPM calculates total demand by adding the participation by each five-year age band/gender of the area's population from 0 to 80+ with the frequency of participation in each age band/gender and is expressed in visits in the weekly peak period and square metres of water. The FPM parameters for the percentage and frequency of participation, for gender and age, are calculated from Sport England's Active Lives survey up to November 2019.

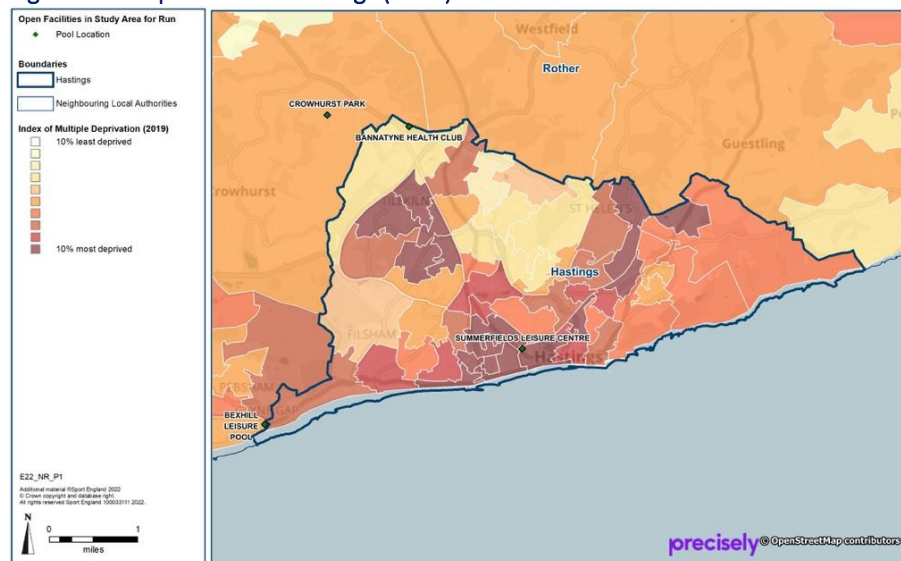
[271] **Hastings:** The population of Hastings in 2022 is 93,130. The population forecast is based on ONS 2018-based sub-national population projections.

[272] Hastings’s demand for swimming pools in 2022 equates to 998 sqm of water (with a comfort factor⁵ included) which is 26% greater than the supply.

[273] A total of 31% of swimming demand in Hastings lies in the 10% most-deprived lower super output areas (LSOAs) nationally. Overall, Hastings ranks in the top 5% most deprived of all local authorities.

[274] Deprivation is highest in the area where Summerfields Leisure Centre is located, and in the northwest and northeast of the Borough (see Figure 2.4).

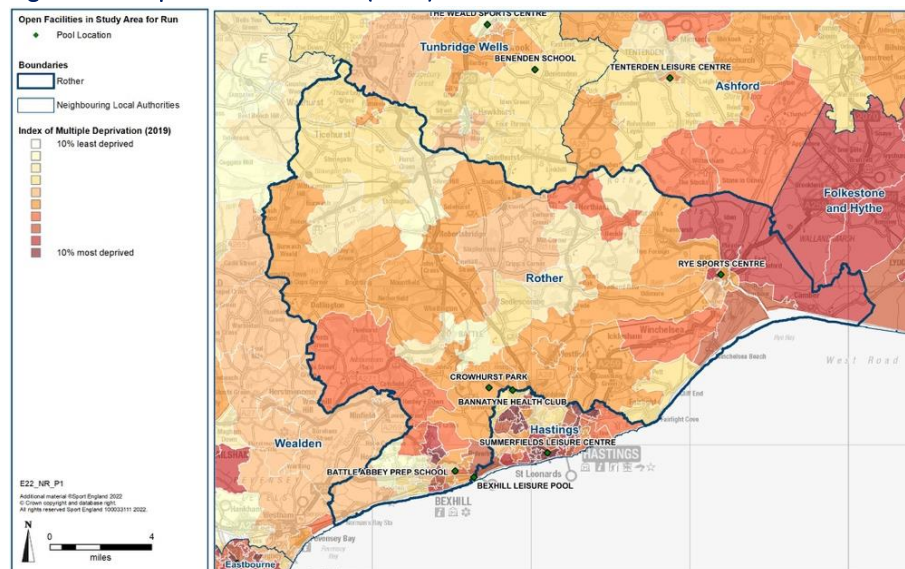
Figure 2.4: Deprivation in Hastings (2019)



[275] **Rother:** The population of Rother in 2022 is slightly larger than Hastings at 98,935. Rother swimming demand equates to 988m² of water (almost identical to that in Hastings) which, with a comfort factor included, is 17% greater than the available supply.

[276] Deprivation is much less a factor in Rother. A total of 4% of Rother’s demand is in the 10% most-deprived lower super output areas (LSOAs) nationally. Rye Sports Centre is very close to the largest areas of most deprivation. There are small areas of high deprivation close to Battle Abbey Prep School (see Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5: Deprivation in Rother (2019)



⁵ The FPM includes a ‘comfort factor,’ beyond which the venues are too full. The pool itself becomes too crowded to swim comfortably, and the changing and circulation areas also become too congested. The model assumes that usage over 70% of theoretical capacity (based on 1 swimmer per 6m²) is ‘uncomfortable’.

Accessibility of swimming pools

[277] Overall, surveys have shown that, nationally, the majority of visits made to swimming pools are made by car (72%) with 18% on foot and just 10% using public transport.

[278] The FPM uses a distance decay function where the further a user is from a facility, the less likely they will travel. On average, a 20-minute travel time accounts for approximately 90% of visits to a swimming pool. The travel time limits used in the FPM for pools are:

- Driving - 30 minutes
- Public transport - 30 minutes (at half speed of car)
- Walking – 40 minutes (2 miles).

[279] The proportion of the resident population in Hastings who do not have access to a car is 30.8% which is substantially higher than the national average of 25% and the average for the South East Region of just 17.6%. By contrast, in Rother car ownership is much higher with just 17.8% of the population without access to a car, closely aligning to the regional average.

[280] For residents without access to a car, travel to swimming pools on foot or by public transport become the choice of travel mode. However, only around a quarter of the population in the study area live within a 20-minute walk of a pool (26.2% in Hastings; 21.9% in Rother).

Figure 2.6: Travel to Swimming Pools in the Study Area

Accessibility	Hastings	Rother
% of population without access to a car	30.8	17.8
% of population within a 20-minute walk of a swimming pool	26.2	21.9
% of demand satisfied who travelled by car	79.5	85.9
% of demand satisfied who travelled on foot	8.8	7.2
% of demand satisfied who travelled by public transport	11.7	7.0

[281] In Hastings, around a fifth of all swimming pool visits are made either on foot (8.8%) or by public transport (11.7%), whereas in Rother the figure is much lower at just over 14% (7.2% on foot and 7% by public transport).

[282] Maps 2.7 and 2.8 illustrate the locations of swimming pools in relation to walking access to public transport for residents of the study area.

[283] In Hastings, both swimming pools are within a five-minute walk of a bus stop (pink areas in Map 2.7). Summerfields Leisure Centre is also within a ten-minute walk of a railway station (purple areas). Therefore, it should be possible to access Summerfields Leisure Centre by public transport.

[284] In Rother, of the four swimming pool sites, three are within a five-minute walk of a bus stop (pink areas in Map 2.8). The exception is Crowhurst Park. Rye Sports Centre is the only site within a five-minute walk of a railway station (purple areas in Map 2.8).

[285] It should be noted that, while residents in the pink and purple areas on the maps can access public transport, it does not mean they can reach a swimming pool within 20 minutes via a combination of walking and public transport. Also, in some areas the service may not be regular.

Figure 2.7: Walking Access to Public Transport in Hastings

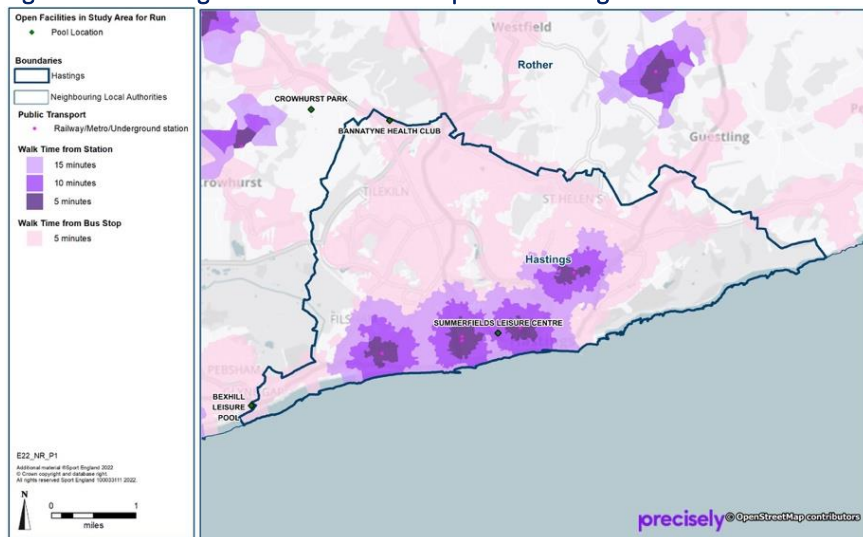
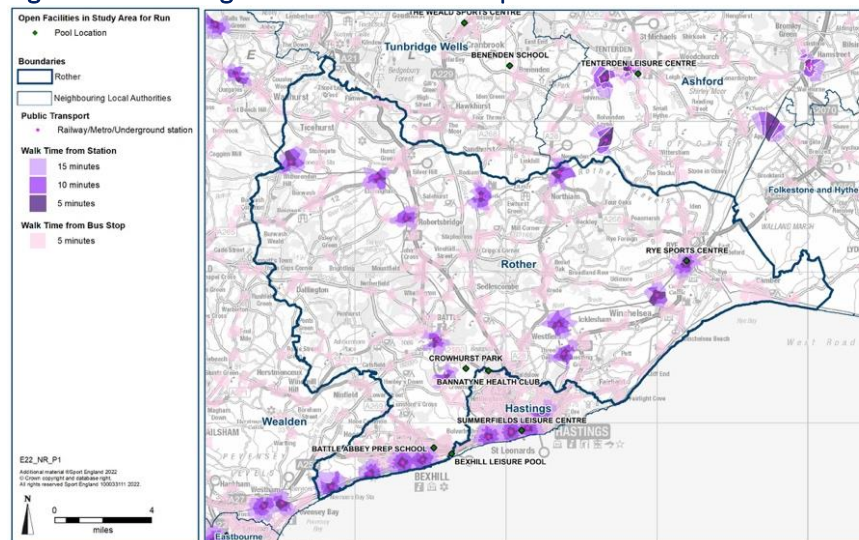


Figure 2.8: Walking Access to Public Transport in Rother



Satisfied demand for swimming pools

[286] This represents the proportion of total demand that is met by the capacity at the swimming pools from Hastings and Rother residents who live within the driving, walking or public transport catchment area of a pool. This includes pools located both within and outside Hastings (for Hastings residents) and Rother (for Rother residents).

[287] Just over three quarters (77.4%) of the total demand for swimming from the resident population of Hastings is met by the capacity of the two pool sites.

[288] In Rother, the level of satisfied demand is a little higher than in Hastings at 78%.

[289] These levels of satisfied demand for swimming in the study area are low relative to the regional average (92.1%) and the national average (90.4%) indicating a lower level of accessible swimming pools across the study area.

Figure 2.9: Satisfied Demand for Swimming in Study Area

Satisfied Demand	Hastings	Rother
Number of visits which are met per week in peak period	4,694	4,686
% of total demand satisfied	77.4	78.0
Number of visits retained per week in peak period	3,665	3,295
Demand retained as a % of satisfied demand	78.1	70.3
Number of visits exported per week in peak period	1,029	1,391
Demand exported as a % of satisfied demand	21.9	29.7

[290] **Retained demand** is a subset of satisfied demand and shows how much of residents' satisfied demand for swimming is retained at pools within the subject local authority area. This assessment is based on the catchment area and consideration of the quality of a site based on its age and type of management as supported by Sport England's research. Increasingly, there are other factors that influence which pools residents chose to use, such as other facilities being on the same site, for example, a gym or studio, ease of parking, or a swimming pool programme that provides activities at times when residents wish to participate.

[291] Of Hasting's met demand for swimming, 78% is retained within the borough indicating the two pool sites are suitably located for the majority of residents (i.e. within their driving, walking or public transport catchment area). However it should be noted that Summerfields remains the only full publicly accessible pool for Hasting's residents. Of Rother's met demand, 70% is retained within the district.

[292] **Exported Demand** is the residue of satisfied demand after retained demand and is based on residents in the subject local authority who live within the travel time of a swimming pool located outside that local authority and use that swimming pool.

[293] With 70% of met demand retained, Rother therefore exports 30% of its met demand to pools outside the district. The FPM does not identify to which pools in neighbouring boroughs this exported met demand goes. However, given its location, Bannantyne Health Cub in Hastings is highly likely to be the destination of some of the exported demand from Rother (for those who can afford this) therefore retaining demand within the overall study area.

[294] As indicated above, Hastings exports substantially less of its met demand for swimming to pools outside the borough (22%). The most likely destinations are the leisure pools in Rother at Bexhill and Crowhurst Park, again retaining demand within the study area.

Unmet demand for swimming pools

[295] Unmet demand is important to note as it is demand for swimming pools which cannot be met because there is either too much demand for any particular swimming pool within its catchment area and there is a lack of capacity; or because demand is located too far away from any swimming pool. In Hastings, unmet demand amounts to 22.6% of total demand, equivalent to 226m² of water. In Rother the unmet demand for swimming pools is very similar to that in Hastings i.e. 22% and 217m² of water area.

Figure 2.10: Unmet Demand for Swimming in Study Area

Unmet Demand	Hastings	Rother
Number of visits unmet per week in peak period	1,373	1,322
Unmet demand as a % of total demand	22.6%	22.0%
Equivalent in sqm of water with comfort factor	226m ²	217m ²

Unmet Demand	Hastings	Rother
% of unmet demand due to:		
Facility too far away:	55.3	70.5
Without access to a car	51.7	34.9
With access to a car	3.6	35.6
Lack of facility capacity:	44.7	29.5
Without access to a car	26.5	10.2
With access to a car	18.2	19.3

[296] It is important to note the two different types of unmet demand. Unmet demand located too far away from a facility will always exist because it is not possible to achieve complete spatial coverage whereby all areas of an authority are within walking distance of a swimming pool and not everyone will want, or be able, to drive to a facility.

[297] The overall key point is not that unmet demand outside a catchment exists, but the scale of that unmet demand. Also, if this unmet demand is clustered in one location, further pool provision should be considered in order to improve accessibility for residents.

[298] Unmet demand due to a lack of swimming pool capacity within the existing supply is the equivalent of 101m² of water in Hastings and 64m² in Rother. Pools being too far away is the larger cause of unmet demand for swimming in the study area (equivalent to 125m² of water in Hastings and 153m² in Rother).

[299] The distribution clusters of the unmet demand for swimming in the study area are shown in Appendix 7 – Sport England FPM Reports.

[300] In Hastings, unmet demand is highest in the Belmont area, at 17 sqm of water per kilometre square. North of this area also has high unmet demand

of 14 sqm of water per kilometre square. Unmet demand is therefore highest in the east of the Borough and high in the areas of most deprivation.

[301] Unmet demand in Rother is highest in Bexhill at two locations, each with 7 sqm of water, followed by a third location in Bexhill and in Robertsbridge, each with 6 sqm of water.

[302] An analysis of the spread of this identified unmet demand shows the level of unmet demand that would be met by a potential new facility in any given location, this is known as reachable unmet demand and is calculated for each one-kilometre grid square across the borough. Accessibility is a major factor in determining reachable unmet demand so a location with a good road network and good public transport links has a higher reachable unmet demand than a facility in a geographical area which has a poor layout which makes it more difficult for people to move around and get to a swimming pool location. It is really important to emphasise that reachable unmet demand isn't a reflection of need for a particular area.

[303] In Hastings, reachable unmet demand is highest in Alexandra Park in the centre of the borough, where unmet demand of 127 sqm of water could be met. However, the level of reachable unmet demand is insufficient to consider building an additional new swimming pool to improve accessibility for residents. For context, the minimum amount of water space required to justify a new pool would be 160 sqm, which is a 20m x 8m four-lane pool.

[304] In Rother, the FPM finds that reachable unmet demand is highest in Beauport, where unmet demand of 114 sqm of water could be met. However, this is insufficient to consider building a new swimming pool to improve accessibility for residents. Reachable unmet demand is high along the route of the A21 but decreases with increasing distance from Hastings.

Used capacity of swimming pools

[305] Sport England define used capacity as a measure of usage at swimming pools that estimates how well used or how full facilities are; the assumption is that usage over 70% of capacity is busy and that the facility is operating at an uncomfortable level above that percentage.

[306] The FPM modelling estimates used capacity in the weekly peak period of Hastings Borough’s Summerfields Leisure Centre pools at 100%. In contrast, used capacity at the commercial Bannantyne Health Club is estimated at 66%.

[307] In Rother, both the Bexhill Leisure Pool and Battle Abbey Prep School pool are estimated to be used to 100% capacity in the peak hours at these facilities. The used capacity in the peak period at Rye Sports Centre is well within comfortable limits at 63% while at the commercial Crowhurst Park leisure pool, it is low at just 24%.

[308] Variation in the estimated used capacity of sites is primarily caused by the interaction of the following factors):

- Type of site operator (public/commercial/educational).
- The hours available for community use.
- The level of demand within the travel-time limit from the site and reachable from other pools.
- Imported demand.

