EAST HERTFORDSHIRE

OPEN SPACES AND SPORTS FACILITIES ASSESSMENT TECHNICAL STUDY

Part 2:
Built Facilities Strategy

Executive Summary

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Nortoft Partnerships Limited
2 Green Lodge Barn, Nobottle, Northampton NN7 4HD
Tel: 01604 586526 Fax: 01604 587719
Email: info@nortoft.co.uk Web: www.nortoft.co.uk

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SECTION 1: SPORT IN EAST HERTFORDSHIRE

1.1 This Built Facilities Assessment summary for East Hertfordshire is part of East Hertfordshire Council's Open Space Sports Facilities Assessment and Strategies Study which covers both built facilities and playing pitches used by the community for sport and physical activity.

1.2 East Herts is a predominantly rural district covering an area of 477 square kilometres (184 square miles). There are over 100 small villages and hamlets in the district in addition to the five historic market towns of Bishop's Stortford, Buntingford, Hertford, Sawbridgeworth and Ware. These towns provide a range of services, including sports facilities, to the nearby rural areas. The southern third of the district lies within the London Metropolitan Green Belt, while the rest of the northern and central area lies within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt.

1.3 The district is bordered by larger towns, with Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City to the west and Harlow to the south-east. This affects the dynamics of sports facilities usage, with complex patterns of import and export across all of the district's borders.

Methodology

1.4 The approach to this assessment and the development of the recommendations reflects the guidance contained in the Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance of Sport England of 2014 (Sport England, 2014), adapted as necessary to the needs of East Hertfordshire. The assessment of each facility type therefore draws on a number of different elements:

- The findings from the site audits, including an assessment of the used capacity of the facilities and management considerations;
- User information supplied by operators;
- Conditions surveys where available;
- The theoretical demand for facilities based on various modelling tools;
- The results of consultation;
- Issues associated with facility quality, accessibility for the community etc;
- The future population characteristics;
- The Council's policies on participation, and sports development objectives;
- The resources which may be available to meet the future requirements;
- National governing body strategic requirements;
- The overall pattern of facilities and housing growth both within the authority and the adjacent districts.

1.5 As the assessment is based on a number of factors which can change over time, the recommendations in this strategy will need to be kept under regular review. There should be an annual update for the action plan and key recommendations, but also a more fundamental revision within 5 years to take account of such things as any changes in the housing delivery, or in the network of sports facilities.

SECTION 2: THE LEISURE NETWORK

2.1 This section of the report provides an overview of the facility network in East Herts, the maps for which are provided in Appendix 1. The main elements of the network are:

East Herts Council (EHC) sites

2.2 These sites are operated by a contractor appointed by East Herts Council (EHC), and for which the authority has financial and other responsibilities. They are listed below.

Main leisure centres

- Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre in Bishop's Stortford which has a main pool, learner pool and large health and fitness facility.
- Hartham Leisure Centre in Hertford, which has a main pool, two learner pools, and a large health and fitness facility.

Joint use school sites with formal agreements

- Ward Freman School in Buntingford, which has only a main pool.
- Leventhorpe Pool and Gym in Sawbridgeworth, which has a main pool and small health and fitness facility.
- Fanshawe Pool and Gym at Chauncy Academy in Ware, which has a main pool and a medium size health and fitness facility.

Wodson Park Trust

2.3 The Wodson Park Trust in Ware is a charity with a single site which provides an athletics track, two sports halls and the only full-sized '3G' pitch in the district. It is independent from EHC.

Schools with formal joint use agreements managed independently

2.4 Formal community use agreements for the use of school facilities exist for Leventhorpe School in relation to the sports hall and artificial grass pitch (AGP), and Presdales School for its sports hall.

Other schools which allow community use on an informal basis

2.5 There are a number of schools which allow access by the community to their sports facilities, but for which there is no legal requirement to do so. This use is "unsecure" but there are no known risks to the use of any of these sites. Of particular importance are Haileybury and Imperial Service College, and Bishop's Stortford College, both of which are independent schools.

Commercial operators

2.6 Commercial operators provide a range of facilities in East Herts, including an indoor tennis centre in Hertford and the majority of the health and fitness provision in the district.

Sports clubs

2.7 Sports Clubs own and manage a number of facilities, ranging from the Bishop's Stortford Squash and Racketball Club, to a number of bowling green sites.

Town and parish councils

2.8 Town and parish councils are major providers of community and ancillary halls, which cater for a range of local sports needs. They also provide a large number of recreation and sports grounds which host football, cricket and often tennis.

Facility types and hierarchy

2.9 To ensure the effective location of key facilities across the authority area, and to link into the statutory planning process, a facilities hierarchy is proposed. It should be noted that where a facility is defined as high level, it can also often provide for local use too. At each level of the hierarchy, facilities may be owned or managed by the public, education, private, voluntary or commercial sectors.

2.10 Examples of the different levels of facility within the hierarchy for East Herts are given in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Facility hierarchy for East Herts

Hierarchy level	Examples in East Herts
National	No facilities in East Herts
Regional	No facilities in East Herts
County	Wodson Park
Hub	Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre Hartham Leisure Centre Legends Tennis Centre Bishops Stortford Lawn Tennis Club Bishop's Stortford Squash and Racquetball Club
Satellite	e.g. Fanshawe Pool and Gym Leventhorpe Pool and Gym Ward Freeman Swimming Pool Birchwood High School Haileybury and Imperial Service College Drill Hall, Ware

	Bishops Stortford Bowling Club Mercury Gymnastics Club Stortford Gymnastics Club
Local	e.g. Bishop's Park Community Centre Datchworth Village Hall Walkern Sports and Community Centre

Strategic review of the Council's leisure facilities

2.11 East Herts Council (EHC) has undertaken a parallel study to this strategy, a comprehensive review of the facilities it owns and manages. The two projects have informed each other, with the vision for the role of EHC in the future being "providing pay and play opportunities which cannot be provided through other sectors." The vision for the EHC role is:

The Council will provide attractive facilities available to the whole community which complements the wider provision of recreation opportunities in the community and voluntary sector. In addition, it will ensure that leisure facilities contribute fully to the health and wellbeing objectives of the Council.

2.12 The recommendations in this strategy have informed, and also reflect the findings of the EHC facilities review.

SECTION 3: SPORTS HALLS

3.1 Sports halls are one of the prime sports facilities for community sport because they are able to provide a venue for many different activities. The standard methodology for measuring sports halls is by the number of badminton courts contained within the floor area. This section considers sports halls of 3+ badminton court size, primarily those which are designed for sport. Village and community centre halls are usually smaller and designed to be multi-purpose, and are addressed in a separate section to this report.

Current supply and demand

3.2 There are currently 11 sports halls on 10 sites in East Herts with community use, of which 7 are school sites. Wodson Park and the Drill Hall at Ware are both independent trusts. There is one commercial/private industrial facility, the Allenbury Sports and Social Club in Ware. This was the GSK staff facility and has very limited other community club use. There are no facilities owned or managed by the Council. Most of the halls are either good or standard quality, with the poorest facilities being the Drill Hall and Allenbury Sports and Social Club, both of which are in Ware.

3.3 Of the sports hall facilities, only Wodson Park and the Drill Hall, both in Ware, are available for community use during the school day. The demand for day time access to sports halls is however likely grow further with the ageing population over much of the district. This lack of access during the daytime is already impacting on the authority's ability to deliver on its health and well-being objectives for those people who are not working.

3.4 Overall however the areas of the authority with least good access to sports hall space at peak time are at Bishop's Stortford, Sawbridgeworth, and on the borders of Stevenage and Welwyn Hatfield.

3.5 The site audits suggest that although some halls are busy, others are relatively lightly used, which in part may reflect the programming, booking policies, marketing, management and hire charges at some sites.

3.6 The Sport England Sports Facilities Calculator calculates that the current demand for sports hall space from the East Herts residents is around 0.28 badminton courts per 1000 population.

3.7 The review of the adjacent authorities' strategies indicates that there is no spare capacity at Harlow for further demand arising from East Herts, and that there are also likely to be capacity issues at Welwyn Garden City and potentially at Stevenage.

3.8 The 3+ badminton court sports hall network is supplemented by community and village halls which can provide capacity for some activities such as fitness, but there are only a very small number of these halls which have high enough ceilings for

activities such as badminton. This restricts their ability to compensate for the lack of the larger sports hall space.

Future requirements

3.9 There will be a need for some additional sports hall space at peak time and also space available during the school day, to meet the needs of the growing community in East Herts. The size of the district and the location of the planned housing means that the future supply of facilities should be considered at the main town level.

3.10 The ways in which additional "capacity" might be unlocked across the current network of halls could include:

- Via the provision of 3G pitches, to allow football to be relocated to the pitches. However there are no confirmed plans for 3G pitches in the district, so it should be assumed that the current programming and demand patterns will remain and need to be planned for.
- Extending the opening hours at the school operated facilities. However the schools are currently unwilling to extend their opening hours further, either because the facilities are in use for the school, or the costs of doing so are too high. Where the facilities are simply closed during the peak period, then there may be opportunities for the Council (and through them, clubs) to explore supporting the schools to extend their hours. At this time, significant changes to the opening hours of the facilities on school sites is not anticipated.
- New sports halls provided on new secondary school sites, designed and managed during the peak period for community use.

New sports halls

3.11 There are already proposals for a number of new halls at existing secondary school sites, and there are also proposals for new secondary schools in some of the identified growth locations.

Bishop's Stortford

3.12 The main issue identified in relation to sports hall provision in the area is the lack of sports hall access during the day time. The total additional planned housing growth will generate new sports hall demand of around 3 badminton courts at peak time. As new sports halls are usually a minimum size of 4-courts, the need is for one 4-court sports hall. As there is effectively no spare capacity in this area of the district. additional provision will be required.

3.13 East Herts Council would wish to have the option of developing a sports hall on the Grange Paddocks site which can then meet the community needs for sports halls during the school day. However, there are two key considerations; firstly, a sports hall may impact on the ability of the authority to develop an artificial grass pitch on the site, and secondly, the site is in the green belt, and is therefore restricted in

development terms. The planning restriction may be tested through a planning application.

3.14 Given these restrictions, alternative provision is required to be sought in Bishop's Stortford, although these are unlikely to provide sports hall space during the school day.

3.15 The Hertfordshire and Essex High School has funding for a new sports hall, so this could help to meet some of the needs of the community during evenings and weekends (at peak time). Once the programming, management, and focus of this facility is confirmed, then the amount of community use still needing to be provided for in the longer term in Bishop's Stortford can be more clearly defined. The current proposal is for the sports hall to be operated, at least part of the time, on a pay and play basis.

3.16 Two new secondary schools are planned for the Bishop's Stortford area, both of which will be provided with sports hall space. Once the outcome of the discussions at the Hertfordshire and Essex High School are known, then it will be possible to confirm the community need for the two planned sports halls on school sites at Bishop's Stortford North and South. The assessment suggests that the Bishop's Stortford North secondary school should have a sports hall and ancillary facilities designed for community use and appropriately located on the school site to facilitate community access, including during the school day.

Hertford and Ware

3.17 The issue of day time access in this area of the district is less critical than in the Bishop's Stortford area because the large hall at Wodson Park is a community facility, and the Drill Hall at Ware is also available. The planned housing growth is likely to generate a need for around 1 badminton court of sports hall space. With the proposed development of the 4-court hall at Richard Hale school, if community use can be secured and made fully available throughout the peak time, then this should be sufficient to meet most of the needs arising from the new developments.

3.18 The homes planned for Ware will generate some demand but the existing facilities in the area have sufficient capacity. The priority in Ware is the retention of Wodson Park as a good quality facility and to improve the Drill Hall. Any developers' contributions should therefore be towards these two facilities.

Gilston Area

3.19 The Gilston Area is expected to have around 10,000 new homes, of which about 3,000 are due to be completed by 2033. Two new secondary schools are planned for the area, and the policies anticipate them to have community use. The sports halls in Harlow are generally already at capacity, so there is a need to directly meet the new demands of the Gilston Area within the area. Given the issues that the authority has experienced with the joint use of schools, and the need to also provide additional

and replacement swimming pool space, a new wet/dry leisure centre should be planned for the Gilston Area as a new leisure centre. This should have fitness provision and studio space to help balance the revenue costs. The site should be adjacent to one of the secondary schools, be owned and managed by the district council, and be available to hire by the secondary school. The design of the new facility will be critical to its success.

3.20 Given the interrelationship between the proposed leisure centre and the proposed secondary school, the leisure centre should be phased with the development of the school.

3.21 The advantage of East Herts Council taking direct control of the proposed leisure centre will help to ensure that there is some sports hall availability during the school day, and the Council has some direct control over some sports hall space.