[309] So, in both the main public swimming pool sites in the study area – Summerfields and Bexhill Leisure Pool (as well as the prep school pool in Battle) are running at above the level Sport England considers “comfortable” in the peak hours for these pools.

Figure 2.11: Used Capacity of Swimming Pools in Study Area

Used Capacity	Hastings	Rother
	2022	2022
Number of visits used of capacity in weekly peak period	4,335	4,579
% of overall capacity of pools used	90.2	62.1

Figure 2.12: Used Capacity of Swimming Pools – individual sites

Used Capacity	Site Capacity ⁶	% of capacity used
Summerfields Leisure Centre	3,406	100%
Bannantyne Health Club	1,400	66%
Battle Abbey Prep School	813	100%
Bexhill Leisure Pool	1,979	100%
Crowhurst Park	2,835	24%
Rye Sports Centre	1,750	63%

Local share of swimming pools

[310] This measure helps show which areas within a local authority have a better or worse share of facility provision and is useful for looking at ‘equity’ of provision. It considers the size, availability and quality of facilities, as well as travel modes and decreases as facilities age. Local share is the available capacity at the locations that people want to visit in an area, divided by the demand for that capacity in the area, a value of 1 means that the level of supply just matches demand, a value of less than 1 indicates a shortage of supply and a value greater than 1 indicates a surplus. Hastings has a

⁶ Visits per week in peak period

borough-wide local share of 0.49; Rother 0.88. Therefore, demand for swimming in the study area cannot access sufficient quality supply.

[311] Local share differs across the study area. In Hastings, local share is best in the north of the borough, to the southwest of Bannantyne Health Club at 1.9 and 2.0 (see Appendix 7 – Sport England FPM Reports). Demand in this area has access to double the required quality provision. Local Share is also good around Conquest Hospital at 1.56. Local share is poorest in the east and south of the Borough with values of between 0.2 and 0.4. The demand in these areas can access less than half the quality provision required.

[312] In Rother, local share is best in Battle, at 3.1, and nearby, at 2.8 (see Appendix 7 – Sport England FPM Reports). Demand in this area has access to three times the required quality provision. Local share is also good in Robertsbridge, Sedlescombe and Brede at 1.7.

[313] Local share is poorest in the northwest of the District and in Bexhill, with values of between 0.4 and 0.5. The demand in these areas can access less than half the quality provision required.

Comparative Measure of Provision

[314] A comparative measure of swimming pool provision is water space per 1,000 population.

[315] Hastings has a total of 6 sqm of water per 1,000 population and 4 sqm of water per 1,000 population excluding the commercial water space. Rother has a higher provision, with 12 sqm of water per 1,000 population and 8 sqm of water excluding commercial water space.

[316] The Regional and England-wide averages are also higher than those for Hastings, with totals of 13 sqm of water and 12 sqm of water per 1,000 population, respectively.

Summary of the FPM Analysis

[317] The main strategic theme arising from the FPM study in Hastings is that Summerfields Leisure Centre – the only public leisure centre site in the borough that is available to all residents – is full at peak times and there is no scope to reduce the venue’s used capacity by increasing the opening hours. Therefore, for Hastings more water space is required at this site to bring the used capacity down to a comfortable level.

[318] Options for meeting demand, in terms of further modernisation of the site or replacement with a new centre should continue to be investigated as the assessment is based on current demand and takes no account of increased demand in future as a consequence of population growth. Whilst options for a new site could be investigated because another location may result in the retention of more satisfied demand within the borough, Summerfields Leisure Centre is well located in an area of high deprivation and is equidistant from the other two areas of high deprivation.

[319] In Rother, an increase in swimming pool provision is not required to meet existing demand with substantial unused capacity in the peak period at two of the four pool sites. However, both Bexhill Leisure Pool and Battle Abbey Prep School pools are full at peak times. The model indicates that there could be scope to increase the community use hours at both sites to bring the proportion of capacity used down to a more comfortable level particularly as the population grows across the district. However the suitability of Bexhill Leisure pool for increasing the capacity is questioned by the Consultant Team.

[320] The water space at Bexhill does not facilitate the provision of all aquatic activity because the leading pool is a leisure pool. Whilst there is no need for an additional swimming pool there absolutely is a need for replacement swimming pool provision given the age, condition and nature of existing provision.

[321] The lack of a dedicated learn-to-swim pool (minimum depth 0.9m) and restricted availability of lane swimming are also strong themes for consideration in strategic planning of any replacement of the Bexhill Leisure Pool. At the time of the strategy the closure of Rye swimming pool is of notable concern putting further pressure on sites within Rother that currently are not able to meet the demand.

[322] Close co-operation and joint planning of future changes to public swimming pool provision across the two local authority areas is supported by the strategic FPM analyses which show the patterns of demand and use of the available supply across the local authority boundaries.

Swimming Pool Sites and Consultation

[323] The Consultation with Swim England detailed earlier in the report emphasised the need for both Councils to ensure future planning can meet the increased demand. The needs for the NGB align closely with the evidence from the FPM analysis. The strategy assessment also includes the site audits of the main municipal swimming pools sites in Hastings, Bexhill and Rye.

Club Consultation

[324] **Hastings Seagulls Swimming Club** is based at Summerfields Leisure Centre and also uses Battle Abbey Swimming Pool. The club has expanded its membership from 320 in 2019 to 510 in 2022. The have plans to grow the club further and has a waiting list of over 100 but cannot accommodate them due to a lack of pool time. The club have identified a need for additional pool time to accommodate their growth as well as investment into the current ageing facilities.

Quality ratings – Training facilities 2/5 – Changing facilities 2/5

Priorities and Actions - Swimming Pools

[325] Swimming		
Protect	Enhance	Provide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a minimum, both Council's should ensure the protection of the current levels of water space within the study area. Ensure that Summerfields Leisure Centre and Bexhill Leisure Pool can continue to operate during the next planning phases for their potential future replacement. Agree re-opening parameters for Rye Pool with Freedom Leisure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate options with Claremont Senior School to increase access for club use. Seek to extend hours of public swim access at Battle Abbey Swimming pool in negotiation with the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future upgrade or replacement of Summerfields Leisure Centre with extended leisure water reflecting the destination tourist role for the facility. Re-development / re-location of Bexhill Leisure Pool to provide a health and fitness and learn-to-swim pool focus and mix of facilities.

Prioritised Actions:

- Investigate options with Claremont Senior School to increase access for club use.
- Seek to extend hours of public swim access at Battle Abbey Swimming pool in negotiation with the school.
- Agree the re-opening and future of Rye Swimming Pool
- Future Options and Affordability assessments for future upgrade or replacement in Hastings (Summerfields) and Bexhill (Leisure Pool) with joint planning approach to take into account the impact of forecast population growth within the study area on the supply/demand balance and to ensure optimum, sustainable provision to meet range of types of demand to include learn-to-swim, health and fitness swimming (lanes), local club competitive swimming and water play (leisure water).
- Programme for delivery and timetable agreed by Hastings Borough Council and Rother District Council for both projects.

Future Delivery

- Future upgrade or replacement of Summerfields Leisure Centre with extended leisure water area.
- New Bexhill Leisure Pool with provision for lane swimming and learn-to-swim.

Sports Halls

What's changed since the Leisure Facilities Strategy 2009-20

[326] The supply of sports halls across the study area is broadly typical in its mix of provision with a core of public sports halls in leisure centres augmented by sports halls and ancillary halls on education sites with shared access for students and the public.

[327] Since the previous strategy was completed there has been significant new sports hall provision in the study area as well as refurbishment of some of the existing stock.

[328] In Hastings the new provision since 2009 is at Ark Alexandra Academy (two sports halls opened in 2011 and, in the west of the borough, at St Leonards Academy which opened a new four-court hall in 2020 replacing a former smaller activity hall. In addition, the Y Centre underwent a refurbishment in 2014.

[329] In Rother, the Bexhill Academy opened a new four-court hall in 2010, Battle Sports Centre was refurbished in 2012 and, most significant, Robertsbridge Community College opened in 2013 offering capacity to meet community demand for both a main sports hall and an activity hall.

[330] In addition, as noted earlier in the swimming section, significant progress has been made with pre-planning work including public consultation, options appraisals and feasibility studies, notably with regard to the future upgrade or replacement of the Hastings Summerfields Leisure Centre which includes a sports hall. Feasibility studies have also been completed by Rother District Council with regard to an ambitious project to replace the Bexhill Leisure Pool and Bexhill Leisure Centre - both of which have aged buildings and plant which are increasingly costly to operate and maintain - with a new destination combined 'wet and dry' leisure centre.

Sport England's Facility Planning Model

[331] To successfully plan for the future, Hastings and Rother councils used the Sport England Facilities Planning Model (FPM), which aims to assess how the demand, distribution and access to sports halls is met by the supply of sports halls currently (i.e. as at 2022).

[332] It is most important to state that the FPM study is a quantitative, accessibility and spatial assessment of the supply, demand and access to sports halls. The assessments are based on catchment area, so include the sports halls and population across the borough and the neighbouring local authorities. The FPM study provides a hard evidence base that can inform consultations, to then provide a rounded evidence base. This can then be applied in the development of the Council's strategic planning for the provision of sports halls.

[333] As with swimming pools, the FPM sports hall assessments for Hastings and Rother include the sports halls and population in this study area as well as those located in neighbouring local authorities that fall within a defined travel time catchment.

Headline strategic overview from the FPM analysis

[334] The headline strategic overview is that the sports hall supply in the study area is well distributed and is meeting demand from the existing resident population.

[335] However, this position is very much dependent on the very high level of public accessibility currently afforded in the peak period to provision on education sites that make up the majority of the supply.

[336] Accordingly, where community-use agreements are not already in place for sports halls on education sites, it is strategic priority that these are considered where opportunities arise.

[337] Summerfields Leisure Centre is the most important public sports hall site in Hastings borough but is now well over 40 years old. The location is ideal to meet resident demand for sports halls in the borough.

[338] In Rother, there is scope to increase availability for community use in the weekly peak period by 14 hours at Bexhill Academy and 7 hours at Bexhill College Sports Centre, two of the newest sports hall sites. If this is achieved, it would redistribute some demand because Bexhill Leisure Centre is estimated to be completely full at peak times.

[339] The newest site, Robertsbridge Community College, is a key facility in meeting resident demand in this part of the district as the only alternative supply is the much smaller Vinehall Academy which has an unmodernised sports hall with relatively few hours availability for community use.

[340] As with swimming, any proposals to replace or upgrade out-dated public sports halls – e.g. Summerfields Leisure Centre and at Horntyte Sports Complex in Hastings and in Bexhill in Rother – should be planned jointly given the cross-boundary patterns of demand and to ensure complementarity.

Supply and location of sports halls

[341] In the FPM modelling for sports halls, there are nine individual sports hall facilities located at seven sites in Hastings; two public sports hall sites (Summerfields LC and Helenswood SC), three academy education sites (Ark Hastings, St Leonards) and two sites with sports halls in the ownership of community organisations (The Y Centre and Horntyte Park Sports Complex).

[342] In Rother, there are also nine sports halls across seven sites; two public centres (Bexhill LC and Rye SC) and the other five – including the largest provision at Battle Sports Centre – are all based on education sites.

Figure 2.13: Supply of Sports Halls in Study Area

Total Supply	
Hastings	2022
Number of halls	9
Number of hall sites	7
Supply in badminton court equivalents	37
Supply in courts scaled with hours available in peak period	32.3
Supply in visits per week in peak period	11,426 ⁷
Average year built of all sites	1993
Average year built of public sites	1980
Rother	2022
Number of halls	9
Number of hall sites	7
Supply in badminton court equivalents	33.3
Supply in courts scaled with hours available in peak period	27.0
Supply in visits per week in peak period	9,943
Average year built of all sites	1999
Average year built of public sites	1990

[343] In general, a four-court sports hall can provide for most indoor hall sports at the community level of participation. However, in Hastings, three of the four-court halls have dimensions which are less than the Sport England and National Governing Body's recommended size of 34.5m x 20m with a width of 18m (Horntyte Sports Complex, the Y Centre and The Hastings Academy). In Rother, four of the sports halls are 18m wide (Battle

⁷ Excludes VPWPP at St Leonards Academy 4ct hall – available to public 15 peak hours/wk

SC, Robertsbridge Community College, Vinehall School and Rye Sports Centre). This width limits the run-off area between and behind courts.

[344] Summerfields Leisure Centre is the only site in the study area with a six-court sports hall that can provide for multi-sports use at the same time and events with temporary spectator seating.

[345] Any potential future provision of an eight-court double sports hall as part of any new plans for the replacement of Summerfields Leisure Centre or another site have the key benefit of providing a venue in the study area that can accommodate multiple sports activities as well as regional level sports competitions and events.

[346] Supply is defined as the supply or capacity of the sports halls available for community and club use in the weekly peak period. The supply is expressed in the number of visits that a sports hall can accommodate in the weekly peak period and in the number of badminton courts. The total supply and available supply are different because of the hours available for community use in the weekly peak period. The weekly peak period is when the majority of visits take place and when users have most flexibility to visit. The peak period for sports halls is one hour on weekday mornings, five hours on weekday evenings and eight hours on weekend days. This gives a total of 46 hours per week. The modelling and recommendations are based on the ability of the public to access facilities during this weekly peak period.

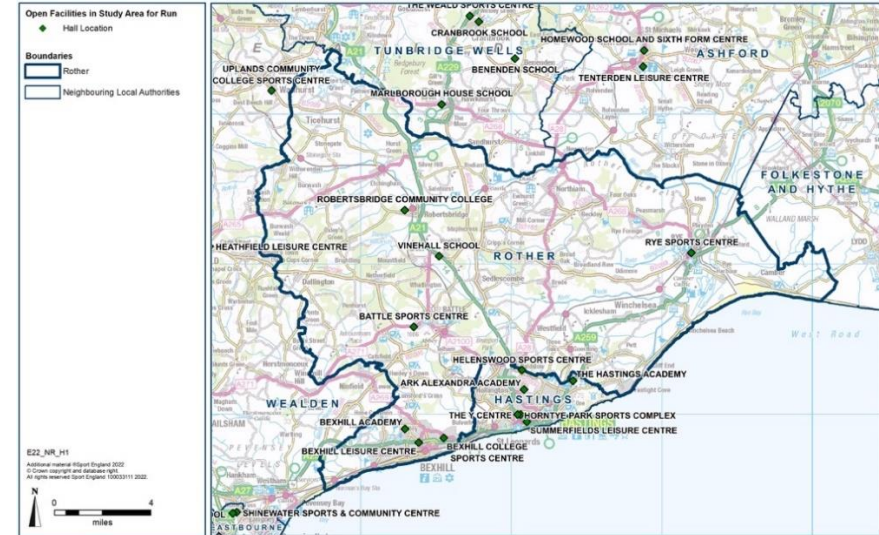
Figure 2.14: Details of Sports Halls in Study Area

Hastings Site	Operation	Facility Type
Ark Alexandra Academy	Educational	4-court
		3-court (18m)
Helenswood Sports Centre	Public	4-court
Horntye Park Sports Complex	Community	4-court (18m)
Summerfields Leisure Centre	Public	6-court
		Activity
The Hastings Academy	Educational	4-court (18m)
The Y Centre	Community	4-court
St Leonards Academy	Educational	4-court
Rother Site	Operation	Facility Type
Battle Sports Centre	Educational	4-court (18m)
		Activity
Bexhill Academy	Educational	4-court
Bexhill College Sports Centre	Educational	4-court
Bexhill Leisure Centre	Public	4-court
Robertsbridge Community College	Educational	4-court (18m)
		Activity
Rye Sports Centre	Public	4-court (18m)
Vinehall School	Educational (3 rd Party)	3-court (18m)

Figure 2.15: Location of Sports Hall Sites in Hastings



Figure 2.16: Location of Sports Hall Sites in Rother



Demand for sports halls

[347] In the FPM, total demand for sports halls is calculated by adding the participation by each five-year age band/gender of the area population with the frequency of participation in each age band/gender and is expressed in visits in the weekly peak period and number of badminton courts. As with swimming, The FPM parameters for the percentage and frequency of participation in sports hall sports, for gender and age, are calculated from Sport England’s Active Lives survey up to November 2019.

[348] **Hastings:** The demand for sports halls from Hastings’ 93,130 residents (with a comfort factor included⁸) is 7,744 visits in the weekly peak period in

⁸ The FPM includes a ‘comfort factor,’ beyond which the venues are too full. The time taken to change the sports hall programme and equipment starts to impinge on the activity time itself and the changing and circulation areas also become too congested. The model assumes that usage over 80% of theoretical capacity

(based on 32 users per 4 court hall and 15 users per 144m² of activity hall) is ‘uncomfortable’

2022. This is the equivalent of 26 badminton courts with an 80% comfort factor. This is less than the available supply of badminton courts in the borough.

[349] Four of the six sports hall sites in the Borough are on the edge of the areas of highest deprivation (see Figure 2.17).

[350] **Rother:** The demand for sports halls from Rother’s population of 98,935 is very similar at 7,521 visits in the weekly peak period including a comfort factor. This is the equivalent of 26 badminton courts, one fewer than the available supply.

[351] As detailed in the swimming pools section, deprivation is much less a factor in Rother. Rye Sports Centre is very close to the largest areas of most deprivation. There are small areas of high deprivation in Bexhill in the west of the district. There are three sports hall sites close to these areas (see Figure 2.18).