East of Welwyn Garden City

3.22 Welwyn Hatfield has already identified a need for a new swimming pool in Welwyn Garden City and the new housing growth both within Welwyn Hatfield and East Herts is sufficient to justify a new 4 court sports hall. A secondary school is planned for the East of Welwyn Garden City site, again with community use. It will be important for the two authorities to work together to identify the options for a new wet/dry leisure centre, which might be well placed adjacent to the proposed new secondary school. There will be a need for cross-boundary co-operation, and potentially the sharing of developers' contributions in order to deliver the best strategic facility option for the expanding Welwyn Garden City. The new leisure centre would require a large fitness gym and studio space to help balance the revenue costs of any new leisure centre.

Buntingford

3.23 There is substantial housing growth planned around Buntingford, but there is a new sports hall at Freman College. This facility has a planning condition for community use and should be able to meet much of the demand into the future for this town. The facility is however currently only used at about 25% of its capacity, so the priority is to support increased community access, possibly through the changes to the management and programming of the facility.

3.24 The Buntingford area has limited local access to sports hall facilities during the school day, so there is a priority for day time access to village halls and community centres.

Stevenage

3.25 The growth around Stevenage will be within the catchment of the proposed "new" school at the currently closed Barnwell East site. The priority here will be to work with Stevenage Borough Council to meet the needs of the East of Stevenage development by improvements/extensions at sports hall sites in Stevenage including potentially at Barnwell East site.

Sawbridgeworth

3.26 There are no proposed new sports facilities in Sawbridgeworth, but limited housing growth is proposed in the town. The good quality Leventhorpe hall has a small amount of spare space to cater for both the additional housing and any growth in participation. However, the town is close to both Gilston and Harlow, and there is also growth planned in Epping Forest, east of Harlow. The impact on the Leventhorpe facility will therefore depend upon the future network of facility provision within the wider East Herts/Harlow area.

3.27 There is no day time access to sports halls in the town, but Sawbridgeworth is easily within the drive time catchment of Harlow Leisurezone.

Recommendations for sports halls

Council's role in sports hall provision

3.28 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, performance and excellence, the Council will continue to support community access to sports halls via its partners.

3.29 If new leisure centres are developed in the Gilston Area and to provide for the East of Welwyn Garden City, the Council will seek to ensure some community access to the sports halls during the school day.

Cross boundary co-operation

3.30 The Council will actively seek to develop co-ordinated mechanisms which provide solutions in respect of cross-border import and export of demand for sports facilities:

- The Gilson Area – with Harlow Council, Epping Forest District Council and Uttlesford District Council.
- East of Welwyn Garden City – with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
- East of Stevenage – with Stevenage Borough Council.

3.31 Undertake local scenario tests using the Sport England Facilities Planning Model to confirm the requirements, particularly for The Gilston Area, and East of Welwyn Garden City.

Sites

Protect

3.32 It is proposed to protect and maintain the existing network of sports hall space across the district, and to ensure the affordability of the facilities to clubs and individuals.

3.33 Where possible, seek to establish formalised community use agreements with schools to protect community use.

Enhance

3.34 Improve the Drill Hall at Ware to ensure that it is high quality and able to support a wide range of uses.

3.35 Support Freman College at Buntingford to develop community use by changes, if appropriate, to the management and programming of the facility.

Provide

3.36 The priorities for new delivery and which need to be confirmed through feasibility work where appropriate are:

- Hertfordshire and Essex High School: 4 court hall with specialism for netball, and separate dojo.
- Bishop's Stortford North secondary school: 4 court hall designed and built for community use based on club bookings.
- Grange Paddocks: a 4 court hall as part of a phased development of the site. This will require that as a case is made through normal planning processes outlining the exceptional circumstances.
- Gilston Area: a 4 court hall as part of a new leisure centre adjacent to one of the new secondary schools, and available on a pay and play basis but available to hire to the school for curriculum and extra-curricular use.
- East of Welwyn Garden City: a 4 court hall as part of a new leisure centre adjacent to one of the secondary school, and available on a pay and play basis but available to hire to the school for curriculum and extra-curricular use.

3.37 All new school facilities should be designed to encourage and accommodate community use, including during the school day. The site layout must facilitate this, and the sports halls designed with the minimum size for community use, as set out in the Sport England guidance (Sport England, 2012).

3.38 The hours that a new sports hall facility should be made available for community use are the peak period:

	Weekday:	09.00 to 10.00; 17:00 to 22:00
	Saturday:	09:30 to 17:00
	Sunday:	09:00 to 14:30, 17:00 to 19:30
	Total:	45.5 hours

3.39 Appropriate land for the leisure centres should be identified in the masterplans for the developments and the land made available free of charge.

3.40 The proposed leisure centres shared with schools should have some community access during the school day to the sports hall facilities.

3.41 All new facilities supported by capital monies from public sources or grant aid should be secured for community use via a binding legal agreement. The length of the agreement to reflect the size of the public support/grant involved.

SECTION 4: SWIMMING POOLS

4.1 Swimming pools could be considered as one of the most important types of sports facility for East Hertfordshire as they are used by most of the community, from the very young through to the elderly. This assessment considers only indoor pools which are open year round and excludes lidos and other outdoor pools which are only open during the summer months. This follows the best practice guidance provided by Sport England.

Current supply and demand

4.2 Swimming contributes very significantly to the well-being agenda for the district. The authority currently has high levels of pool provision compared to the national and regional averages, and also compared to both the geographical neighbours and benchmark authorities. The geographical spread of the pools means that almost everyone with a car can reach at least one pool offering pay and play opportunities within Sport England's recognised 20 minute drive time catchment. The amount of pool provision also means that the authority has a very high level of satisfied demand for swimming. The current rate of participation in swimming in East Herts is about 1.1% above the national average rate.

4.3 Only the Council pools offer affordable pay and play swimming and club training opportunities. They are also important in the learn to swim opportunities across the district. The Council's Leisure Strategy has confirmed that these roles will continue in the future, even if the network changes since they support the wider health and well-being objectives of the Council.

4.4 At the present time there are no competition pools available to support competitive swimming.

4.5 The leisure centres and joint use pools have wide catchments, and most of the pools draw users from a wide area, both across the district and from outside. However, a large majority of users of all of the pools are from within the district. The pool with the highest proportion of users living outside of the authority is Leventhorpe at Sawbridgeworth, as its catchment is skewed to the east of the district.

4.6 The age and quality of the public pool stock is of concern, and the joint use centres are potentially at risk if the schools and Hertfordshire County Council are unable to continue to subsidise the sites, either in capital or revenue terms. East Herts is therefore currently considering the future site options across the pools network. The public pool network will also require capital investment in the next few years, with every site having need of major investment.

4.7 At the present time there appears to be *spare capacity* in different parts of the district of the following order:

- Bishop's Stortford area: 67 sq m
- Sawbridgeworth area: 66 sq m
- Hertford and Ware area: 102 sq m
- Buntingford area: 95 sq m

4.8 The management of the Leventhorpe site is complex, with the pool and gym being run by the Council's contractor, whilst the other school facilities are being managed by a separate, academy appointed, contractor. This is unnecessarily duplicating some costs on this site.

4.9 The commercial sector provision via Nuffield Health at both Bishop's Stortford and Hertford is expected to be retained in the long term. These sites operate on a membership basis, and pay and play swimming is not generally available. These pools are also not generally available for club activities or club training.

Future requirements

4.10 There will be a need for some additional swimming pool space to meet the needs of the growing community in East Herts. The extra demand arising from the additional population has been compared with the currently spare capacity of the pool network in different parts of the district. The pool requirements are:

- Bishop's Stortford: 33-42 sq m additional water space to cater for new housing, plus replacement water area for any sites "lost" to community use, e.g. Hertfordshire and Essex High School.
- Gilston Area: water area of 77-84 sq m in the period up to 2033, but rising to 177-192 sq m after 2033, once housing completed.
- East of Welwyn Garden City: 34-37 sq m of water space.

- East of Stevenage: 15-16 sq m water space.

4.11 If the network of pools remains the same and there is no change in the import/export of demand across the authority borders, then there is no requirement for additional pool provision in Sawbridgeworth, Hertford, Ware or Buntingford.

4.12 A major consideration for the Sawbridgeworth, Gilston, and Welwyn Garden City areas is the network of pool provision and housing growth in the adjacent authorities. Cross boundary sports facility planning is therefore needed to confirm the facility proposals in these areas of the district.

4.13 At the present time, there is a surplus of water space overall, and there are significant potential liabilities for the Council in relation to the joint use pools. There is therefore a need to review the network as a whole, and to ensure that the swimming pool facilities are able to provide for the planned new communities across the district, as well as the existing populations.

4.14 There are a small number of swimming pools provided on school sites, mainly independent schools. Given that their opening hours are already high and there is little scope to extend the use as they are constrained by the schools' uses, there does not appear to be any significant scope to meet future needs via these facilities.

4.15 The Hertfordshire and Essex High School pool is poor quality and the pool is likely to be affected by the development of the sports hall. Given the potential costs of refurbishment, the higher relative importance of the proposed sports hall, and the potential ability to "replace" the demand here by a new pool at Grange Paddocks, retaining this pool for community use is not essential.

Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth

4.16 A number of site options are currently being considered in relation to the future pool network. The option of the replacement or refurbishment of Grange Paddocks is being specifically addressed. If Grange Paddocks is to be replaced, any new replacement facility will need to be larger than the current pool to cater for the new growth, particularly if other pools in the network were to be closed in the longer term. The size of the pool and its design options are currently being considered but the preferred option is:

- 25m x 8 lane competition pool with standard floor
- 20 x 10 learner pool with 2m depth and moveable floor
- confidence water
- 250 spectator seats

4.17 This pool mix would meet the swimming clubs requirements for a competition pool for a number of disciplines, including club level water polo and syncro.

4.18 In Sawbridgeworth, and considering the demand from the housing within the authority only, there is sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the new housing growth within the Leventhorpe pool. It is noted however that the Leventhorpe pool provides a facility for users from Harlow, Epping Forest and Uttlesford, all of which will have substantial new growth. The future of the Leventhorpe pool will therefore need to be considered as part of a review of swimming in the wider Harlow area, and alternative longer-term options to this ageing pool should be considered. For example, whether a new leisure facility in the Gilston Area or elsewhere would provide a better offer than Leventhorpe in the longer term.

Hertford and Ware

4.19 The new housing growth in Hertford and Ware up to 2033 can be accommodated in the existing pool network even into the long term. The priority for this area is the retention and improvement of the existing facilities.

Gilston Area

4.20 The Gilson area would be expected to generate demand of around 273 sq m of water space in the long term, but only 83 sq m in the period up to 2033. By the time that the site is fully built out, this would therefore justify a new community pool i.e. sometime after 2033. This area however needs to be planned together with Harlow and Epping Forest, as there is no spare capacity in those areas to meet any of the new demand arising from new housing in the Gilston Area.

East of Welwyn Garden City

4.21 The growth East of Welywn Garden City will generate demand for around 37 sq m of waterspace, insufficient to justify a pool on its own. However, there is already an identified need in Welwyn Garden City for a new pool, and the priority here will be for the authorities to work together to identify and then deliver an appropriate wet/dry facility. An option which should be considered is the provision of a leisure centre adjacent to the planned secondary school in the East Herts East of Welwyn development. Alternatively, off site contributions might be considered, with the location of any facility dependent upon the options for sharing developer contributions across the local authority boundary.

Buntingford

4.22 There is sufficient capacity in the Ward Freman site to cater for the planned growth of Buntingford, and it seems likely that the current pool will continue to have spare capacity even in the long term. The initial priority is to retain and improve the existing facility.

4.23 In the longer term, the future of the site as a joint use facility will need to be kept under review. The long term demand for a pool in Buntingford will in part depend upon whether a new pool is delivered in Bishop's Stortford, its size, and also whether

a new pool is developed in an accessible location in Stevenage, as the catchments significantly overlap.

Stevenage

4.24 Stevenage Borough currently has too little water space but the new housing on the East of Stevenage site will generate only a small amount of new swimming demand. As the residents of the East of Stevenage development are likely to access pool facilities within Stevenage rather than East Herts, the priority will be cross-boundary working with Stevenage Borough Council to ensure that the proposed new pool is large enough to cater for the demand from the East of Stevenage as well as its own new population. Off site developer contributions are potentially appropriate, dependent upon the options for sharing developer contributions across the local authority boundary.

Recommendations for swimming pools

Council's role in swimming provision

4.25 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, performance and excellence, the Council will provide attractive swimming facilities available to the whole community which complements the wider provision of recreation opportunities in the community and voluntary sector. The Council will ensure that there is a network of accessible swimming pools available to all residents on a pay and play basis.

4.26 The network of pools provided by the Council as a whole should be financially self-sustaining both in relation to capital and revenue costs.

Cross boundary co-operation

4.27 The Council will actively seek to develop co-ordinated mechanisms which provide solutions in respect of cross-border import and export of demand for sports facilities:

- The Gilson Area – with Harlow Council, Epping Forest District Council and Uttlesford District Council.
- East of Welwyn Garden City – with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
- East of Stevenage – with Stevenage Borough Council.