Figure 2.17: Deprivation in Hastings, 2019

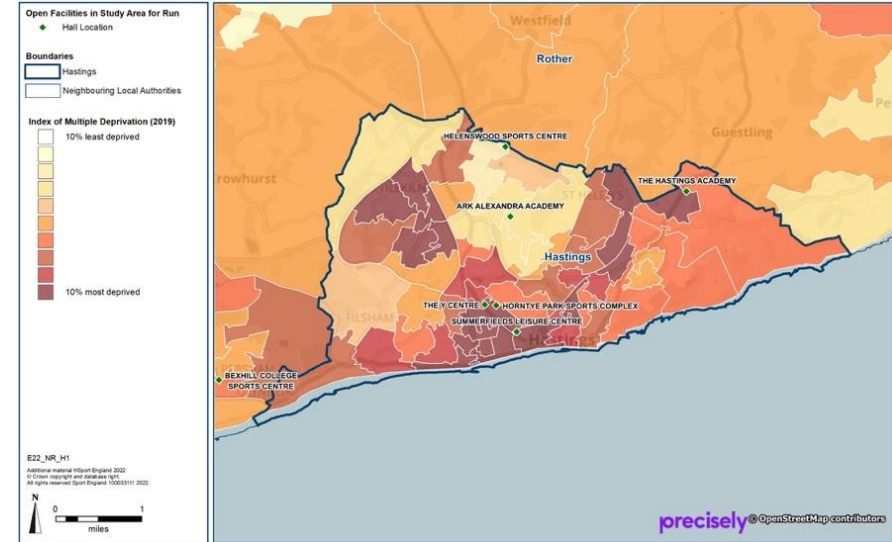
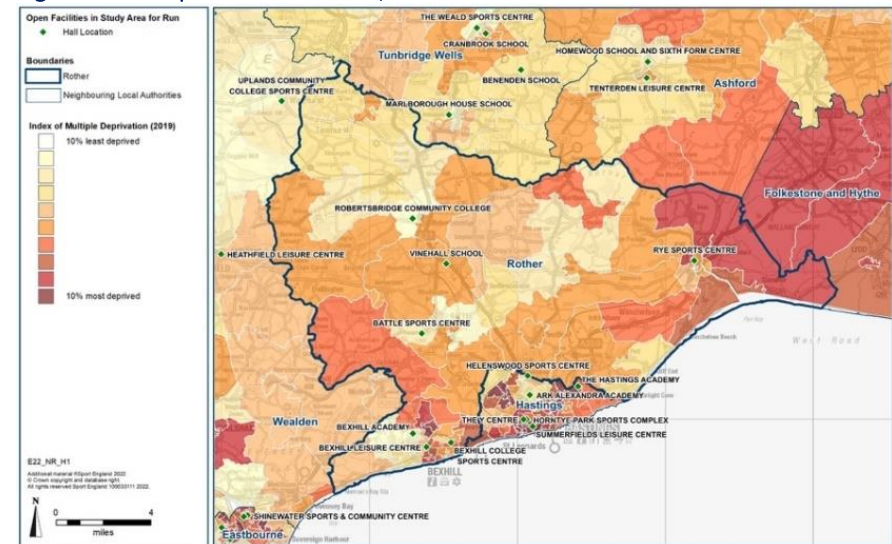


Figure 2.18: Deprivation in Rother, 2019



Accessibility of sports halls

[352] For residents without access to a car, travel to sports halls by public transport or on foot is the choice of travel. The FPM uses a distance decay function where the further a user is from a facility, the less likely they will travel. On average, a 20-minute travel time accounts for approximately 90% of visits to a sports hall. The travel-time limits used are:

- Driving is 30 minutes
- Public transport is 30 minutes (at half speed of car)
- Walking is 40 minutes (two miles)

[353] The FPM findings are that 71.2% of all visits to sports halls by Hastings residents are by car, 12.9% are on foot and 15.9% are by public transport. Therefore, more than one in four of all visits are either on foot or by public transport.

[354] In Rother where car ownership is higher and the population is dispersed over a much larger area with a limited bus service, 84.3% of all journeys to sports halls are by car with just 7% by public transport and 8.7% on foot (see figure 2.19)

Figure 2.19: Travel Mode of Demand to Sports Halls

Accessibility	Hastings	Rother
	2022	2022
% of population without access to a car	30.8	17.8
% of population within a 20-minute walk of a sports hall	47.4	43.3
% of demand satisfied when travelled by car	71.2	84.3
% of demand satisfied when travelled on foot	12.9	8.7
% of demand satisfied when travelled by public transport	15.9	7.0

Maps 2.20 and 2.21 illustrate the locations of sports hall sites in relation to walking access to public transport for residents of the study area.

Figure 2.20: Walking Access to Public Transport in Hastings

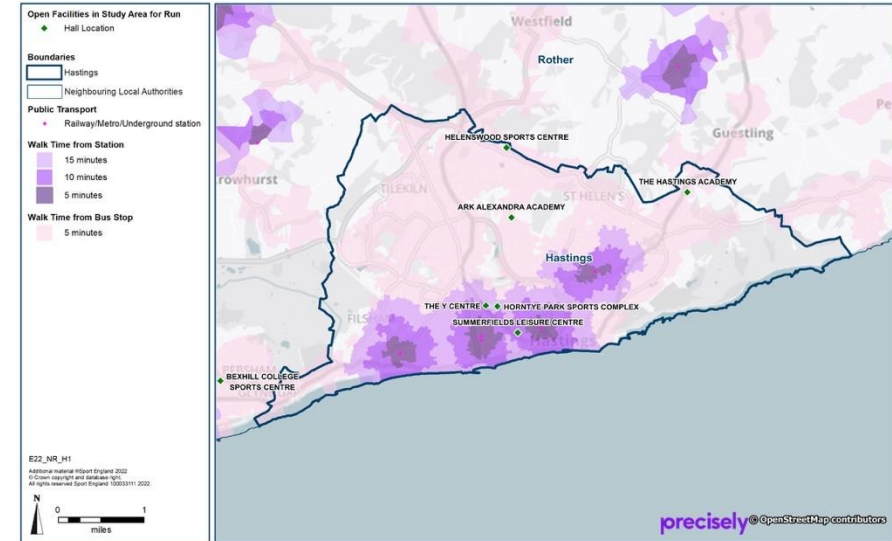
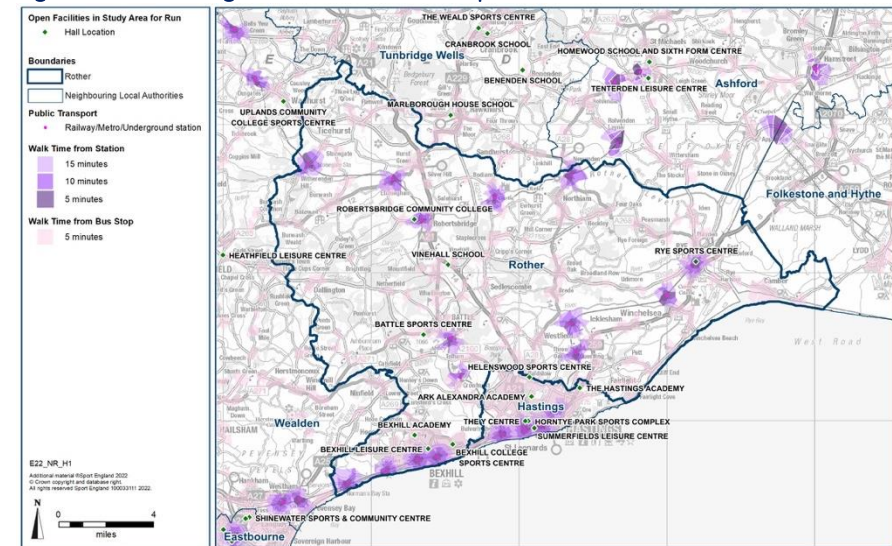


Figure 2.21: Walking Access to Public Transport in Rother



[355] In Hastings, all the sports halls are within a five-minute walk of a bus stop (areas in pink in Figure 2.20). The three sports hall sites in the south of the Borough are within a 15-minute walk of a railway station (purple areas).

[356] In Rother, there is a very limited bus service, as shown by the small area within a five-minute walk of a bus stop (areas in pink in Map 2.21). However, all the sports hall sites, apart from Vinehall School, are within a 5-minute walk of a bus stop. Bexhill Leisure Centre, Robertsbridge Community College and Rye Sports Centre are within a 15-minute walk of a railway station (purple areas).

[357] Opportunities to travel to sports halls by bus are greater than opportunities to travel by rail. It should be noted that, while residents in the pink and purple areas on the map can access public transport, it does not mean they can reach a sports hall within 20 minutes via a combination of walking and public transport. Also, in some areas the service may not be regular.

Satisfied demand for sports halls

[358] Satisfied demand represents the proportion of total demand that is met by the capacity at sports halls which are located both within and outside the borough, from residents who live within the driving, walking or public transport catchment area of those sports halls.

[359] The FPM analysis shows that there is enough sports hall capacity within a suitable travel time to meet more than nine out of ten desired visits to a sports hall by a Hastings or Rother resident.

[360] Satisfied demand across the study area is higher than the national average for sports halls although below the regional average (see Figure 2.22)

Figure 2.22: Percentage of Satisfied Demand for Sports Halls in Study Area

Local Authority / Area	2022
Hastings	91.0
Rother	91.2
Ashford	91.6
Folkestone and Hythe	88.2
Tunbridge Wells	93.7
South East Region	93.7
England	90.6

Retained demand for sports halls

[361] Retained demand is a subset of satisfied demand and shows how much of residents' demand for sports halls is retained at sports halls within the subject local authority area. This assessment is based on the catchment area and appeal of the sports halls and the residents of the subject local authority using these facilities. In 2022, 96% of satisfied demand in Hastings is retained within Hastings borough. In Rother the retained demand is lower at 76% of satisfied demand.

[362] This FPM finding shows that, in Hastings in particular, the sports halls are in the right places for most residents, are attractive and have suitable capacity. In Rother, while over threequarters of the total satisfied demand is met by the sports halls in Rother, just under a quarter of visits are 'exported' to sports halls in the travel time catchment located either in Hastings or in another neighbour local authority area. There are three sports hall sites close to the Rother boundary: two in Hastings and one in Wealden.

Unmet demand for sports halls

[363] Unmet demand is important to note as it is demand for sports halls which cannot be met because there is either too much demand for any particular sports hall within its catchment area and there is a lack of capacity; or because demand is located too far away from any sports hall.

[364] In Hastings, unmet demand is 9% of total demand and in Rother 8.8%. This equates to less than 2.5 badminton courts in each local authority area (see figure 2.23).

Figure 2.23: Unmet Demand for Sports Halls in study area

Unmet Demand	Hastings	Rother
Number of visits unmet per week in peak period	695	663
Unmet demand as a % of total demand	9.0	8.8
Equivalent in courts with comfort factor	2.4	2.3
% of unmet demand due to:		
Facility too far away:	97.3	93.1
○ Without access to a car	95.2	80.0
○ With access to a car	2.1	13.1
Lack of facility capacity:	2.7	6.9
○ Without access to a car	2.6	5.1
○ With access to a car	0.1	1.8

[365] An analysis of the spread of this identified unmet demand shows the level of unmet demand that would be met by a potential new facility in any given location, this is known as reachable unmet demand and is calculated for each one-kilometer grid square across the borough. Accessibility is a major factor in determining reachable unmet demand so a location with a good road network and good public transport links has a higher reachable unmet demand than a facility in a geographical area which has a poor layout which makes it more difficult for people to move around and get to a sports hall location.

[366] It is really important to emphasise that reachable unmet demand isn't a reflection of need for a particular area. The reachable unmet demand is highest in the Belmont area of Hastings (0.9 of a badminton court) and close

to Bexhill Leisure Centre (0.6 of a court) see appendix 7 – Sport England FPM Reports.

Used capacity of sports halls

[367] There are several ways to account for the estimated used capacity for sports halls. Often it is difficult to identify which of these reasons apply because several could be interacting simultaneously, but it is generally caused by any of the following factors: the type of operator, the hours available, the level of demand within the travel-time limit from the site and reachable from other halls, the quality and range of the offer, the age of the hall and its 'attractiveness' weighting and imported demand.

[368] Public leisure centres especially those open during the day have a 'draw effect' because they have the highest accessibility for both sports club and public use and because operators actively promote participation by offering a programme of use that reflects the activities customers wish to participate in.

[369] Access to sports halls for community use at educational sites will be determined by the policy of each provider. Some schools and colleges actively promote community use. At some venues there is little differentiation between educational and wider community use, with community access based on a membership system (classed as commercial). Other educational venues let their sports halls to sports clubs or community groups on a termly basis, or for shorter periods.

[370] The quality and range of the offer at a sports hall are of increasing importance to customers and affect participation levels. All the sports halls in the model are weighted to reflect their age, condition and whether they have been modernised. This is to assess their comparative attractiveness to customers.

[371] Figure 2.24 shows the estimate used capacity of the sports halls in the study area by the FPM. The capacity of a four-court hall, that is open for the maximum 46 hours in the weekly peak period, is 1,472 visits. In Hastings, three of the seven sports hall sites are available for this maximum number of hours in the peak demand period - Helenswood SC, Summerfields LC and Horntye. It is noted that Horntye Park Sports Complex has the same capacity as Helenswood Sports Centre but has a lower estimated used capacity: 60% compared to 87%.

[372] In Rother just the two public sports centres in Rye and Bexhill offer maximum peak hour availability.

[373] In Hastings, two of the seven sites are estimated to be used above the 80% capacity level Sport England considers “comfortable” in the peak hours – The Y Centre (100%) and Helenswood Sports Centre (87%).

In Rother also two out of the seven sports hall sites are used in the peak at levels over comfortable capacity. Both are in Bexhill – Bexhill Leisure Centre (100%) and Bexhill College Sports Centre (94%).

[374] The overall estimated used capacity of sports halls in the weekly peak period in Hastings is 69% and in Rother 59%. The regional average is 64% and the England-wide average is 71%.

Figure 2.24: Used Capacity

Hastings Site	Site Capacity ⁹	% of Capacity Used
Ark Alexandra Academy	2,184	50
Helenswood Sports Centre	1,472	87
Horntye Park Sports Complex	1,472	60
Summerfields Leisure Centre	3,674	70
The Hastings Academy	1,216	56

⁹ Visits per week in the peak period

The Y Centre	1,408	100
St Leonards Academy	No FPM figures	No FPM %
Rother Site	Site Capacity ¹⁰	% of Capacity Used
Battle Sports Centre	2,427	31
Bexhill Academy	1,008	68
Bexhill College Sports Centre	1,248	94
Bexhill Leisure Centre	1,472	100
Robertsbridge Community College	1,979	30
Rye Sports Centre	1,472	62
Vinehall School	336	71

[375] The FPM assessment indicates that there could be scope to increase community hours on some education sites, especially where there is capacity to increase community hours to include all weekday evenings and weekends. Vinehall School sports hall close to Robertsbridge Community College appears to offer the greatest potential as it is currently only available for 14 hours a week in the peak periods. There is also some potential at Bexhill Academy currently available for 31.5 peak hours a week. Finally, it is important to note that the FPM takes no account of the contribution of other smaller community hall facilities (e.g. church halls, village halls and school halls) that do not meet the criteria for inclusion in the FPM as sports halls but which provide physical activity opportunities for residents of Hastings and Rother.

[376] These include Hollington Youth centre in Hastings and Bexhill Youth and community centre, The Pretious sports Hall, Northiam and Westfield Community Hall in Rother.

Site Analysis and Audit

[377] As with the swimming analysis, close co-operation and joint planning of

¹⁰ Visits per week in the peak period

future changes to sports hall provision across the two local authority areas is supported by the strategic FPM analyses which show the patterns of demand and use of the available supply across the local authority boundaries.

[378] Also similar to the swimming pools findings, securing the community use of sports halls on education sites through formal community use agreements is a priority as opportunities arise (such as St Richard’s Catholic School).

[379] The Summerfields Leisure Centre sports hall in Hastings is dated and in need of modernisation to provide a more flexible and suitable space for multisport activity, ideally an 8 court hall suitable for larger sports events to serve both local authority areas.

[380] Although not as old as the Summerfields LC, Bexhill LC is also over 40 years old and the sports hall shows in the FPM as 100% full in the peak hours (i.e. well above comfortable capacity in the peak). Any future opportunities to expand this sports hall to 6 courts or provide additional capacity through the provision of a second (activity) hall should be explored together with extending peak hours at Bexhill Academy and Vinehall School.

[381] The model shows that the sports hall at the Horntye Sports Complex in Hastings has a relatively low used capacity in comparison with the Y Centre which is running at 100% used capacity. From site audits and consultation the use of Horntye is below capacity. Consideration could therefore be given to enhancing / extending the Y Centre as alternative provision to the Horntye sports hall however both facilities are dated and if Horntye is to be retained or the Y centre expanded or redeveloped the viability and options for these sites needs to be assessed in full.

Club Consultation

[382] **Hastings Butterflies Basketball Club**, which uses Summerfields Leisure Centre as well as the outdoor courts at Whiterock. The club have plans to grow the club further and offer turn up and play sessions. The club have identified a need for additional indoor space, improved air flow and space for storage of equipment. The outdoor courts need to be refurbished and accessible for community use.

Quality ratings – Playing surface 2/5 – Changing facilities 3/5

[383] **Bexhill Giants Basketball Club**, have one team and runs an annual tournament in Hastings using Summerfields Leisure Centre. The club have plans to grow and host coaching sessions. The club have identified a need to improve the quality of the facilities to support their growth.

Quality ratings – Playing surface 3/5 – Changing facilities 2/5

[384] **Hastings YMCA Badminton Club**, based at Helenswood Sports Centre has 122 members from U14 to older adults (50+), the club have seen a growth in members in the last few years and have plans to grow further. They have not identified any facility needs.

Quality ratings – Playing surface 5/5 – Changing facilities 5/5

[385] **Bexhill Pickleball Club**, based at Bexhill Sports Centre, have 42 members. The club used outdoor courts during Covid but now only run indoor sessions. The club have plans to grow and is aiming to advertise and promote additional sessions. They have not identified any additional facility needs, although state the court markings could be better.