4.28 Undertake local scenario tests using the Sport England Facilities Planning Model to confirm the requirements, particularly for The Gilston Area, and East of Welwyn Garden City.

4.29 Develop a mechanism for sharing developer contributions cross-boundary, with the priorities being Harlow and Welwyn Hatfield.

Sites

Protect

4.30 It is proposed to protect and maintain the existing network of swimming pools across the district, but subject to proposals to make some changes to the public swimming pools.

4.31 Where possible, seek to establish formalised community use agreements with schools to protect community use.

Enhance

4.32 Refurbish and improve the pool and its health and fitness facilities at:

- Hartham Leisure Centre
- Fanshawe Pool and Gym
- Leventhorpe Pool and Gym
- Ward Freman Swimming Pool

Provide

4.33 The priorities for new delivery and which need to be confirmed through feasibility work where appropriate are:

- Replacement larger pool at Grange Paddocks.
- Gilston Area: a 25m x 6 lane pool plus teaching pool as part of a new wet/dry leisure centre adjacent to one of the new secondary schools.
- East of Welwyn Garden City:
    - EITHER a 20m x 4 lane pool (or larger) as part of a new leisure centre adjacent to one of the secondary schools
    - OR off site contributions to new pool provision within Welwyn Garden City, depending upon agreement to share developers' contributions.

4.34 Appropriate land for the leisure centres should be identified in the masterplans for the developments and the land made available free of charge.

4.35 All new facilities supported by capital monies from public sources or grant aid should be secured for community use via a binding legal agreement. The length of the agreement to reflect the size of the public support/grant.

Dispose

4.36 Agree the closure to community use of the Hertfordshire and Essex High School pool.

SECTION 5: HEALTH AND FITNESS

5.1 This section considers indoor fitness facilities, both the provision of fitness gyms and the provision of studio space. The latter are multi-purpose rooms used for a range of fitness activities and dance, and are usually an integral part of any leisure centre or commercial fitness site. The revenue generated by health and fitness provision is particularly important for those sites with a swimming pool, as the revenue generated can help offset the net revenue costs of a pool.

5.2 The provision of health and fitness facilities (typically including fitness stations) is potentially a key element in achieving increased participation in physical activity. However there is no simple way of assessing participation in individual gym and fitness activities, nor the spaces they need. The method used for the analysis of the provision per 1000 population of the health and fitness facilities which have a number of 'stations' (one station might be for example a single treadmill).

Current supply and demand

5.3 There are a total of 965 fitness stations and 17.5 studios on 23 sites. The largest fitness gyms are at Body Active (on the Harlow border) with 150 stations, Nuffield Health at Bishop's Stortford with 120 stations and Grange Paddocks in Bishop's Stortford with 120 stations. There are three sites with less than 20 fitness stations. The access type varies; there are 7 sites offering pay and play which are the leisure and joint use centres, plus Wodson Park Sports Centre and Challenge Active in Bishop's Stortford; there are 12 sites where the access is to registered members, and four school sites offering access to sports clubs and community associations.

5.4 With the geographical spread of fitness provision, everyone with access to a car can reach a site within 15 minutes' drive, either to site in the district or elsewhere.

5.5 The fitness and gym provision in terms of both the number of fitness stations and the number of studios in East Herts appears to reflect the nature of the authority and the extensive cross-boundary movement of users. It is a higher rate of provision that might be expected if the authority was simply meeting its own needs. However, as the supply of fitness gyms responds rapidly to demand, it is likely that the current level of fitness provision approximately matches the demand across the different areas of the authority.

5.6 About 43% of the provision is in commercial fitness facilities, with the remainder being mainly the public facilities provided by the authority, either in the leisure centres or joint use centres. This percentage of commercial provision appears somewhat lower than would often be expected in a relatively affluent district such as East Herts.

5.7 The gym usage information for the leisure centres and joint use centres shows a mixed picture across the sites, but generally there is either steady or declining use by the adult market, although the number of people age over 60 years has increased recently. However, the over 60s market is only a relatively small proportion of the total adult market.

5.8 The concurrent review of the EHC controlled facilities identified that that there was some latent demand around each of the public leisure centres, and this has informed the proposals in terms of future fitness and gym provision at each site.

Future requirements

5.9 There is clearly a significant amount of cross-border movement and it is assumed that this is likely to continue to be the case into the long term. However, as the market changes so rapidly, this will need to be kept under review.

5.10 Some additional provision may be required in Bishop's Stortford (about 70 stations and 1 studio space) and the Gilston Area may generate the need for around 170 stations and 2 studio spaces once the development is fully built out, sometime after 2033. Elsewhere the amount of additional fitness provision demand potentially being generated by the developments is likely to be fairly limited.

5.11 The EHC facility review recommended:

Fanshawe Pool and Gym	Increase gym size to 45 stations (currently 30). Add studio
Grange Paddocks	New replacement leisure centre with 140 stations and 3 studios (increase of 40 stations at existing facility)
Hartham Leisure Centre	Increase gym size to 150 stations (currently 85). Add 3 studios.
Leventhorpe Pool and Gym	No change to fitness provision
Ward Freman Pool	Add fitness gym with 25 stations

5.12 Where it is proposed to develop a new wet/dry leisure centre, then it will be essential to have as part of the complex a large fitness gym and studio space. Given the identified need for a new leisure centre with pool in the Gilston Area, this should have a large fitness facility to support it. The size and mix would need to be confirmed through the feasibility work.

5.13 The other potential site for a new leisure centre is in or adjacent to Welwyn Garden City. This proposal will require detailed discussion with Welwyn Hatfield District Council, but again the principle should be the provision of fitness gym facilities and studio space as an integral part of the wet/dry leisure centre.

5.14 It is not appropriate to allocate timescales to any future commercial provision as this will respond to the market as it changes.

Recommendations for health and fitness provision

Council's role in health and fitness provision

5.15 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, the Council will provide attractive health and fitness facilities which are available to the whole community which complements the wider provision of recreation opportunities in the community and voluntary sector. This provision will be made in association with the public swimming pools, where the revenue generated from health and fitness can help balance the cost of the pool.

Cross boundary co-operation

5.16 The Council will actively seek to develop co-ordinated mechanisms which provide solutions in respect of cross-border import and export of demand for sports facilities:

- The Gilson Area – with Harlow Council, Epping Forest District Council and Uttlesford District Council.
- East of Welwyn Garden City – with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
- East of Stevenage – with Stevenage Borough Council.

5.17 Develop a mechanism for sharing developer contributions cross-boundary, with the priorities being Harlow and Welwyn Hatfield.

Sites

Protect

5.18 It is proposed to generally protect and maintain the existing network of health and fitness sites which have 50 stations or more.

Enhance

5.19 Refurbish and improve the health and fitness facilities at:

- Hartham Leisure Centre

- Fanshawe Pool and Gym
- Leventhorpe Pool and Gym
- Ward Freman Swimming Pool

Provide

5.20 The priorities for new delivery and which need to be confirmed through feasibility work where appropriate are:

- Replacement larger fitness provision including gym and studio space at Grange Paddocks.
- Gilston Area: large fitness gym and studio spaces as part of a new wet/dry leisure centre adjacent to one of the new secondary schools.
- East of Welwyn Garden City:
  - EITHER large fitness gym and studio as part of a new leisure centre adjacent to one of the secondary school.
  - OR off site contributions to new health and fitness provision on a new leisure centre site within Welwyn Garden City, depending upon agreement to share developers' contributions.

5.21 Appropriate land for the leisure centres should be identified in the masterplans for the developments and the land made available free of charge.

SECTION 6: ATHLETICS

6.1 The term "athletics" includes field and track activities, both taking place at athletics tracks, as well as cross-country running, road running, marathon/ultra-marathon running, and jogging.

6.2 Research by Sport England has shown that about 10% of athletics activity takes place at a track, with 90% elsewhere. This report therefore considers both synthetic athletics track provision and other athletics needs.

Current supply and demand

Track facilities

6.3 There is currently one publicly accessible synthetic athletics tracks in East Herts, at Wodson Park Sports Centre called the Stuart Storey Track. This 8 lane track was built in 1996 and was refurbished in 2005. This track is managed by the independent Wodson Park Sports and Leisure Centre Trust. The latest UK Athletics Facility Competition Certification of 17th October 2016 lists the track under the section "No Survey – only able to host events up to Permit Level 2" (UK Athletics, 2017). There is no indication of when the track will be re-surveyed.

6.4 The Level 2 permit allows the track to provide for seniors at area and county leagues, county championships, British Miler's Club (BMC) Academy and Regional. For u20s this allows for the youth development leagues, county championships and area and county leagues. For the u13-u17 age groups Permit Level 2 also allows for county club and school championships, inter-county individual and Combined Events (CE) meetings, and the English Schools Cup Final.

6.5 A realistic travel time to athletics tracks is around 30 minutes, and all of East Herts is within a 30 minutes drive of the track at Wodson Park, and also that a 30 minute catchment includes all of Harlow, Stevenage and large areas of Broxbourne and Welwyn Hatfield. The catchment overlaps with the tracks at Mark Hall in Harlow, Gosling Sports Park in Welwyn Garden City, and Ridlins Wood at Stevenage. Many of the residents of East Herts therefore have a choice of facility, depending on where they live and their level of competition.

Marked running routes

6.6 There are currently marked running and fitness routes in the following locations:

- Hartham Common, Hertford
- Sacombe Road, Hertford
- King George V Recreation Ground, Ware
- Grange Paddocks, Bishop's Stortford
- Bishops Park, Bishop's Stortford
- Thorley and St Michaels Mead, Bishop's Stortford

6.7 Several of the routes and tracks are grass, so are not all-weather and will have limited use during wet periods.

Future requirements

6.8 The national governing body's objectives are to retain the current network of athletics tracks and at a good quality. The track at Wodson Park requires resurveying, and until this is undertaken the need for and extent of an investment is unknown.

6.9 There is no requirement for additional track provision, and the amount of demand generated by the planned housing growth can be absorbed into the existing facility network. However, should the tracks in any of the surrounding areas be closed and if a planned track at Saffron Walden is not developed, then there may be a need to invest in a compact athletics training facility, ideally in Bishop's Stortford.

6.10 There is a need for and potential to develop marked running routes, and such routes should be planned both into existing parks and open spaces, and into the larger new developments.

6.11 Separate developers' contributions for athletics facilities are not proposed but the provision of measured running routes within major developments are expected to be incorporated within the proposals for open space and at identified sites within the authority.

Recommendations for athletics

Council's role in athletics provision

6.12 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, performance and excellence, the Council will:

- continue to support community access to the athletics track at Wodson Park.
- develop via appropriate planning policy and investment the development of at least one marked running route in each of:
  - Bishop's Stortford
  - Ware
  - Hertford
  - The Gilston Area.

Sites

Protect

6.13 It is proposed to protect the Wodson Park athletics track and existing traffic free running routes.

Enhance and provide

6.14 Ensure that the Wodson Park Athletics Track is able to regain its full certification for all levels of events, by investment as required.

6.15 It is proposed to enhance existing pedestrian routes, particularly those that link open spaces across the towns to make marked running routes.

6.16 The priorities for new delivery are marked running routes in each of:

- East of Stevenage
- East of Welwyn Garden City (a large central parkland/common with lots of potential to link communities and facilities in both Welwyn Garden City and East Herts sides of the development)
- South of Bishop's Stortford (utilising the Hertfordshire Way and routes towards the Stort Valley)
- Land North and East of Ware (lots of opportunities to link parts of the site with proximity to Wodson Park)

- Gilston Area (lots of opportunities to link through landscape to central hub area where most of open spaces are likely to be located and to the Stort Valley to the south)
- West of Hertford (potential to link to routes through Panshanger Park).

SECTION 7: BOWLS

7.1 This section of the strategy considers the demand for bowls, both indoor and outdoor. Specialist indoor bowls centres have catchments of up to 30 minutes drive time and are largely run separately from outdoor bowls, where the clubs and sites have more local catchments and are usually restricted to the summer months.

7.2 The membership of indoor bowls clubs has remained fairly static nationally over the last few years, so participation rates per 1,000 population for indoor bowls are not expected to increase to any large extent in the future.

Indoor bowls

Current supply and demand

7.3 There are no specialist indoor bowls sites in the district. However, most people in the district can reach an indoor bowls centre in one of the adjacent authorities within 30 minutes drive time, and many people are within 20 minutes drive time.

7.4 It is also likely that the community and village hall network is providing a significant level of opportunity for many people in terms of short mat and carpet bowls.

Future requirements

7.5 A review of the membership levels of the indoor bowls clubs around East Herts suggests that most have spare capacity. Taking into consideration the fact that membership of indoor bowls clubs has remained fairly static nationally over the last few years despite increases in the number of older people, there appears to be no requirement for new specialist indoor bowls facility in East Herts.