Quality ratings – Playing surface 4/5 – Changing facilities 4/5

[386] **Rye Cricket Club**, uses Rye Sports Centre for indoor training. They have 133 members, with plans to grow further. They have identified a need for more indoor practice facilities.

[387] Sports Halls		
Protect	Enhance	Provide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The two Councils to continue to protect the current community use at the education sites as a minimum and to secure formal community use agreements where possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review educational site access and availability – especially at Vinehall School and Bexhill Academy in Rother. Enhancement of either Horntye or the Y centre to retain sports hall space in close proximity to the town centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replacement enhanced provision as part of potential future upgrade or replacement of Summerfields Leisure Centre and Bexhill Leisure Centre redevelopment to better provide for events and a more diverse programme of activity.
Prioritised Actions		
Short Term (1-2 years) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options for Summerfields and Bexhill leisure centres to be finalised as part of a joint review by both Councils. Explore options to extend community availability in the peak hours at Vinehall School and Bexhill Academy. Hastings to assess the final position for Horntye Sports Complex and assess the viability of retaining the Sports Hall via a detailed business plan from the Horntye Sports Trust. If the viability of Horntye is not sustainable (through any refurbishment), options for investing into the Y centre and expanding the sports hall facilities (either new build or extension) should be fully assessed. Investigate the options to open the facilities at St Richard’s Catholic School for community use and extend the current provision further at Battle Abbey School. 		
Medium / Longer Term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional capacity for indoor sports events to be provided in Hastings and/or Bexhill as part of redevelopment of the existing public leisure centres in the two towns. Investigate the opportunities to enhance / extend the sports hall facilities at The Y Centre in Hastings if Horntye is no longer operational or viable. 		

Health and Fitness Provision in Hastings and Rother

[388] Health and fitness provision has played a key part of the Covid-19 pandemic recovery process for leisure centres and will continue to be vital in improving the health and wellbeing of local residents.

Health and Fitness Facilities

[389] There are currently 17 sites with 17 stations or more that offer health and fitness provision. The existing provision provides accessible opportunities across the range of access types (pay and play or pay as you go, membership), budget and mid-range price points and types of provision (cardio, weights, functional fitness, circuits, exercise to music classes, studio cycling). There are also smaller gyms within Rother such as Dale Hill Hotel & Golf Course, Flackley Ash Hotel Leisure Club and Poolside Leisure Club, plus other gym facilities based at sports clubs primarily for the use of players/athletes. Schools with gyms for pupil use only are not included.

Figure 2.25: Health and Fitness Facilities in Hasting and Rother with 17+ stations

Facility Name	Postcode	Approx. Stations	Access Type	Ownership
Hastings				
Bannatyne Health Club (Hastings)	TN38 8EZ	74	Reg. Membership use	Commercial
Falaise Fitness Centre	TN34 1ES	120	Reg. Membership use	Local Authority
Helenswood Sports Centre	TN37 7PS	54	Pay and Play	Education
Station Plaza Fitness	TN34 1BA	43	Reg. Membership use	Education
Summerfields Leisure Centre	TN34 1ET	17	Reg. Membership use	Local Authority
The Gym Group (Hastings)	TN34 1PH	220	Reg. Membership use	Commercial

The Hastings Academy	TN35 5DN	26	Reg. Membership use	Education
Trojan Training Systems	TN35 4NN	60	Pay and Play	Commercial
Zeus Gym	TN38 9AZ	80	Reg. Membership use	Commercial
	Total	694		
Facility Name	Postcode	Approx. Stations	Access Type	Ownership
Rother				
Battle Sports Centre	TN33 0HT	30	Pay and Play	Education
Bexhill College Sports Centre	TN40 2JG	22	Private Use	Education
Bexhill Leisure Centre	TN39 4HS	56	Pay and Play	Local Authority
Bexhill Leisure Pool	TN40 2JS	23	Pay and Play	Local Authority
Crowhurst Park	TN33 0SL	30	Reg. Membership use	Commercial
Harbour Health Club	TN31 7EL	60	Reg. Membership use	Commercial
Physiques Gym	TN39 4HU	50	Reg. Membership use	Commercial
Rye Sports Centre	TN31 7ND	30	Pay and Play	Education
	Total	301		

[390] At present, only one of the major high street budget gym companies offering low cost 24/7 access is present in the area, The Gym Group in Hastings. This site offers a large 24/7 gym with 220 stations at affordable prices (from £18.99 a month). In recent years, the market has seen a significant increase in the number of low-cost 24-hour gyms that offer

residents the flexibility to exercise when it is appropriate for them.

[391] In light of the revenue contribution made by health and fitness to the financial sustainability of the area's main public leisure and sport centres, it will be important to ensure that the health and fitness offers at these centres remain competitive in relation to availability (opening hours), access (affordable membership options) and attractiveness (the quality of the studios, equipment, training and instruction).

[392] There is a good level of health and fitness provision in the following Council owned leisure centres, including a 120-station facility at Falaise Fitness Centre and a 56-station facility at Bexhill Leisure Centre. Freedom Leisure currently operate all of the main sport and leisure centres within the area.

[393] A number of the public health and fitness facilities in Hastings and Rother are located on educational sites. This includes the 54-station facility at Helenswood Sports Centre and the 30-station facility at Rye Sports Centre.

[394] Summerfields Leisure Centre has the smallest provision in the area, with separate larger provision at the Falaise Fitness Centre. If the leisure centre is redeveloped future provision should be accommodated all together on one site, with the current number of stations maintained as a minimum and consideration of specific provision such as women only sessions.

[395] There are also smaller niche gyms in the area including 1066 Crossfit in Hastings, offering workouts based on function movements, Stackz Gym in Bexhill, offering personal training, martial arts, boxing and nutrition advice, and My A to Z fitness in Bexhill, offering fitness classes and personal training targeted for women.

Quality of Health and Fitness Facilities

[396] The majority of the facilities that were assessed by the Consultant Team were to a good or a very good standard, except Falaise Fitness Centre which is dated and needs to be refurbished to bring it up to modern standards and equipment needs to be upgraded to compete with commercial companies in the area.

Health and Fitness Participation

[397] In terms of health and fitness demand trends, the latest annual state of the industry report found that, in 2022, the penetration rate (i.e., the proportion of the adult population in the UK that were members of a gym in either the public or private sector) has dropped from 15.6% in 2019 to 14.6%. Currently in the UK, 1 in every 10 people is a member of a gym. The 2022 report highlights that the pandemic has knocked the industry back around three years and the 3-year period to the end of March 2022 has seen decreases of 2.4% in the number of fitness facilities, 4.7% in the number of members and 4.3% in market value. The industry is taking time to recover to pre pandemic levels as consumers adapted to new exercise habits, including online and hybrid model. Group exercise remains popular for its social aspects.

[398] This evidence of the reduction of UK health and fitness participation is supported by the findings of the Active Lives Survey for England. 7.7% of adults (16+) in England took part in a gym session at least twice in the previous 28 days in 2020/21 i.e., 3,528,000 people. This has decreased from 13.3% in 2018/19, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The number of people taking part in a fitness class was higher at 12.1% (5,526,000 people), which is a decrease from 14% in 2019/20, the first time there has been a reduction in participation since the start of the survey in 2015/16.

[399] Health and Fitness Recommendations

Protect	Enhance	Provide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to protect the current quantity and availability of community health and fitness facilities through planning policy and to ensure its leisure management service provider maintains the facilities and equipment to a good quality standard whilst offering and affordable pricing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re provide and consider expanding the health and fitness provision of Falaise Fitness Centre as part of any future upgrade or replacement of Summerfields Leisure Centre. Assess the demand and feasibility of expanding the health and fitness provision as part of any redevelopment of Bexhill Leisure Centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly review health and fitness facility and equipment needs with the leisure management service provider in relation to changes in accessible supply (e.g. 24/7 budget gyms and high street / retail town centre provision), fitness participation and industry trends and population growth.

Prioritised Actions

Short Term (1-2 years)

- Maintain a community focused presence within the market of health and fitness provision in the area.

Longer Term

- Assess the demand and feasibility of expanding the health and fitness provision as part of any future upgrade or replacement of Summerfields and Bexhill Leisure Centre.

Squash Provision in Hastings and Rother Introduction

[400] The summary below provides the assessment of squash provision in Hastings and Rother alongside the leading outcomes from the consultation process which has informed this study. The priorities to be adopted for squash provision are then provided at the end of this assessment.

Squash Facilities

[401] There are currently 7 squash courts, 1 in Hastings and 6 in Rother.

Figure 2.26: Squash Facilities in Hastings and Rother

Site Name	Postcode	No of courts	Court type	Ownership Type	Management Type
Hastings					
Summerfields Leisure Centre	TN37 6RS	1	Normal	Local Authority	Leisure Company
Rother					
Bexhill Leisure Centre	TN39 4HS	1	Normal	Local Authority	Leisure Company
Cooden Beach Tennis & Squash Club	TN39 3BD	3	Normal	Sports Club	Sports Club
Rye Lawn Tennis & Squash Club	TN31 7NY	2	Normal	Sports Club	Sports Club
TOTAL COURTS		7			

[402] The squash landscape in the area, due to the effects of the pandemic, the loss of facilities (8 courts have been closed in mainly municipal facilities in the last 5 years) and therefore reduced playing opportunities along with the financial pressures on leisure centre managers to maximise the use of spaces has resulted in a decline in activity over the past four to five years.

[403] There was also a thriving squash league in the area (Eastbourne & District) which ceased in early 2018 and this has no doubt contributed to the lack of competitive opportunities for those regular players outside of their own clubs/courts.

[404] The level of overall supply does not meet the England Squash benchmark quantitative guidance standard of 1 court per 10,000 people. Based on a supply of 3 accessible courts, the level of provision Hastings & Rother falls well below this benchmark at approximately 1 court per 27,000

(approx.) people, which will only increase with population changes. This is especially exacerbated by the fact that there are only 2 publicly available courts in the district that can be accessed by new/first-time/casual users.

Location of Squash Facilities in Hastings and Rother

[405] The spread of facilities aligns with the most populated area, however there are gaps in provision in the north of Rother. It is imperative that the current sites are maintained, and more sites added in the future.

Quality of Squash Facilities

[406] During the development of this strategy, the Consultant Team undertook non-technical visual site visits to the squash facilities in the study area and gave it a quality rating or poor, standard or good. The ratings can be seen below in figure 2.27.

Figure 2.27: Quality of Squash Facilities in Hastings and Rother

Squash Facilities	Quality Rating
Hastings	
Summerfields Leisure Centre	Standard
Rother	
Bexhill Leisure Centre	Poor
Cooden Beach Tennis and Squash Club	Good
Rye Lawn Tennis and Squash Club	Good

[407] The standard of facilities in the area are mixed with club facilities in good condition, with both being maintained on a regular basis, compared to the Leisure Centre facilities. Bexhill Leisure Centre has 3 squash courts but only one is currently used for Squash, the other two have been repurposed for use, one as a free weight's gym area, the other for table tennis. The court in use is in a poor condition and the council should look to refurbishment this court in the medium to long term, as well as consider the viability to bring back into use a second court. Summerfields Leisure centre has one

squash court in a standard condition.

Squash Facilities in Neighbouring Local Authorities

[408] There are a number of facilities located in neighbouring borough's that are likely to attract residents of Hastings and Rother. These include the two courts at Hawkhurst Squash Club (Tunbridge Wells), the four courts at Crowborough Tennis and Squash Club (Wealden) and the two courts at Hampden Park Sports Centre (Eastbourne).

Squash Participation

[409] Overall, the most recent Active Lives Survey findings¹¹ indicate a decrease in adult demand for squash nationally over the last three years. 0.2% of adults (16+) in England played at least twice in the last 28 days in 2020/21 i.e. 105,600 people. This represents a significant decrease of -0.8% since the benchmark ALS in 2015/16.

[410] Cooden Beach Tennis and Squash Club have 3 squash courts in good condition. They have 40-45 members predominantly male 45+. They hold club afternoon sessions for squash members and potential new members and are actively looking to grow the club.

[411] Rye Lawn Tennis and Squash Club is celebrating its centenary year. They have 2 squash courts in good condition having been recently replastered, with LED lighting. They have 530 members overall with more tennis members than squash, and have found some squash members now play padel instead.

[412] Both leisure centres (Bexhill and Summerfields) reported a positive increase in the number of new and younger players taking up both tennis and squash 57 (formally known as racketball) post-covid, which indicates a latent demand for squash in the area. To maintain this perceived uptake,

England Squash, Sussex County and the Southeast Regional Forum feel that new/more external competitive opportunities need to be supplied to meet this demand and re-stimulate interest at the two members clubs.

[413] England Squash has a number of engagement programmes aimed at encouraging more people to become involved with the sport, helping to create thriving communities including Squash 101 programmes - Squash Stars, Junior 101, Adult 101, Squash 57 and Squash Girls Can. For these programmes to be successful facilities need to be well maintained to provide a positive experience along with a partnership approach between the various clubs/ centre management teams.

[414] Squash Recommendations

Protect	Enhance	Provide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to protect the current quantity and the availability of community squash facilities through this strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refurbish the squash court at Bexhill Leisure Centre and look into the viability of bringing a second court back into use. Work with leisure providers and clubs to encourage 'come and try it' sessions using the Squash 101 programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider options for providing additional squash courts (glass back and potentially with a moveable side wall) within the feasibility assessments and future plans for the future upgrade or replacement of Summerfields Leisure Centre. Regularly review squash facility needs with England Squash and the leisure management service provider in relation to changes in accessible supply, participation trends and population growth.

¹¹ Active Lives Adult Survey November 20/21 Report, Sport England (April 2022)

[414] Squash Recommendations

Prioritised Actions

Short Term (1-2 years)

- Refurbish the squash court at Bexhill Leisure Centre and look into the viability of bringing a second court back into use or providing new squash facilities as part of any new leisure provision.

Longer Term

- The Councils to support the providers of squash to ensure the current level of facilities is maintained as a minimum.
- Consider options for providing additional squash courts (glass back and potentially with a moveable side wall) within the feasibility assessments and future plans for the replacement of the Summerfields Leisure Centre.

Gymnastics and Trampolining Provision in Hastings and Rother Introduction

[415] The summary below provides the assessment of gymnastics and trampolining provision within the study area alongside the leading outcomes from the consultation process which has informed this study. The priorities to be adopted for gymnastics and trampolining provision are then provided at the end of this assessment.

Gymnastics and Trampolining Facilities

[416] In Hastings and Rother there are 4 gymnastics/trampolining clubs, with the majority of the clubs having a dedicated facility.

Figure 2.28: Facilities in Hastings and Rother used by Gymnastics clubs

Site Name	Postcode	Facility Type
Hastings		
Ark Alexandra Academy (William Parker) (Hollington GC)	TN34 2PG	School Academy
Summerfields Gymnastics Club	TN35 4PL	Dedicated venue
Helenswood Sports Centre (Acromax/Dharma)	TN37 7PS	School Academy

Hastings Rother

1066 Gymnastics

TN40 2JP

Dedicated Venue

[417] Hollington Gymnastics Club have classes starting from the age of 3 upwards and compete in 3 disciplines Acrobatic, Tumble and Floor and Vault. The club is based at Ark Alexandra Academy with dedicated space within the sports hall.

[418] Summerfields Gymnastic Club has a purpose equipped facility, with sprung floor and equipment, including a specialist tumbling track. They provide sessions for children from five years upwards of all abilities as well as baby gym and preschool classes. They also offer novice and intermediate sessions and opportunities to enter floor, vault and artistic competitions.

[419] Dharma / Acromax are based in a leisure centre in Maidstone and Homewood School in Tenterden operating a satellite centre in Hastings at Helenswood Sports Centre providing gymnastics and Trampolining sessions for all ages and abilities. The club are looking for a more permanent facility in the area.

[420] 1066 Gymnastics has a dedicated facility with sprung floor and equipment, including a sunken trampoline and foam pits. They provide general gymnastic sessions from 4 years onwards, as well as preschool and toddler sessions. They offer girls and boy's competition gymnastics and Women's Artistic Gymnastics.

Quality of Gymnastics and Trampolining Facilities

[421] During the development of this strategy, the Consultant Team undertook non-technical visual site visits at most of the facilities in the area currently used for gymnastics and trampolining. Each facility was given a quality rating of poor, standard or good. The ratings can be seen below in figure 2.29.

Figure 2.29: Quality of Gymnastic Facilities

Gymnastic Facilities	Quality Rating
Hastings	
Ark Alexandra Academy (William Parker) (Hollington GC)	o Standard
Summerfields Gymnastics Club	o Not seen
Helenswood Sports Centre (Acromax/Dharma)	o Standard
Rother	
1066 Gymnastics	o Good

[422] The dedicated sites are in good condition with sprung floors, specialist equipment and are well looked after. The clubs using school facilities use standard sports hall space, with mats and trampolines.

Gymnastics and Trampolining Facilities in Neighbouring Authorities

[423] Gymnastics clubs in the neighbouring boroughs rely on the hire of school facilities, the nearest club with dedicated facilities is Kestrel Gymnastics Academy (Ashford).

Gymnastics Participation

[424] Overall, the most recent Active Lives Survey findings indicated no significant change in adult demand for gymnastics and trampolining nationally from November 2015/16 to November 2018/19. However, in the most recent Active Lives Survey there has been a slight decrease in the level of participation, which is due to the impact from the Covid-19 pandemic causing the sport and leisure facilities to close. In the most recent Active Lives Study 0.3% of adults (16+) in England participated in gymnastics or trampolining at least twice in the last 28 days in 2020/21 i.e., 134,800 people. However, it should be noted that adult data is of limited value in estimating overall demand for the sport of gymnastics as most participation is by children under 16 excluded from this data source.