Outdoor bowls

Current supply and demand

7.6 There are currently 15 bowls sites across the authority, hosting one club at each site, with the exception of the Pegs Lane green in Hertford which hosts two clubs. All of the sites are grass and most have 6 rinks, and other than Allenburys, Hartham Common and Wallfields, are club owned and managed. The Allenburys Langley site is an industrial sports club based provision.

7.7 All of the sites except the green at Pegs Lane in Hertford are club owned and managed and most have 6 rinks with 1 green. The club at Bishop's Stortford has 2 greens and it is such high quality that it is used for county level matches. All of the club sites have good quality greens and ancillary facilities including their pavilions.

7.8 The distribution of the bowling greens means that everyone with access to a car can reach at least one bowling green site within 15 minutes drive time.

7.9 The capacity of outdoor bowls greens is approximately 100 members per 6 rink green. If the current membership is compared to the potential capacity of the sites, it is clear that Buntingford and Sawbridgeworth are running at full capacity, Ware is also running close to capacity at 94%, and Buntingford is at about 90% full capacity. However, some of the other sites are more lightly used, for example Allenburys has about 25% used capacity and Bengeo has about 28% used capacity. However the accessibility is the most important factor in the rural areas of the district.

Future requirements

7.10 By 2033 some of the sites/clubs at Buntingford, Hertford, Sawbridgeworth and Ware will be well over the accepted capacity, although some of the other sites will remain fairly lightly used. The extent of the extra demand by 2033 at Buntingford is close to what would justify an additional bowls green, and this is also the case at Sawbridgeworth. However the delivery of a new outdoor bowls site may be easier to achieve in the Gilston Area rather than within Sawbridgworth, so this has been proposed as the delivery priority.

7.11 The lack of capacity at some of the sites in Hertford and Ware is balanced out by spare capacity at other sites.

7.12 Given the outcomes of the modelling of future demand and supply, the priorities are for new provision in Buntingford and in the Gilston are, and retaining the existing network of sites.

Recommendations for indoor and outdoor bowls

Council's role in indoor and outdoor bowls provision

7.13 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, performance and excellence, the Council will:

- continue to support outdoor bowls clubs across the district, including securing the provision of additional 6-rink outdoor bowls sites via planning policy for Buntingford and Sawbridgeworth/Gilston Area.

- support facility improvements at village halls and community centres which will enable the halls to offer indoor bowls as an activity.

Sites

Protect

7.14 It is proposed to protect and maintain the existing network of outdoor bowls greens and their ancillary facilities.

Enhance and Provide

7.15 The priorities for new provision are one 6-rink outdoor bowls green in both Buntingford and Sawbridgeworth/Gilston Area by 2026. These will need to be confirmed through more detailed local feasibility work.

7.16 Appropriate land for the outdoor bowls greens should be identified in the masterplans for the developments and the land made available free of charge.

7.17 Provide additional storage at village halls and community centres where there is demand for indoor bowls but a lack of storage restricts this use.

7.18 Improve:

- Bishop's Stortford Bowling Club – floodlighting
- Buntingford Bowls Club – ancillary facilities
- Sawbridgeworth Bowls Club – changing, ancillary facilities and storage

SECTION 8: TENNIS

8.1 This section of the strategy considers the demand for tennis, both indoor and outdoor. Indoor tennis has a large catchment area, whilst outdoor tennis is usually more local, except for the largest and most successful clubs.

8.2 The LTA's affiliated club information gives a total membership figure of 2,128 for East Herts. This gives a membership rate of 14.6 per 1000 population.

Indoor tennis

Current supply and demand

8.3 There are 4 covered acrylic courts at the Legends Tennis Centre near Haileybury in a permanent air hall. They are all floodlit and the quality of the courts is good. The courts are available on a pay and play basis as well as via a membership scheme. The

southern and western parts of the authority have good access to indoor tennis provision either to sites within the district or outside, but much of the central area and the north eastern area of the authority has no access within 20 minutes drive time.

Future requirements

8.4 Although no additional indoor provision is required based on quantity of provision alone, covering courts at Bishop's Stortford Lawn Tennis Club would be an option for increasing the capacity of the club site.

Outdoor tennis

8.5 This section of the strategy primarily looks at dedicated tennis courts, following the approach taken by Sport England. This is because courts on school sites and elsewhere tend only to be available for community use during the summer months, with the courts being converted to netball and other sports for much of the rest of the year.

8.6 Club sites are considered separately from open access sites as the number of courts, the quality of the courts and the ancillary facilities needs to be much higher than a facility aimed at casual play. Most clubs also need at least some flood-lit court space to enable the sport to be played year round.

8.7 There are a total of 82 regularly available and usable outdoor courts with community access. The distribution of the currently affiliated LTA clubs means that most East Herts residents have access to an affiliated club within 10 minutes drive time and that the most notable gap is around Buntingford, where the tennis club was previously affiliated to the LTA but was not in 2016.

8.8 The non-technical site quality audit undertaken in February 2017 identified some significant quality differences across the sites. The best sites were generally the LTA club affiliated sites which have good quality courts and ancillary facilities. However of the LTA affiliated clubs, Much Hadham has no changing provision.

8.9 The two disused macadam tennis courts at Hunsdon appear to have been managed and possibly owned by a club which has now folded. The future of this site therefore seems uncertain and the courts are poor quality. There is also no clubhouse on the site.

8.10 The Priory Tennis court is owned by the Town Council in Ware. It is poor quality and there is no changing available and appears to be disused.

8.11 The Allenbury's site previously hosted an LTA affiliated club. The site is only available to employees so has a restrictive membership policy. The quality of the courts and site are moderate.

8.12 Most of the outdoor tennis courts have spare capacity, with the exceptions being Tewin, Watton at Stone, Braughing, and Datchworth. These are all small clubs with only 2 courts. The capacity at Tewin and Datchworth could be increased if it was possible to floodlight the courts, but the only way of increasing capacity at Watton at Stone and Braughing would be to provide additional court space.

8.13 The large Bishop's Stortford club has 14 outdoor courts; 6 grass, 3 clay and 5 AGP and mini courts. The LTA's capacity assessment methodology excludes both the grass courts and mini courts, so the number of members of the club exceed what would be considered to be the maximum, at about 120% of the calculated capacity of the courts.

Future requirements

8.14 The options for increasing the capacity of the Bishop's Stortford club are the highest priority for the future. The options to enable the club to cater for more members, perhaps by converting the grass courts to hard courts, ideally with floodlighting, or covering several of the hard courts need to be explored. If neither is possible, then there is justification for a new 3 tennis court site with floodlighting and clubhouse provision, and this would be needed by 2026.