[425] Gymnastics and Trampolining Recommendations

Protect	Enhance	Provide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Continue to protect the current quantity and availability of community facilities for gymnastics and trampolining through planning policy and this strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Work with British Gymnastics and the local clubs to support the ongoing refurbishment needs of facilities in order to maintain the current level of provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Regularly review gymnastics and trampolining facility needs with British Gymnastics, and the clubs based in the study area in relation to changes in accessible supply, participation trends and population growth. o Subject to feasibility, funding and planning, support the development of a purpose-built gymnastics/trampolining facility in the study area to accommodate Dharma / Acromax and service central Rother area.

Prioritised Actions

Short Term (1-2 years)

- o Work with British Gymnastics and the local clubs to support the ongoing refurbishment needs of facilities in order to maintain the current level of provision.

Longer Term

- o Investigate the feasibility, funding and planning to support the development of a purpose-built gymnastics/trampolining facility in the study area to accommodate Dharma / Acromax at a location to be determined to service central Rother area.

Athletics Facilities in Hastings and Rother

[426] Hastings and Rother has one outdoor synthetic track with field athletics facilities for training and competition, at Ark Alexandra Academy (William Parker). The facility is managed by Playsport and has a floodlit, eight-lane 400m athletics track, as well as throw zones for the hammer, shot putt, discus and javelin. The facility provides a home venue for Hastings Athletics Club, HY Runners and Hastings Runners.

[427] Hastings Athletics Club providing activities from U7 to vets, male and female. Their membership is majority from the Rother area, 70% compared to Hastings 30%. The club are responsible for the maintenance of all the equipment including the track surface and facilities.

[428] HY Runners was formed after a spilt with Hastings Athletic Club, they cater for all ages and abilities from 7 years up and have approximately 70 members registered with England Athletics (although full membership figures are said to be closer to 500 potential members). They provide structured and coached sessions for kids, new runners and intermediate runners.

[429] Hastings Runners have 163 members registered with England Athletics (with total membership thought to be closer to 400 members) welcoming members of all abilities from beginner runners to more experienced, faster runners accustomed to competing in a wide range of events. They use the athletics track once a week for sessions, with other training runs starting from Horntye Park, where they have a secure storage area, as well as other road and off road runs around the area.

[430] There are a number of other clubs offering outdoor running opportunities (not registered with England Athletics) including Rye Runners, who use the pavilion at Rye Cricket Club as a base for meetings twice a week, and run sessions targeting inactive people and RunningSpace, a registered charity using running to prevent suicide through PACE (Prayer, Activity, Community and Education). They run free Walk to Run sessions at St Helens Ore and Christchurch Ore, in Hastings and The Pelham, Bexhill in Rother. There is also a number of races / events run in villages and towns including couch to 5k, 5k and 10k races.

[431] There are no indoor athletics facilities located within Hastings and

Rother and the area sits just outside of England Athletics recommended 60min drivetime catchment for the nearest indoor facility. Whilst the area would benefit from improved indoor provision England Athletics does not consider it to be a strategic priority due to the location of the indoor facilities at Julie Rose Bowl Stadium in Ashford and the relatively small population catchment a new indoor facility would serve.

Quality of Athletics Facilities in Hastings and Rother

[432] During the development of this strategy, the Consultant Team undertook non-technical visual site visits to the athletics facilities in the area. The Athletics Track at Ark Alexandra Academy is an important facility as the only athletic track in the area and is well placed to meet the needs of athletics/ running demand in Hastings and many areas of Rother. The track is relatively well used and in good condition, the surface was resurfaced in 2018, but likely to be due an interim respray in 2025/6. The club are fundraising for a new throwing cage. The facility is working towards the UKA TrackMark accreditation but needs to full complete Unites 2,3 and 4 by April 2023 to demonstrate compliance with UKA Standards and to host UKA competition.

Parkruns

[433] Hastings has a Parkrun every Saturday at 9am taking place at Seaside Road along the sea front. The average attendance across the 332 weekly runs is 236 finishers. There are no junior parkrun's in the area. The nearest alternative Parkrun for those in the Central / North Rother is Bedgebury Pinetum (Tunbridge Wells), Shinewater Park (Eastbourne), Victoria Park (Ashford).

Participation in Athletics and Running

[434] Overall, the most recent Active Lives Survey findings¹² indicate a slight decrease in adult demand for running, athletics or multi sports nationally in

¹² Active Lives Adult Survey November 20/21 Report, Sport England (April 2022)

the last year compared to a relatively stable period prior to this. 13.7% (down from 15.6%) of adults (16+) in England went running or took part in track or field athletics at least twice in the last 28 days in 2020/21 (i.e. over 6.2 million people), which is now higher than gym-based health and fitness membership.

[435] The facility at the Ark Alexandra Academy is well placed to meet the needs of athletics/ running demand in Hastings and many areas of Rother. However, Central and Northern Areas of Rother could benefit from the introduction of an entry level new generation facility (NEW:GEN). England Athletics are encouraging the development of these innovative, affordable and accessible multi-activity facilities to inspire people of all ages to run, jump and throw – the fundamental skills behind all physical activity.

Walking

[436] The NHS provide evidence of countless health benefits to walking centred around heart health, general fitness levels and burning excess calories. Beyond medical benefits the NHS recommend walking as one of the cheapest and easiest ways to become healthier. Whilst physical and mental health is key to the promotion of walking, the environmental benefits are vast in terms of reduced transport by other means and therefore cleaner air and reduced pollutive fuels. Hastings and Rother’s open spaces and parks provide excellent opportunities for walking and good quality and safe walking routes are part of the wider picture for better provision for physical activity. Hastings Strategic Open and Play Space Assessment (July 2020) identifies that opportunities should be considered to ensure existing open spaces are of a high quality and provide a broad range of features and facilities to support the health and wellbeing of the Borough’s residents. The study sets out key characteristics that should be provided in open spaces to offer opportunities for play and informal recreation including physical activity.

Club Consultation

[437] Hastings Athletics Club has 90 members and has seen a decrease in membership in the last few years. The club has plans to grow further and are concentrating promoting field and sprinting events as well as revising their membership fees. The club has identified a need for a new throwing cage and are constantly fundraising to maintain the track facilities.

Quality ratings - Playing surface - 5/5 Changing facilities - 3/5

[438] Athletics Recommendations

Protect	Enhance	Provide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to protect the existing athletics facility and ensure that the venue achieves and maintains UKAs TrackMark accreditation. In partnership with East Sussex County Council, ensure the lighting, waymarking and other signage along footpaths and in parks used for jogging and walking for health, are maintained to a good standard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with England Athletics and Hastings Athletics Club to support the ongoing refurbishment of facilities. Support Hastings Athletics club in their fundraising efforts for a new throwing cage. Work with local running groups, Parishes and Town Councils to get people active through running. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate options to provide a NEW:GEN facility as part of any sport/leisure development in Central / Northern Rother. Regularly review athletics and running facility needs with England Athletics, clubs and the leisure management service providers in relation to changes in accessible supply, participation trends and population growth.

Prioritised Actions

Short Term (1-2 years)

- Continue to protect the existing athletics facility and ensure that the venue achieves and maintains UKAs TrackMark accreditation.

[438] Athletics Recommendations**Longer Term**

- o Investigate options to provide a NEW:GEN facility as part of any sport/leisure development in Central / Northern Rother.

Tennis provision in Hastings and Rother

[439] The section below provides the assessment of tennis provision within Hastings and Rother alongside the leading outcomes from the consultation process which has informed this study. The priorities to be adopted for tennis provision are then provided at the end of this assessment.

Tennis Facilities in Hastings and Rother

[440] There are 18 sites that offer accessible tennis courts in the area, with a total of 72 outdoor tennis courts. There are 18 floodlit courts in the study area all on club / education sites, figure 2.29 shows the sites split by borough.

[441] There are no indoor tennis venues in Hastings and Rother, although Rye Lawn Tennis and Squash Club have submitted planning for 3 new indoor courts at their facility, with the planning consent due to be determined in March 2023. The LTA have identified Hastings as a target location for future community indoor tennis centre and have discussed opportunities for this to be considered as part of the Bohmemia / Summerfields development.

Tennis Clubs in Hastings and Rother

[442] There are a total of 9 tennis clubs located within the study area, although only 6 are registered to the LTA and are listed in figure 3. These account for 40 (18 floodlit) of the total courts within the study area.

Figure 2.29 Club Tennis Sites in Hastings & Rother

Site	No. Courts	Floodlit
Hastings		
Amherst LTC	7	5
The Green LTC	8	3
Rother		
Burwash LTC	2	0
Cooden Beach Sports and Social Club	6	6
Crowhurst LTC	1	0
Fairlight Rec Ground	1	0
Mountfield TC	3	1
Pett Tennis Club	1	0
Rye Lawn Tennis and Squash Club	11	3
Total	40	18

[443] Amherst LTC has 5 artificial grass floodlit courts and 2 artificial clay non floodlit courts. The club runs a number of recreational programmes such as LTA Youth Start, Rusty Racquets, Adult Green Ball, cardio tennis, children's holiday clubs as well as Junior Development Programmes and Academy, Intermediate/ Team Player sessions. The club is looking to provide floodlights for the clay courts but need to have access to power, as well as upgrade existing light to LED. There is a small space next to the clay courts which could potentially be used for a Padel Court. The club only have one year left on their lease and are unable to make any development plans until this is progressed. They have been trying to arrange a renewal of the lease for the last 2 years.

[444] Burwash LTC has 2 macadam non floodlit courts, with around 81 members. The courts were built using lottery funding in 1998 and are maintained by the club. They were last professionally cleaned and re coloured in 2016. The club provides opportunities for children and teenagers to play for free.

[445] The Green LTC has 9 courts, 5 acrylic surfaces, 3 of which are floodlit and 4 porous macadam of which 2 are floodlit. They refurbished their changing rooms in 2021 and hold the freehold of the site. The club has around 140 members, offering club competitions and social drop ins. Their facilities meet their needs however car parking at the site is limited.

[446] Cooden Beach Sports & Social Club has 6 tennis courts, 4 macadam floodlight courts and 2 artificial clay floodlit courts. The clay courts were installed 4 years ago which provide year-round use. The macadam courts are due to be repainted in Spring 23 and cleaned at the end of summer. The club are investigating the options and cost for LED funding. The club have seen an increase in junior membership since Covid.

[447] Crowhurst LTC has one macadam non-floodlit court, part of the Crowhurst Park Holiday Village. The tennis court is not available to external members.

[448] Fairlight Tennis Club has one court at Woodfield Recreation Ground which is access controlled. The club is responsible for the maintenance of the court. They have no amenities on site but make use of youth club when it is open.

[449] Mountfield TC has access to facilities at Vinehall School consisting of 3 macadam courts, one of which is floodlit.

[450] Pett Tennis Club has one court at Pett Recreation Ground which has a gate controlled access system with an online booking process.

[451] Rye Lawn Tennis and Squash Club has 11 tennis courts and 2 padel courts. This includes 1 artificial clay floodlit court, 2 artificial grass floodlit court, 8 grass courts. They provide competitive opportunities, group coaching sessions and turn up and play sessions. They club are looking to

expand their facilities and have submitted planning consent in for an indoor tennis facility consisting of 3 courts and 4 additional hard courts.

Park Tennis Sites

[452] In public parks and recreation grounds there are 25 courts all of which are available for public hire on a pay and play basis or, in some cases, on an open access / free of charge basis, see figure 2.30. There is currently no community accessible floodlight provision across the area.

Figure 2.30: Park Tennis Sites

Site	No. Courts	Floodlit
Hastings		
Alexandra Park	6	0
Rother		
Battle Rec	2	0
Beckley Playing Field	1	0
Burwash LTC	1	0
Egerton Park	8	0
Little Common Rec Ground	1	0
Oaklands Park (tennis area)	2	0
Swan Meadow Playing Fields	2	0
Westfield Tennis Courts	2	0
Total	25	0

[453] There were previously 5 tennis courts at White Rock Gardens in Hastings, but these have been decommissioned. The LTA highlighted 3 key park sites in the area Alexandra Park and White Rock Gardens in Hastings and Egerton Park in Rother. The latent demand figures for each site are set out in figure 2.31, demonstrating the number of residents, within a 10min drive time of each facility, who would like to play more recreational tennis:

Figure 2.31 Latent demand figures provided by the LTA

Site	Latent Demand Figures
Alexandra Park	1,074
White Rock Gardens	1,132
Egerton Park	477

[454] The LTA ClubSpark booking system is in place for Egerton Park tennis courts, despite the lack of access solution currently. There have been 601 unique uses of the courts since the system was introduced in 2020 with an average of 1,947 court hours booked per annum.

[455] The system along with an access system in place means people can access the courts through a coded gate access system, which also provides security for court users and helps protect the courts. The smart gate access system allows people to book a court for a specific time and helps prevent vandalism and unauthorised use. A number of park sites also use the clubSpark booking system including Battle Rec. Ground and Little Common Rec. Ground.

[456] In addition to the tennis clubs and park tennis court sites in Hastings and Rother, there are also 10 tennis courts on educational sites available for community use currently or have potential to be available in the future.

Figure 2.32: Educational Tennis Sites

Site	No. Courts	Floodlit
Rother		
Battle Sports centre (Claverham College)	3	0
Bexhill Academy	1	0
Vinehall School	6	1
Total	10	1

[457] Battle Sports centre had 3 courts but due to building works at the school

these are currently not accessible until March 2023. Bexhill Academy has recently added a cover to their tennis court, they have not had any external hire yet but are open to this being used. Vinehall School has 6 courts in total, 3 of which are home to Mountfield Tennis Club and are also listed under the club tennis sites, the other 3 are for school use only at present.

Quality of Tennis Courts in Hastings and Rother

[458] During the development of this strategy, the Consultant Team undertook non-technical visual site visits to the following tennis facilities in the study area. Each facility visited was given a quality rating of Poor, Standard or Good. The ratings can be seen below in figure 3.33. Not all tennis court sites were visited for a range of reasons including those courts at private members clubs where courts were assumed to be of good quality, those on school sites with limited community use and single courts with no ancillary facilities.

Figure 2.33: Quality of Tennis Courts audited.

Tennis Courts	Quality Rating
Hastings	
Alexandra Park	o Poor (5), Unplayable (1)
Amherst LTC	o Good (7)
The Green LTC	o Standard (8)
White Rock Gardens	o Unplayable (5)
Rother	
Battle Rec. Ground	o Poor (2)
Beckley Playing Field	o Poor (1)
Burwash LTC	o Standard (2)
Cooden Beach Sports and Social Club	o Good (6)
Crowhurst Rec. Ground	o Poor (1)
Egerton Park	o Poor (8)
Little Common Rec Ground	o Poor (1)
Oaklands Park Tennis Courts	o Poor (2)

Mountfield TC	o Standard (3)
Pett Recreation Ground	o Standard (1)
Rye Lawn Tennis and Squash Club	o Good (11)
Swan Meadow Playing Fields	o Standard (2)

[459] The non-technical site assessments highlight that the tennis courts within the area vary in quality, with the club courts being a good or standard, whilst the tennis courts within the park sites are of lesser quality. In Hastings, the park courts are in need of refurbishment being poor or unplayable, whilst the club sites are good or standard. In Rother there are only two good sites, four standard sites and six sites with courts in a poor condition and in need of refurbishment.

[460] It is recommended that those courts rated as poor or unplayable be refurbished or replaced, with the priority being those on the key sites at Alexandra Park, White Rock Gardens and Egerton Park. Bringing these sites back to payable standard, would cater for the current latent demand in the area (figure 2.36). In addition to the required renovations, it is important that all three sites introduce a sustainable operational model, to include online booking (via ClubSpark), gate access systems and an inclusive, accessible programmes of activity. This would protect the long-term future of the courts, provide improved resident journey to court, allow the operator to remotely manage each site and ultimately drive an increase in participation.

Padel

[461] The LTA also oversees the running of Padel, a new sport which is growing fast across the country that provides an exciting addition to the traditional game of tennis, enjoyed by both existing players and complete beginners. Already popular across Europe, a wave of new Padel facilities are being built in parks and other settings and, in some cases, traditional tennis courts are

being converted to Padel courts.

[462] There are currently two padel courts at Rye Tennis and Squash Club and demand for additional courts in the area. There have been enquiries from Padel operators to design, build and operate new facilities in the area, with Bexhill being identified as an option. It is anticipated that there will be little or no requirement for any capital contribution from the Rother Council and any new operation will yield a moderate revenue income.

[463] To capitalise on this wave of interest and the potential benefits to residents that might be available from commercial operators in this market, the Councils should explore what opportunities there might be to partner with a Padel operator to develop new sports facilities which will potentially encourage non active people to try a new version of a traditional sport.

Tennis Participation

[464] Overall, the most recent Active Lives Survey findings¹³ indicate there has been a decrease in adult demand for tennis nationally over the last year. 1.4% of adults (16+) in England participated in tennis at least twice in the last 28 days in 2020/21 i.e. 641,800 people. This represents a significant decrease of -0.6% since the benchmark Active Lives Survey in 2015/16. Whilst there was a post covid resurgence of demand for outdoor park tennis this has not however converted into regular participation.

Club Consultation

[465] Amerhurst LTC has 221 members and an additional 100 non-members attending coaching sessions. Membership levels have been relatively stable over the last few years. The club has no plans to grow further and are concentrating on sustaining the current membership. The club would like to install floodlights on their remaining courts as a priority.

Quality ratings - Playing surface - 5/5 Changing facilities - 5/5

¹³ Active Lives Adult Survey November 20/21 Report, Sport England (April 2022)

[466] Rye Lawn Tennis and Squash Club has 530 overall members, which has been relatively stable over the last few years. The club has plans to grow aiming to attract more younger players to the club. The club has identified a need for more indoor courts and outdoor hard courts.

Quality ratings - Playing surface - 5/5 Changing facilities - 5/5

[467] The Green LTC has 45 members and has had a relatively stable membership level over the last few years. The club has no plans to grow in the future but would like to be able to provide all weather courts to increase playing time in the winter.

Quality ratings - Playing surface - 5/5 Changing facilities - 5/5

[468] Tennis Recommendations

Protect	Enhance	Provide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Councils to continue to protect the current quantity and availability of community facilities for tennis through planning policy. ○ Following investment, the Councils to maintain courts, fencing and nets in parks. ○ Club sites to be maintained to a good quality standard (club led) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work with the LTA to resurface and repaint the courts at Alexandra Park and implement an online booking and gate access system. ○ Assess the feasibility of refurbishing the courts and implementing the LTA gate access system at Egerton Park. ○ Work with the LTA to provide support for tennis clubs in the area to enhance and increase their facilities further. ○ Work with Parish and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Investigate the feasibility of providing a Padel court in the Bexhill area. ○ Support the development of indoor facilities at Rye Lawn Tennis and Squash Club. ○ Ensure the courts at White Rock Gardens are refurbished or re provided as part of any redevelopment of the site. ○ Investigate the feasibility of providing a community indoor tennis facility as part of any development of

[468] Tennis Recommendations

Protect	Enhance	Provide
	<p>Town Councils and communities to improve access to tennis.</p>	<p>the Summerfields leisure centre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regularly review tennis and padel facility needs with the LTA, the tennis clubs based in the area in relation to changes in accessible supply, participation trends and population growth. ○ Working with the LTA and understanding current financial pressures to maintain tennis courts, consider introducing a pay and play policy for more park tennis courts.

Prioritised Actions

Short Term (1-2 years)

- Work with the LTA to resurface and repaint the courts at Alexandra Park and implement an online booking and gate access system.
- Assess the feasibility of refurbishing the courts and implementing the LTA gate access system at Egerton Park.
- Investigate the feasibility of providing a Padel court in the Bexhill area.
- Work with the LTA to provide support for tennis clubs in the area to enhance and increase their facilities further.

Longer Term

- Investigate the opportunities to re provide / refurbish the courts at White Rock Gardens as part of any redevelopment of the site.
- Investigate the feasibility of providing a community indoor tennis facility as part of any development of the Summerfields leisure centre.

Netball Provision in Hastings and Rother

[469] Hastings and Rother have a total of 15 courts across 9 different facilities. There are 8 outdoor courts and 7 indoor courts in the study area.

Figure 2.34 Netball Sites in Hastings & Rother

Site	No Courts	Indoor	Outdoor
Hastings	4	2	2
Rother	11	5	6

[470] One of the indoor courts and two of the outdoor courts are on education sites in Hastings compared to three indoor courts and 2 outdoor courts in Rother.

[471] There are 3 clubs in Hastings with a total of 71 members. In Rother there is only one club with 17 members. The clubs play in the Hastings & District Netball League, which is based at Helenswood Sports Centre and has a total of 13 teams involved. The league and clubs in the area are concerned about the quality of the facilities at this venue as the surface is becoming unplayable and urgently needs resurfacing.

[472] Angels Netball Club, based in Hastings at Helenswood Sports Centre provides junior provision for the area and there is also a Walking Netball Club for those 50+ in the area, based at Helenswood Leisure Centre in the summer and Willingdon in the winter.

[473] The courts at Battle Sports Centre are currently unavailable due to works at the Claverham College, new provision is due to be provided once the works are completed in March 2023.

[474] England Netball’s supply and demand analysis shows there is a demand for two additional courts, one in each area.

[475] Netball Recommendations

Protect	Enhance	Provide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to protect the current quantity and availability of community facilities for netball through planning policy. Ensure the courts, fencing and nets at all venues are maintained to a good quality standard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Freedom Leisure, Ark Academy and England Netball to assess the feasibility, costs and funding strategy to refurbish the courts at Helenswood Sports Centre. Work with Claverham College to ensure the netball courts are re provided following building works. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly review netball facility needs with England Netball, netball clubs and the leisure management service provider in relation to changes in accessible supply, participation trends and population growth. Investigate options to provide additional Netball courts to meet the demand as part of any sport/leisure development.

Prioritised Actions

Short Term

- To work with Freedom Leisure, Ark Academy and England Netball to assess the feasibility, costs and funding strategy to refurbish the courts at Helenswood Sports Centre.
- Work with Claverham College to ensure the netball courts are re provided following building works.

Long Term

- Investigate options to provide additional Netball courts to meet the demand in the area as part of any sport/leisure development.

Cycling Provision in Hastings and Rother

Introduction

[476] The summary below provides the assessment of cycling provision within Hastings and Rother alongside the leading outcomes from the consultation process which has informed this study. The proposed priorities to be considered for cycling provision are then provided at the end of this assessment.

Cycling Facilities

[477] There are two BMX facilities in the area, the Source Park, an underground BMX and skatepark in Hastings and a newly opened Bexhill BMX Race Track and Jump Park at Sidley Recreation Ground. There is also a pump track at Battle recreation ground, Hollington Bowl Skatepark, made up of two rectangular bowls adjoined at the corners and a skatepark at White Rock Gardens in Hastings known locally as the Boyley Skate Park. The Boyley trust actively fundraises for the skatepark and hosts an annual BMX fundraiser event which is celebrated within the BMX industry.

[478] The Source Park houses two underground skateparks, the main room and the plaza, which includes ledges, handrails and movable objects. It includes a viewing area, courtyard and shops. They offer pay and play sessions and coaching.

[479] The Bexhill Race Track and Jump Park includes six-rider floodlit dirt track, which features a tarmac berm, a modern start gate for race stimulation and a split second straight. The dirt jump park has a variety of jumps to challenge most riders. The new track is next to the Bexhill skatepark. Jump club are the resident club offering turn up and play sessions and coaching, as well as hosting local and regional sized events. The Club will be responsible for the

maintenance of the facility and are keen that any future developments of Sidley Recreation Ground considers parking enhancement.

Cycling Provision in Neighbouring Local Authorities

[480] There is mountain bike and cycling trails in Bedgebury Park in Tunbridge Wells accessible to residents in Rother in a 20-minute drive time.

Road and Track Cycling

[481] There are two British Cycling and/or Cyclists' Touring Club affiliated road cycling clubs; Hastings & St Leonards Cycling Club have 100 members and offer a wide variety of rides mainly on public roads for those age 14 and above. Rye and District Wheelers have around 80 members and welcomes cyclists of all abilities including juniors. The main needs for the further development of road cycling are to improve the quality of the roads and cycleways in the area.

Track Cycling

[482] The closest velodrome to Hastings and Rother is the outdoor velodrome at Preston Park in Brighton. The facility is available for free during the day and can be hired on an hourly or seasonal basis.

Participation in Cycling

[483] Overall, the most recent Active Lives Survey findings¹⁴ indicate a change in adult demand for cycling for leisure and sport nationally over the last year, since a significant increase likely due to the Covid-19 pandemic. 14.2% of adults (16+) in England participated in cycling at least twice in the last 28 days in 2020/21 i.e. 6,479,900 people, down from 16% in 2019/20 but higher than the previous year of 13.4% in 2018/19.

¹⁴ Active Lives Adult Survey November 20/21 Report, Sport England (April 2022)

Cycling for community and active travel purposes

[484] Cycling forms part of the active travel offer in Hastings and Rother which includes walking to school, cycling to work or other everyday journeys, which can offer a convenient, accessible and affordable way to move more. Helping residents get moving through walking and cycling can make a powerful, lasting difference to their physical and mental health and well-being. Hastings and Rother Council's through the maintenance of parks, cycle routes and investment into a more active environment will continue to encourage people to choose more active modes of transport in the area.

[485] The overall lack of cycle lanes and fast or narrow rural lanes are noted as a barrier to cycling. Both Councils should continue to work with East Sussex County Council on the designation of 'quiet lanes' in rural areas and the creation of cycle lanes in the towns and larger villages and greenways in rural areas. Current examples include cycle route 2 that connects Dover to St Austell and includes a mainly traffic free routes from Camber to Rye, through Rye Harbour Nature Reserve and along Hastings and Bexhill seafronts as well as the greenway between Bexhill and Hastings alongside the Link Road.

[486] Cycling		
Protect	Enhance	Provide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Councils should continue to protect the existing facilities for cycling through planning policy. The Councils in partnership with East Sussex CC should ensure that existing cycle paths, cycle routes, lighting, waymarking and other signage are maintained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Councils to continue to work with other partners to inform future investment in infrastructure needed to support cycling opportunities. This should include seeking to facilitate greater physical activity and to support those with health conditions and / 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly review cycling facility needs with British Cycling and local clubs in relation to changes in accessible supply, participation trends and population growth. Work with schools to link to national cycling networks and promote

to a good standard.	or disabilities. This should include input from British Cycling, Cycling UK, Bikeability Cycle Training, Sustrans and Sussex CC.	opportunities for active travel.
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Prioritised Actions
<p>Short Term (1-2 years)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure through planning conditions that any new developments create the conditions for active travel between all locations. Support the ongoing development of the clubs and activity based at the Source Park and Bexhill Race Track. Investigate the feasibility to enhance the provision at Boyley Skate Park (White Rock Gardens).
<p>Long Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with transport, parks and planning to look at sustainable ways to improve route marking and promotion of more off-road routes

Bowls provision in Hastings and Rother

[487] There are 3 indoor bowls clubs in the area Falaise in Hastings and Egerton Park and Gullivers in Rother.

[488] Falaise Indoor Bowling Club has two separate greens of 3 rinks in each playing hall. The changing rooms and a function area are upstairs in the main centre. Two years ago, a new door system with wheelchair access and two new small changing tooms were added downstairs for those unable to access the changing rooms upstairs, and more recently a greenside wheelchair ramp has been added. The club operates 7 months of the year.

[489] Egerton Park has 6 rinks, with electronic scoring and ancillary facilities including changing rooms, kitchen, restaurant and function area. They open all year round with reduced hours in the summer. The club own the building and are responsible for the maintenance, they have a sinking fund in place and have a schedule in place for works. The green currently has 7 years left

before its due renewal. They have their own parking area however it is not big enough for them to be able to provide sufficient parking to host National Competitions anymore now the council has introduced charges in the main car park.

[490] Gullivers Bowls Club has closed for a refurbishment for the past 1 year. The clubhouse is due to be replaced and the rinks refurbished.

[491] England bowls report that many players have moved from Hastings and Bexhill clubs to play at Hampden Park, Eastbourne because of the recently introduced parking restrictions in the area.

[492] There are two large outdoor sites each with 4 greens providing 24 rinks, White Rock in Hastings, home to three bowls clubs Hastings, Rosemount and White Rock and Polegrove Recreation Ground in Rother, home to Polegrove and Bexhill. Both sites are maintained by the respective councils. Both Polegrove and Bexhill would like to have security on the site and be able to lease the facilities. St Leonards Bowls Club are wholly responsible for the maintenance of a single bowls green at West Marina. The bowls green was leased to the club in December 2020 and the club have appointed an external contractor to maintain the site. Rother DC manages 3 other outdoor bowls sites at Egerton Park, Sidley Rec Ground and Rye Town and Fair Salts, and there are also active bowls clubs with outdoor greens in the following parish council areas; Fairlight, Northiam, Pett, Westfield.

[493] England Bowls have not identified a need for any additional facilities in the area but improvements to the quality of greens and ancillary provision will allow for increased recruitment and participation for clubs.

Club Consultation

[494] **Bexhill Bowling club** (Polegrove Rec. Ground) has 80 members and has seen a reduction in numbers over the last few years. The club has plans to grow and aims to ensure everyone in the community can access suitable and safe opportunities to participate. They are committed to working with the 'bowls family' and local stakeholders to achieve this. The club state the building is in need of repairs to the roof and windows and is too small to meet the needs of touring teams.

Quality ratings - Playing surface - 4/5 Changing facilities - 2/5

[495] **Egerton Park Indoor Bowls** has 460 members and has noticed a large drop in numbers since Covid and the council introducing parking charges. The club has plans to grow and run turn up and play sessions. They have not identified any facility needs.

Quality ratings - Playing surface - 5/5 Changing facilities - 5/5

[496] **Falaise Indoor Bowls Association Limited** has 146 members. Active Hastings run sessions for visually impaired bowlers. The membership has reduced since Covid with around 80 members not re-joining. The association has plans to grow and would like to lease the two outdoor greens next door to provide activities all year round. The association is currently on a rolling lease since its expiry in May 21. They state they struggle to attract new members due to the facility being outdated and tired.

Quality ratings - Playing surface - 5/5 Changing facilities - 3/5

[497] **Northiam Bowls Club** (next to Northiam Rec. Ground) has 47 members and has had a relatively stable membership over the last few years. They have plans to grow and hold open days and turn up and play sessions to attract new members. They are currently in lease negotiations and maintain their own facilities. They have not identified any facility needs.

Quality ratings - Playing surface - 5/5 Changing facilities - 4/5

[498] **Polegrove Bowls Club** (Polegrove Rec. Ground) has 100 members and have recently seen a 20% increase in membership through England Bowls Initiatives and working with Active Rother. The building and green is owned and run by Rother DC. The club state there is a need to improve the changing facilities to include private toilets, upgraded kitchen and heating.

Quality ratings - Playing surface - 3/5 Changing facilities - 2/5

[499] **Sidley Martlets Bowls Club** (Sidley Rec. Ground) has 62 members which has stayed relatively constant over the last few years. The club has plans to grow and holds an open day each year. During the winter, the club use their club house for short mat bowls. The club's lease has expired and are chasing to get this renewed. The club is responsible for the maintenance of the clubhouse, but Rother DC maintains the green through a contract with Idverde. The club state that there is a need to improve the playing surface.

Quality ratings - Playing surface - 3/5 Changing facilities - 4/5

[500] Bowls Recommendations

Protect	Enhance	Provide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Councils to continue to protect the current quantity and availability of community facilities for bowls if there continues to be demand, through planning policy. In liaison with clubs, seek to ensure the existing facilities for bowls continue to be maintained to a good quality standard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work closely with Bowls England and clubs to review key grounds where the maintenance needs to be improved. Work with clubs to improve security of tenure on key sites and transfer of maintenance responsibilities. Investigate opportunities for the refurbishment or reprovision of FALAISE indoor bowls as part of the future upgrade or replacement of Summerfields leisure centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly review bowls facility needs in the area with the Bowls Development Alliance, England Bowls, England Indoor Bowls Association, and the established bowls clubs in relation to changes in accessible supply, participation trends and population growth.

Prioritised Actions

Short Term (1-2 years)

- Work closely with Bowls England and clubs to review key grounds where the maintenance needs to be improved.

Long term

- Work with clubs to improve security of tenure on key sites and transfer of maintenance responsibilities.
- Investigate the opportunities for the refurbishment or reprovision of FALAISE indoor bowls as part of the future upgrade or replacement of Summerfields leisure centre.

Climbing Provision in Hastings and Rother

[501] There are three small climbing walls located within sports halls in the area, one at St Leonards School, in Hastings, one in Bexhill College and one in Battle Sports Centre in Rother. The nearest dedicated facilities are between 20 minutes to 60 minutes away at the Ordinary Climbers Gym in Polegate, Eastbourne, the Bowles Outdoor Centre in Tunbridge Wells or the Stanley Deason Leisure Centre, in Brighton & Hove. The Hastings Rock and Fell Club previously used the facilities at St Leonards School on a weekly basis, but have stopped due to an increase in costs. The club now travels outside of the study area to the dedicated facilities. Sport climbing made its Olympic debut at the 2020 Olympics (2021) with 3 disciplines: speed climbing, bouldering and lead climbing. British Mountaineering has seen a large demand for bouldering and entry level activities such as clip and climb centres for families.

[502] Climbing Recommendations

Protect	Enhance	Provide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The councils should work with the education providers to protect the availability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education providers to continue to provide and maintain facilities to a good quality standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assess the feasibility, costs, and funding strategy to support the development of

of community facilities for climbing through planning policy.		additional climbing provision in the area as part of any leisure facility development.
Prioritised Actions		
Long Term		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assess the feasibility, costs and funding strategy to support the development of additional climbing provision in the area as part of any leisure facility development, such as outdoor bouldering and/or indoor climbing as part of the Summerfields leisure centre development and indoor climbing at Bexhill Leisure centre. 		

Croquet Provision in Hastings and Rother

[503] Hastings and Rother have one Croquet facility at Rye Lawn Tennis and Squash Club in Rother, the club is not registered to the Croquet Association but has regular matches and hosts an annual tournament. There are no Croquet Association clubs in East Sussex, but there is a strong presence in West Sussex.

[504] Croquet Recommendations		
Protect	Enhance	Provide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rother DC to continue to work the club to protect the availability of community facilities for croquet through planning policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rother DC and the club to ensure the existing facilities continue to be maintained to a good quality standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly review croquet facility needs in the area with the Croquet Governing Body as well as the club in relation to changes in accessible supply, participation trends and population growth.

Judo Provision in Hastings and Rother

[505] There are three clubs in the area, Hollington Judo Club, based at Hollington Community Centre in Hastings and Dynamic Judo, based at Bexhill Amateur Athletic Club (40 members) and Westerleigh Judokwai (65 members), temporarily based at Pebsham Community Hub.

[506] Westerleigh Judokwai provide inclusive sessions and are looking for a suitable facility that is accessible for disabled access and provides suitable storage facilities, they are working with the British Judo to identify possible locations. The governing body was not aware of any further demand for clubs.

[507] Judo Recommendations		
Protect	Enhance	Provide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Councils to continue to protect the current quantity and availability of community facilities for judo through planning policy and, in liaison with the local clubs, seek to ensure the facilities are to be maintained to a good quality standard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly review facility needs for judo and other martial arts clubs based in the area and British Judo in relation to changes in accessible supply, participation trends and population growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the club to assess the feasibility, costs and funding strategy to support the development of a permanent dojo in the area either as a standalone facility or as part of a multi-sport facility to serve the needs of Westerleigh Judokwai
Prioritised Actions		
Long Term		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the opportunities to review the feasibility, funding and planning, support the development of a permanent dojo in the area either as a standalone facility or as part of a multi-sport facility to serve the needs of Westerleigh Judokwai. 		

Boxing Provision in Hastings and Rother

[508] There are four clubs in the area affiliated to England Boxing, PunchOut BA and Hastings West Hill based in Hastings, and BOX HIIT and Bexhill both based in Rother (Bexhill area).

[509] BOX HIIT are looking into creating disability access following demand locally from wheelchair users. They need to improve access to toilet facilities and have specific roll out flooring. They are looking to be part of the Box wise programme offering free boxing and hot food for the community as well as disability access. Bexhill Boxing Club are looking to extend their facilities to be able to provide improved boxing sessions, enable more to attend, and provide ongoing benefit to the community of Bexhill.

[510] Boxing Recommendations

Protect	Enhance	Provide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Councils to continue to protect the current quantity and availability of community facilities for boxing through planning policy and, in liaison with the local clubs, seek to ensure the facilities are to be maintained to a good quality standard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with BOX HIIT to enhance their facilities to improve disability access. Work with Bexhill BC to identify funding options to support their facility needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly review facility needs for boxing in the area with the clubs based in the area and England Boxing in relation to changes in accessible supply, participation trends and population growth.

Prioritised Actions

Short Term (1-2 years)

- Work with BOX HIIT to enhance their facilities to improve disability access.

Long Term

- Work with Bexhill BC to identify funding options to support their facility needs.

Summary

[511] This section has highlighted a notable number of facility investment needs for the Council's and partners bringing together the analysis, consultation and assessment work.

[512] Both Councils have a history of supporting sport and leisure, and commitment to improving levels of physical activity and health for their residents and communities and the needs within this section will result in both Councils considering some important and key decisions to make over the coming years.

[513] Given the on-going financial challenges and finite resources for the public sector, it will not be possible to deliver or support all of the investment needs or carry out all of the assessment studies identified within this strategy. Section 4 of this report sets out the priority projects arising out of this strategy as well as (where applicable) indicative outline capital costs. Alongside this the outline associated timescales are presented as Hastings and Rother plan out each of their priority needs for sport in the area. Some recommendations require further discussion to ascertain the lead organisation.



BFS Section 3 – Action Plan

Section 3 – Action Plan

[514] This section of the strategy provides an outline draft delivery plan related to the potential priority projects and facility needs for sport and recreation as set out in the previous section.

[515] Figure 3.1 and 3.2 presents the projects in alphabetical order by area with a reference to their potential to be progressed either in the short term (defined as within 2 years approximately) the medium term (defined as within 2-5 years) or longer to progress - for example projects dependent on acquisition of land, the outcome of wider area development planning or large-scale review of options, feasibility and viability. Figure 3.3 that follows highlights a number of sites which present opportunities for providing or extending community sports. These sites sit outside of the main action plan as further work is required to investigate relevant permission, access, suitability and funding.

[516] The updates to the Action Plan should in turn inform periodic updates of both Council's priorities for investment and future decision on funding either through capital grant and / or financing and budgetary planning.

[517] The action plan is a guide to how facilities might be developed, pending funding confirmation and planning permission where necessary, where and whom they might be developed by to meet identified demand, exploit opportunities that may arise and provide sustainable management and operational models often through engaging with either voluntary or commercial partners. Each potential project must be evaluated considering the current situation, as the strategy and action plan set out the position at the time of writing; so, factors on both the demand and supply side may have changed as well as the cost and viability of the project at the point when an individual project is being considered within the lifespan of this strategy.

[518] Several project proposals within the strategy are subject to design and cost analysis and for some projects feasibility testing and options appraisals.

[519] The immediate priority for both Hastings and Rother is to protect and continue to maintain the current level of facilities to ensure no loss of provision during the current challenging time for local authorities due to the current pressures on budgets and the increasing costs of materials.

[520] Both Councils have major projects to consider in partnership. In Hastings, the future upgrade or replacement of Summerfields Leisure Centre and in Rother the replacement of Bexhill Leisure Pool and Bexhill Leisure Centre. These two facilities will require considerable planning and development to ensure they can be delivered and provide the right facility mix for residents across the area.

3.1 Priorities and Actions in the Hastings area

Figure 3.1 Actions - Hastings

Site	Timescale	Facility type	Priorities/Action(s) and Associated / Estimated Cost	Lead	Partners
Alexandra Park	Short	Tennis	Work with the LTA to resurface and repaint the courts at Alexandra Park and implement an online booking and gate access system.	HBC	LTA
Ark Alexandra Academy	Medium	Athletics	Work with England Athletics and Hastings Athletics Club to support the ongoing refurbishment of the track facilities.	Club	England Athletics, Ark Alexandra Academy
Ark Alexandra Academy	Short	Athletics	Support Hastings Athletics club in their fundraising efforts for a new throwing cage.	Club	England Athletics, Ark Alexandra Academy
Boyley Skate Park (White Rock Gardens)	Short	Cycling	Protect current provision and investigate the feasibility to enhance the provision at Boyley Skate Park (White Rock Gardens).	HBC	Boyley Trust
Helenswood Sports Centre	Short	Netball	Work with Freedom Leisure, Ark Academy and England Netball to assess the feasibility, costs and funding strategy to refurbish the courts at Helenswood Sports Centre.	Ark Academy / Freedom Leisure	England Netball, HBC
Hornty Sports Centre	Medium	Sports Hall	As part of the future planning for Hornty the proposed refurbishment of sports hall is planned. HBC need to review the full costs and viability of this via a more detailed business plan from the Hornty Sports Trust.	HSC Trust	HBC
Summerfields Leisure Centre	Short	Sports Hall, Swimming, Fitness	Continue to operate and maintain the facility until the future upgrade or replacement of new the facility has been completed to ensure no loss of provision.	Freedom Leisure	HBC
Summerfields Leisure Centre	Medium / Long	Sports Hall, Swimming Pool, Fitness, Netball, Squash.	HBC to review the options and viability of the redevelopment or refurbishment of Summerfields Leisure Centre with extended leisure water reflecting the destination tourist role for the facility. Replacement enhanced provision as part of potential redevelopment to better provide for arena spectator events.	HBC	
White Rock Gardens / Summerfields LC development.	Short	Basketball	Investigate the opportunities to refurbish the courts at White Rock Gardens and extend access for community use.	HBC	Club
White Rock	Long	Tennis	Ensure the courts at White Rock Gardens are refurbished or re provided as part of	HBC	LTA

Figure 3.1 Actions - Hastings

Site	Timescale	Facility type	Priorities/Action(s) and Associated / Estimated Cost	Lead	Partners
Gardens / Summerfields LC development.			any redevelopment of the site. Investigate the feasibility of providing a community indoor tennis facility as part of any development at White Rock Gardens.		
Y Centre	Short Term	Sports Hall	Consider investment into the sports hall floor and changing facilities at Y Centre	YMCA	HBC
Y Centre	Medium	Sports Hall	Enhancement / extension of the sports hall facilities at The Y Centre in Hastings if Horntyte is considered no longer operational or viable.	YMCA	HBC

3.2 Priorities and Actions in the Rother area

Figure 3.2 Actions - Rother

Site	Timescale	Facility type	Priorities/Action(s) and Associated / Estimated Cost	Lead	Partners
Battle Abbey Swimming Pool	Short	Swimming Pool	Seek to extend hours of public swim access at Battle Abbey Swimming pool in negotiation with the school.	RDC	School
Battle Sports Centre	Short	Netball	Work with Claverham College to ensure the netball courts are re provided following building works.	College	RDC
Bexhill Academy	Short	Sports Hall, Tennis, Hockey	Work with the Academy to address access issues to ancillary facilities to enable greater community use.	Academy	RDC
Bexhill Area	Short	Tennis	Investigate the feasibility of providing a Padel court in the Bexhill area.	RDC	LTA
Bexhill Leisure Centre	Short	Sports Hall, Fitness, Squash	Continue to operate and maintain the facility until the development of the new facility has been completed to ensure no loss of provision. Refurbish the squash court at Bexhill Leisure Centre and look into the viability of bringing a second court back into use	Freedom Leisure	RDC
Bexhill Leisure Centre	Medium	Sports Hall, Fitness, Squash, Netball	Assess the demand and feasibility of expanding the health and fitness provision as part of any redevelopment of Bexhill Leisure Centre Consider enhanced provision as part of a potential redevelopment to better provide for arena spectator events.	RDC	

Figure 3.2 Actions - Rother

Site	Timescale	Facility type	Priorities/Action(s) and Associated / Estimated Cost	Lead	Partners
Bexhill Leisure Pool	Short	Swimming Pool	Continue to operate and maintain the facility until development of new facility has been completed to ensure no loss of provision.	Freedom Leisure	RDC
Bexhill Leisure Pool	Medium / Long	Swimming Pool	Redevelop Bexhill Leisure Pool to provide a more focused health and fitness and learn-to-swim pool mix	RDC	
Bexhill Boxing Club	Short	Boxing	Work with Bexhill BC to identify funding options to support their facility needs.	CLUB	RDC
BOX HITT	Short	Boxing	Work with BOX HIIT to enhance their facilities to improve disability access.	CLUB	RDC
Central / Northern Rother	Long	Athletics	Investigate options to provide a NEW:GEN facility as part of any sport/leisure development in Central / Northern Rother.	RDC	England Athletics
Claremont Senior School	Medium	Swimming Pool	Investigate options with Claremont Senior School to increase access for club use in negotiation with the school.	Claremont School	RDC
Council maintained bowls sites	Medium	Bowls	Work with clubs to improve security of tenure on key sites and transfer of maintenance responsibilities.	RDC	Clubs, England Bowls
Education sites	Medium / Long	Sports Hall	Review educational site access and availability – especially at Vinehall School and Bexhill Academy	RDC	School / Academy
Egerton Park	Medium	Tennis	Assess the feasibility of refurbishing the courts and implementing the LTA gate access system at Egerton Park.	RDC	LTA
Rye Lawn Tennis and Squash Club	Medium	Tennis	Support the development of additional indoor facilities at Rye Lawn Tennis and Squash Club.	Club	RDC / LTA
Rye Sports Centre	Short	Swimming Pool	Establish a sustainable operational model to allow the swimming pool to be reopened.	Freedom Leisure	RDC
Site to be identified	Long	Gymnastics / Trampoline	Investigate the feasibility, funding and planning, to support the development of a purpose-built gymnastics/trampoline facility in the study area to accommodate Dharma / Acromax and service central Rother area.	RDC	Club
Site to be identified	Long	Judo	Investigate the feasibility, costs and funding strategy to support the development of a permanent dojo in the area either as standalone facility or as part of a multi-sport facility to serve the needs to Westerleigh Judokwai	RDC	Club

3.3 Further Opportunity Sites for indoor and/or outdoor community sports facilities

Figure 3.3 Opportunities for providing or extending community sports opportunities to be investigated further at the following sites, all pending funding and relevant permissions; all potential opportunities listed are dependent on the support of the site owners/operators

Site	Timescale	Facility Type	Potential actions	Partners
St Richard's Catholic College, Bexhill	Medium	Sports Hall. Pitches	Investigate the options to open the facilities for community use.	College / RDC
Battle Abbey School	Medium	Sports Hall. Pitches	Investigate the options to open the facilities for further community use.	School / RDC
New School Sites – Rother (as part of Worsham Development)	Long	Sports Hall. Pitches	Ensure community use of facilities is included as part of any new development through planning policy.	HBC / RDC

A man in a blue jacket is leaning forward, gesturing with his hand as he speaks to a group of cyclists. The cyclists are wearing orange safety vests and various colored helmets (green, white, pink, blue). They are gathered on a paved road that stretches into the distance. The background shows a grassy field and a cloudy sky.

C. Policy Recommendations

Policy Recommendations

C1 Introduction

[521] This section of the Strategy sets out a number of overarching policy recommendations that the Steering Group and Hastings Borough and Rother District Councils are to apply over the duration of this strategy. These will ensure that this essential planning document continues to play a leading role in the protection of existing sites and the on-going provision of high-quality facilities for both indoor and outdoor sport and can meet the needs and demands highlighted throughout this strategy.

C2 Planning Policy

[522] **National Policy Context** - The relevant policy protecting existing sports facilities and land in the government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 is paragraph 99:

'Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

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

[523] The importance of facilities for recreation, sport and physical activity are also referred to in paragraphs 92 and 93.

[524] **County and Local Policy Context** - The policies contained within this strategy are in line with and provide support to the education and public health policies and priorities of East Sussex County Council and the local land use planning policies of Hastings Borough Council and Rother District Council.

[525] At the county level, East Sussex County Council is responsible for both education and public health. Keeping vulnerable people safe is one of six key priorities in the current (2022/23) East Sussex Council Plan. As part of this work, the Council has set performance measures and targets aimed at helping the most vulnerable people to help themselves. In relation to low physical activity as one of a number of key lifestyle risk factors, the Council has set a target to work with partners to engage 5,000+ individuals by 2025 in a support programme 'One You East Sussex' as part of the county's Integrated Lifestyle Service with a target outcome of improved health outcomes and reduced risk of conditions such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease.

[526] At the borough/district level the key current Local Plan documents and policies that meet the criteria for soundness in the NPPF and form part of the statutory Development Plans for the two local authorities are:

[527] Hastings Borough

- Hastings Planning Strategy: Adopted February 2014 - a strategic land use framework aimed to deliver regeneration and sustainable growth up to 2028.
- Hastings Development Management Plan: Adopted September 2015 - setting out policies for the management of development in the town as well as specific land allocations to meet the targets set in the Hastings Planning Strategy above.

[528] Two key current Local Plan policies of relevance to the protection of playing pitches and leisure facilities in the town are set out in Community Infrastructure chapter:

[529] Policy HC3 - Community Facilities:

'Proposals for the provision of community facilities will be granted planning permission, provided that the development is acceptable in terms of location, design, access and impact on the locality, and is in general conformity with other policies of this Plan, in particular DM1 (re: design principles) and DM3 (re: general amenity).'

[530] *Planning applications involving the loss of a community facility will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the existing community use is no longer required, not viable, or proposals for its replacement are included in the application'.*

[531] Policy CI2 - Sports and Leisure Facilities:

'Major sports and leisure facilities should be centrally located, or easily accessible to all of the community. Provision for casual recreation, such as multi-use games areas should be locally based within communities and where possible, built in school partnership developments, which can maximise daytime use as well as community use outside school hours.'

[532] *Playing fields and sports pitches will be identified as part of the green infrastructure network (see Policy EN2), and planning permission for the reduction in size or number of playing fields or sports pitches will only be granted where:*

- a. existing facilities are of a poor and unsustainable quality and surplus to requirements; or*
- b. the proposal would serve to upgrade the sports facilities, or*

reinstate them elsewhere on the site; or

- c. the proposed development is necessary to meet an important national, regional or local need and alternative provision is made that enhances, or is equivalent to, existing recreational facilities; or*
- d. in the case of an operating school site, the proposal is for educational purposes that are essential and cannot be satisfactorily accommodated elsewhere.'*

[533] Work is now underway in Hastings on preparing a new Local Plan for the twenty-year period 2019/20 to 2038/39 which will reflect changes to the NPPF and replace the current plan and policies. A Consultation Draft was published in winter 2021.

[534] This Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy, when completed will form part of the evidence base informing and underpinning policies in the new Draft Local Plan. The Hastings Local Plan Consultation Draft makes specific reference to *'...the use of planning obligations to secure the re-provision of community facilities, including sports and cultural infrastructure, should existing uses be subject to redevelopment proposals.'*

[535] The pooling of planning obligation receipts arising from new housing developments (through the existing S106 Agreement mechanism and/or a new CIL policy) presents opportunities to fund priority projects in this strategy.

[536] Rother District

- Rother District Council Core Strategy: Adopted September 2014
- Rother District Council Development and Site Allocations Local Plan : Adopted December 2019 - proposals to implement the above development strategy and core policies.

[537] The key core policies of relevance are Policies CO1 - Community Facilities and Services and CO3 - Improving Sports and Recreation Provision:

[538] Policy CO1 - Community Facilities and Services

'The availability of community facilities to meet local needs will be achieved by:

(i) Permitting new, improved or replacement community facilities in appropriate locations where they meet identified community needs, having regard to population characteristics, Local Actions Plans and recognised standards of provision;

(ii) Facilitating the co-location of facilities to meet the needs of a broad a range of community activities, as far as reasonably practicable, particularly when considering new buildings;

(iii) Not permitting development proposals that result in the loss of sites or premises currently or last used for community purposes unless:

(a) Alternative provision of the equivalent or better quality is available in the local area or will be provided and made available prior to the commencement or redevelopment of the proposed scheme; or

(b) It can be demonstrated there is no reasonable prospect of retention for the current use and that no other community use of the site is suitable or viable'.

[539] Policy CO3 - Improving Sports and Recreation Provision

'The provision of sufficient, well-managed and accessible open spaces, sports and recreation facilities, including indoor sports facilities, will be achieved by:

(i) Safeguarding existing facilities from development, and only permitting their loss where it results in improved provision (in terms of quantity and quality) as part of a redevelopment or elsewhere within the locality;

(ii) Allocating land for open space, sports and recreation purposes, and permitting proposals for the improvement of existing or provision of new facilities, in localities where deficits in facilities are identified;

(iii) Application of the quantity, access and quality standards of Rother's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study across all open spaces, including indoor sports facilities within the district;

(iv) Requiring either direct provision or financial contributions towards improvements to existing open space, sport and recreation provision to ensure adopted standards are maintained within the locality;

(v) Increasing access to the countryside by promoting improvements to the rights of way network, especially around the urban areas, particularly in reference to Combe Valley Countryside Park;

(vi) Giving particular support for water-based recreation along the coast near Camber Sands and Bexhill, and at Bewl Water, having due regard to environmental considerations.

[540] As in Hastings, the Rother District Council is also in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for the period to 2039. The Council is currently preparing its public consultation draft local plan (in accordance with NPPF Regulation 18) for issue in 2023.

[541] Unlike in Hastings, in terms of planning obligations, Rother District has had a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) policy in place since 2016. The district is divided into six zones each with different charging rates ranging (from 1st Jan 2023) from £64.55 to £258.18 per square metre. This presents opportunities to pool receipts from several planning obligation sources to fund priority community sporting infrastructure projects.

[542] Since Rother's Green Spaces Sport and Recreation Study was prepared in 2009, the national guidance in use of per capita standards for sports facilities in general, and playing pitches in particular, has changed as detailed in 4.3 below.

C3 Provision Standards

[543] **Quantity Standards** - With regard to playing pitches (as a typology of open space), Sport England's guidance¹⁵ strongly advises local planning authorities to move away from the use of standards in assessing and determining quantitative needs. The guidance advocates gathering detailed local supply and demand data and assessment of area, sport and site-specific needs in order to determine which existing pitches need to be protected and enhanced and priority areas/sites for new playing pitch supply based on this detailed assessment.

[544] The guidance recognises that quantitative standards have become increasingly less useful and relevant as a planning tool for playing pitches with the variation in the playing capacity of natural turf pitches (depending on their quality) and the increase in provision and use of artificial grass playing surfaces which can provide much greater playing capacity than

natural turf. Policy changes by the playing pitch sport governing bodies have also increased the use of artificial surfaces for competitive matches in addition to training.

[545] A further shortcoming of quantity standards as a planning tool is that they tend to encourage the use of 'on-site' provision over off-site enhancements, irrespective of whether the latter is preferable in a given situation. For example securing lower graded on-site provision may be less preferable to securing contributions towards 'off site' enhancement of existing playing pitch sites to form more readily sustainable and effective hub sites.

[546] Accordingly, the strategic recommendations for leisure facilities provision to 2039 in Hastings and Rother in this section of the report do not include a per capita quantity standard. Rather, in accordance with Sport England's published guidance, recommendations are made for a minimum quality standard and for the protection, enhancement and provision of new facilities where justified by identified needs on an area and site-specific basis.

[547] It is therefore recommended that a per capita standard for playing pitches is not carried forward into the new Local Plan for Hastings or Rother.

[548] **Quality Standards** - Pitch carrying capacity has a direct relationship with pitch quality. For example, raising the quality of an adult football pitch from 'Standard' to 'Good'¹⁶ would enable one additional game (or training session) per week to be accommodated. Investment in quality enhancements to pitches at existing playing pitch sites with secure

¹⁵ **Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance, October 2013 (Sport England)**

¹⁶ Based on the FA guidance for visual pitch assessments set out in the appendices to the Playing Pitch

Strategy Guidance, October 2013 (Sport England)

community access is, usually, more cost effective than investment in new provision. Similarly the quality of leisure centres and supporting facilities such as changing rooms and car parking has a direct relationship with their attractiveness and appeal to potential users. Investment in quality enhancements can be more cost effective than investment in new provision although it is important to consider the relative lifecycle costs of refurbishment against new build particularly in the case of swimming pools where plant and energy efficiency are key to affordability.

[549] It is therefore recommended that the two Councils and their partner sports agencies seek to achieve and maintain 'good' quality standard for all built leisure facilities in the study area assessed periodically through customer feedback surveys and/or refreshed needs assessment studies and for all playing pitches used for national governing body affiliated league standard of play (as determined by the latest NGB published guidance). Whilst setting this target for all playing pitches, it should be recognised that in the case of Council pitches in open access public parks, investment decisions in Grounds Maintenance have to take into consideration and be weighed against the risks to quality from unauthorised use and acts of vandalism.

The current guidance for playing pitches is set out in Figure 4.1.

Figure C1 Recommended Pitch Quality Standards

Cricket: Good (i.e. an aggregate rating of 80% or more against ECB Non-Technical Visual Quality Assessment proforma criteria and scoring mechanism for the outfield, grass wickets, pavilion, artificial wickets and non-turf cricket practice nets as applicable to the site)¹⁷

Football: Good as a minimum (i.e. an aggregate rating of 80% or more against FA Non-Technical Visual Quality Assessment proforma criteria and scoring mechanism for the assessment criteria and aggregate rating scores for the playing surface and maintenance programme this also includes the PQS from the PitchPower rating (good or excellent ranking))¹⁸

Rugby Union: Good (M2) rating (i.e. no action needed on maintenance) and D3 rating (i.e. no action needed on pitch drainage)¹⁹.

Hockey: Good (80% or more against Sport England Non-Technical Visual Quality Assessment proforma criteria and scoring mechanism for the AGP playing surface age, condition, markings, fencing, security, goals and posts and ancillary facilities)²⁰.

[550] To support clubs, sports associations and other community organisations with playing pitches used for affiliated games to achieve and maintain a 'good' quality standard, it is recommended that, the Councils continues to liaise closely with the playing pitch sport governing bodies and their pitch maintenance advisors to identify and prioritise the specific maintenance improvement works required to enhance pitch quality and playing capacity.

¹⁷ Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance Appendix 3, October 2013 (England and Wales Cricket Board)

¹⁸ Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance Appendix 2, March 2014 (Football Association)

¹⁹ Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance Appendix 4, October 2013 (Rugby Football Union)

²⁰ Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance Appendix 6, October 2013 (England Hockey Board)

[551] **Accessibility Standards** – As far as major strategic built leisure facilities are concerned – swimming pools and sports halls – where possible it is recommended that the two Councils seek to ensure that all residents can access a facility within the peak period within 30 minutes travel time by car or public transport and 40 minutes on foot (two miles) – i.e. in accordance with the definition of accessibility adopted by Sport England in its Facilities Planning Model (FPM).

C4 Protect, Enhance and Provide

[552] The national and local policies with respect to playing pitches and built facilities are reflected within the following recommendations separated out under the headings of *Protect, Enhance and Provide*. The protection of existing sites remains similar to the previous strategy in that the same principles need to be applied and maintained. Given the evidence presented this furthers the importance to ensure no net loss of sports provision capacity is a key policy driver for both Hastings and Rother Councils.

[553] **Protect**

1. Hastings and Rother Councils have jointly undertaken a Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy and assessed existing and future needs for pitch provision across Rother District and Hastings Borough. The firm conclusion is that there is an identified need to retain the existing overall quantity of sports facilities land in the study area whilst recognising that the distribution of facilities may change (for example through closure of sites of poor quality or of limited value for community sport offset by new provision). This headline finding and recommendation is also applicable when examined at the LPA level.
2. It is therefore recommended that the broad approach and principles

established in existing policies in respect of the protection of existing provision be carried forward into the new Local Plans in development in both local authorities. New policies should be in accordance with NPF paragraph 99 and Sport England’s Playing Field Policy. Specifically the new Local Plans should establish a policy framework to resist granting planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss, or would prejudice the use, of a sports facility, playing field or land last used as a playing field unless:

- The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
 - The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.
3. Should a current or newly created sports facility or playing pitch site exist in either Hastings or Rother that is not expressly mentioned in this Strategy and its appendices, its omission is not an endorsement by the relevant Council, Sport England or the relevant national governing body of that sport of its disposal.
 4. It is also recommended that the two Councils continue to work with strategic sports partners (Sport England, Active Sussex, East Sussex Education and Public Health services and the National Governing Bodies of sport for playing pitch sports) to seek agreements to secure access for community sport at those sites where there is existing access, but long-term access is currently unsecured.
 5. Where sports facility or playing field sites are in local authority ownership (whether borough, district, town or parish council), the policy of securing community access through asset transfer to

community clubs and/or sports associations should continue to be applied, provided that:

i) The facilities are assessed to be of a sufficient quality by the relevant governing bodies of sport prior to transfer to ensure those taking on the responsibility aren't transferred a liability that cannot be viably managed or maintained.

ii) The transferee is able to demonstrate it has the capacity and resources to maintain the facilities to good quality (and this forms part of any service level agreement). It is recommended that the terms of future transfer agreements include incentives for the clubs to deliver sports development outcomes (e.g. grow numbers of teams, volunteering, and sporting opportunities for under-represented groups).

6. Ensure that any changes to levels of provision as recommended in the action plan of this strategy, reductions in the number of pitches marked, changes in pitch sizes (e.g. adult to junior pitches), provision of training grids, are reversible to accommodate future changes in needs.
7. Influence the design and specification of any new education sports facilities and extensions to existing facilities to ensure their suitability for both education and community use (i.e. provided to Sport England and/or the relevant sport's national governing body design dimensions and standards as opposed to education dimensions and standards).
8. Secure affordable community access as a condition of planning consent (via formal Community Use Agreements) for applications from education providers of sports facilities relating to:

- i) Extending hours of permitted use (e.g. for pitch floodlights)
- ii) Extensions to existing sports facilities
- iii) Provision of new sports facilities

9. Whilst acknowledging the squeeze on resources in the short term, It is recommended the two councils maintain their existing budget allocations for playing pitch maintenance and seek to increase these where necessary at key sites (in accordance with the recommendations of the playing pitch governing body grounds maintenance advisers), if and when possible, in recognition of the contribution that outdoor sports make to meeting strategic aims and objectives for public health, education and community cohesion.

[554] Enhance and Provide

1. It is recommended the local authorities (whether borough, district, town or parish councils), clubs, schools and other providers of playing field sites continue to seek the advice of the pitch sport's governing bodies and their respective pitch advisers to secure maximum value from their respective budget allocations for maintenance of playing pitches, particularly when new or revised pitch maintenance contract specifications are being prepared.
2. Similarly, it is recommended that the two Local Planning Authorities continue to seek the advice of these sports bodies whenever pre-planning proposals or planning applications involving new sports facilities, playing pitches or ancillary facilities are brought forward or new S106 Agreements for sports facilities and playing pitches are drafted. This to ensure that the design, layout and management plans maximise the community value of the new facilities and that any maintenance plans meet the relevant Performance Quality Standards.

3. It is recommended that pitch maintenance by local authority employed ground staff (whether employed by borough, district, town or parish councils) and community club volunteers should be supported through the provision and promotion of low-cost training courses in partnership with the sport's governing bodies at least once a year.
4. Where feasible, it is recommended that the providers of football pitches in public parks and recreations grounds use moveable football goal post systems (procured from a supplier on the FA's approved list) to reduce wear from informal play (particularly in goalmouths), and, where feasible, realign the pitch layouts on multi-pitch sites each season.
5. For new or replacement artificial grass pitches (AGPs), it is recommended the local authorities (whether borough, district, town or parish councils) ensure that these are tested, certified and maintained to the necessary standard for inclusion on the relevant NGB register i.e.
 - Football AGPs - FA Football Turf pitch register
 - Rugby AGPs - RFU World Rugby compliant pitch register
 - Hockey AGPs - EH register of pitches approved for Category 3 play or above.
6. It is recommended, subject to financial viability testing, that for all developments involving the creation of one or more residential units, contributions be sought (under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or through the Community Infrastructure Levy mechanism) towards the delivery of 'off site' priority projects in the Hastings Borough and Rother District Councils' Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy in the locality of (or easily accessible without a car from) the proposed development. Appropriate contributions should

also continue to be sought for ongoing maintenance of any new sports facilities. The priority projects are those set out in both the Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan and the Built Facilities Action Plan current at the time the planning application is submitted. The projects include sites in private ownership and on school sites outside the control of the Borough and District Councils. These projects will only be progressed subject to their viability and the provision of secured community access via a formal community use agreement. Accordingly, the lead party responsible for progressing the actions is identified in the plan along with the key supporting agencies.

7. For strategic scale proposals – i.e. developments comprising more than a threshold number of residential units – where there are no existing playing fields with the required capacity to accommodate the additional demand for playing pitches either in the locality (or easily accessible from the development without a car), developer contributions should be sought (under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or through the Community Infrastructure Levy mechanism) towards the delivery and maintenance of 'on site' provision guided by the needs identified in the Strategy. The threshold will be set at 300 units initially and will be updated periodically as part of the review process for the Hastings and Rother Built Facilities Strategy.
8. The latest version of Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator tool should be used to scope the appropriate scale and approximate costs of new sports provision and to provide the starting point for project specific negotiations of S106 and/or CIL developer contributions. (For example, if 1,500 new dwellings are proposed at an average of say 2.4 persons per dwelling, the additional population total to enter into the Playing

Pitch or Sports Facility Calculator will be 3,600). The figure per dwelling can be adjusted based on local factors and specific development details.

9. It is recommended that in the case of all planning applications with implications for sports facilities, the latest version of Sport England's Model Planning Conditions should be used as appropriate. Current model conditions cover the following:
 1. Protection/New Provision of Sport and Recreation Facilities.
 2. Compensatory Provision, Continuity of Use and Phasing of Development.
 3. Built Design and Layout.
 4. Playing Field Provision.
 5. Operational Matters.

10. It is recommended that the Hastings and Rother Playing Pitch and Built Facilities Strategy Steering Group should review and update the Action Plan and priority projects and the development size threshold for triggering consideration of new on-site sports and leisure facility provision periodically during the strategy period in accordance with Sport England national guidance.

D. Summary



Summary

[555] Both Councils have emphasised the importance of facilities for sport and physical activity to the health and wellbeing of the local population as well as recognising the vital contribution these facilities make to the local economy and quality of life for all residents, communities, and visitors.

[556] Hastings and Rother have been making progress with pre planning work to enhance the main leisure facility offer in the area. In Hastings, this work has focused on the future upgrade or replacement of Summerfields Leisure Centre. In Rother feasibility studies have included a previous review regarding the replacement of Bexhill Leisure Pool and Bexhill Leisure Centre alongside the more recent separate strategy associated with Rother's Leisure facilities developed in parallel with this overarching strategy. Progress on both these major projects had slowed in the past two years due to the main to the challenging financial environment exacerbated by the impacts of the Covid pandemic but are still ongoing.

[557] The growing (and changing) population and ageing facilities puts pressure on the current facility stock and means a notable number of opportunities exist for new and continued investment in built sports facilities within the two local authorities.

[558] The primary needs are to protect the overall quantity, maintain the quality and secure availability for the wider community to the existing supply of sports facilities. For both Hastings and Rother, the majority of sports halls are located on school sites and where possible community use agreements need to be developed with academy sites to protect future usage and extend community access where possible (e.g. Bexhill Academy).

[559] The analysis from Sport England's Facilities Planning Model swimming pools report shows demand for pools greater than the current supply in both Hastings and Rother's, coupled with concern over ageing facilities and lack of learner provision in Rother. The strategy recommends that both Councils work closely together to agree a facility mix across any new or redeveloped sites to meet the needs of all residents as part of the planning for the Summerfields Leisure Centre development in Hastings and Bexhill Leisure Pool in Rother.

[560] Alongside direct provision Hastings and Rother also play an enabling role in developing better quality facilities by engaging and empowering community organisations through the asset transfer process to independently manage and operate facilities funded through partnerships with Sport England and National Governing Bodies of Sport as well as other funding organisations.

[561] The Playing Pitch Strategy (Part 1) also highlights a number of priority projects for both Councils to consider and plan for.

[562] The hockey club in the area needs a suitable secured facility as a base for its activities and there is a need to protect existing sand dressed floodlit pitches for school hockey and outreach opportunities.

[563] Football and Cricket are popular team sports for Hastings and Rother residents and the councils continue to play a very important role in providing winter and summer grass sports pitches for local clubs to use. There is a need to increase the provision of 3G FA artificial pitches in the area for football training and matches as well as provide additional NTP cricket pitches to enable clubs to facilitate growing junior provision.

[564] Rugby clubs have good grass pitch provision for matches but improved access to training provision is needed.

[565] In Rother there is a former sports ground (Sidley Sports Ground) and potential new development of sports facilities (Worsham, Kiteye Farm and Northeye) that provide future opportunities for sporting infrastructure growth. There are no agreed plans for these sites of opportunity, but the Council and its potential partners will take each project on its own merits and will develop facilities in line with the needs of Rother residents at the time the opportunity arises.

[566] As the country and the public sector, as a key provider of these essential services for leisure and physical activity, continues to recover from the pandemic, and now grapples with the rise in utilities and the cost-of-living crisis for many of its services, business and residents, the important role physical activity has in positively impacting on the health of the nation is even more evident. Investment into the future health and wellbeing of Hastings and Rother's residents will be impacted very positively by the investment priorities highlighted within this part of the strategy. This will be in the form of both protecting the current facility stock for both indoor and outdoor sport as well as investing in improved and new facilities where the opportunities arise.

[567] Both Councils continue to face a number of challenges with the changing nature of the leisure industry, increasing energy costs, economic challenges and climate change. All of these factors need to be managed as part of the planning process for future investment needs.

[568] Hastings and Rother Councils have always recognised and must continue to do so, despite the ongoing challenges, the importance of

investing in accessible and sustainable community sports facilities which play a critical role in providing activities and opportunities and improving the lives and wellbeing of all of their residents.