8.15 There is some spare capacity at Much Hadham and also at Sawbridgeworth which may be able to meet some of the demand from the Gilston Area development, but post 2033, there is justification for a 3-4 court site with floodlighting and ancillary facilities.

8.16 The need for new on-site provision at the East of Welywn Garden City site needs to be explored in association with Welwyn Hatfield Council, as it may be better in sports development terms, to invest in existing accessible sites in the area rather than a single court.

8.17 The sites at Braughing, Datchworth and Tewin are operating at levels above their capacity, and the following options should be explored, and if possible delivered:

- Braughing – expand site by the development of a further court
- Datchworth – floodlight both courts
- Tewin – floodlight both courts

8.18 There will also be a general need to ensure that the existing tennis court sites are retained, maintained and improved as necessary.

Recommendations for tennis

Council's role in tennis provision

8.19 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, performance and excellence, the Council will:

- continue to support tennis clubs across the district and encourage the retention of pay and play or open access courts.
- ensure planning policies support the improvement of clubs, and new provision where appropriate.

Sites

Protect

8.20 It is proposed to protect and maintain the existing network of tennis courts, both indoor and outdoor where these host active clubs.

Enhance

8.21 Increase the capacity of the Bishop's Stortford tennis club. Options may include covering courts and converting the grass courts to hard courts with floodlights.

8.22 Increase the capacity of the following clubs, with the preferred options being:

- Braughing – expand site by the development of a further floodlit court
- Datchworth – floodlight both courts
- Tewin – floodlight both courts

Provide

8.23 The priorities for new provision are:

- 3 additional floodlit hard courts at Bishop's Stortford by 2026. Options may include further investment at Bishop's Stortford tennis club or new 3-4 court site suitable for club use with floodlights and ancillary provision.
- 3 floodlit hard courts in the Gilston Area after 2033 suitable for a club so provided with ancillary facilities, including clubhouse.
- 1 floodlit hard court at the East of Welwyn Garden City development, but provision may be off-site if there is accessible tennis provision within a 10 minute drive time catchment of all of the site. This may require agreement to share developer contributions with Welwyn Hatfield.

8.24 Appropriate land for the tennis sites should be identified in the masterplans for the developments, and the land made available free of charge.

8.25	Provide additional storage at village halls and community centres where there is demand for tennis but a lack of storage restricts this use.

SECTION 9: SQUASH

9.1 Nationally, Sport England estimates that around 342,300 people play squash or racketball at least once a month, but there has been a gradual decline since 2007 (Sport England, 2017).

Current supply and demand

9.2 There are two types of squash court, glass-backed and "normal" or enclosed. There are only 4 sites in the district, of which 3 are available for community use and one has restricted membership, Allenburys Sports and Social Club in Ware. Most people in the district can access a squash court either within or outside of the district, with the exception of the rural area to the north east of the authority, and a small area between Buntingford and Stevenage.

9.3 There is high quality provision at the Bishop's Stortford Squash and Racketball Club and at Haileybury, with standard quality provision on the other sites. Only the Haileybury Sports Complex offers pay and play access, and the Allenburys site is really restricted to its members, linked with GSK.

9.4 The Bishop's Stortford Squash and Racketball site is used at levels close to capacity, but the sites at the Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust and Haileybury have significant spare capacity.

Future requirements

9.5 The demand likely to be arising from the new developments for new squash courts is expected to be less than 0.5 of a court in total, so no additional provision is required based on quantity of provision alone. The geographical spread of the existing courts within and outside of the authority provide sufficient access for squash, assuming all of the existing provision remains long term.

9.6 At this time there are no known threats to any of the squash court sites and there is therefore no justification for public investment into any new squash court provision.

Recommendations for squash

Council's role in squash provision

9.7 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, performance and excellence, the Council will:

- continue to support community access to the existing squash courts across the district.

Sites

Protect

9.8 It is proposed to protect all of the existing squash court provision in the district and these will be needed to cater for the additional housing.

SECTION 10: GYMNASTICS

10.1 This section of the assessment primarily considers dedicated gymnastics provision and therefore excludes gymnastics within sports halls that are used for other sports.

10.2 Participation in gymnastics is increasing rapidly. Growth of British Gymnastics (BG) membership has been higher than 7% each year since 2011. There has been a total growth of around 17% annually for the past 3 years. There has been a notable increase in the number of teenagers and adults (11-25 year olds) taking part in gymnastics regularly, due to the increased opportunities and suitable activities available within the clubs. BG anticipated increased interest and demand following the 2016 Olympics. BG's membership information suggests that there are 847 gymnasts in the district.

Current supply and demand

10.3 There are two specialist gymnastics centres in the district; the Mercury Gymnastics Club (Valdez) and Stortford Gymnastics Ltd, both at Bishop's Stortford. The other clubs around the district use sports and ancillary halls, such as the Hertfordshire Gymnastics Club which uses the Drill Hall at Ware, the Hertford Gymnastics Academy at Haileybury, and the Rib Valley Trampoline Club which uses Freman College in Buntingford.

10.4 The current rate of participation in gymnastics based on the affiliated club numbers within the district appears much lower than might have been expected, but there are large active clubs in both Harlow and Stevenage, that have catchment areas extending well into East Hertfordshire. This relatively low level of gymnastics

membership to clubs within East Herts is likely to be a direct consequence of this export.

Future requirements

10.5 British Gymnastics is keen to encourage the development of dedicated gymnastics facilities, but at this time there are no known facility projects in the district. However, there is likely to be increasing demand for gymnastics as the population in East Herts and its surrounds increases, and most demand is likely to be in the SUE areas where there will be a higher number of younger people into the future.

10.6 Up to 2033 most of the new demand will be around Bishop's Stortford where there are already active clubs with dedicated gymnastics centres and others using school facilities. There is likely to be sufficient capacity in the existing network to cater for the expected increase in demand.

10.7 Most of the remainder of the demand will be around the Gilston Area after 2033. With the proposed development of a secondary school with community use within this development area, this would give scope for gymnastics to be catered for within the sports hall, but the design would need to be appropriate for the sport.

10.8 The level of demand generated in the other planned developments is such that this can be met by the existing network of gymnastics facilities, both in dedicated and non-dedicated centres.

10.9 The medium-longer priorities for the future are therefore likely to be to support facility improvements at the Bishop's Stortford dedicated gymnastics centres and schools offering gymnastics. However there are no specific known investment needs at this time.

10.10 Also, ensuring that the Gilston Area secondary school with community use (potentially as an adjacent leisure centre) is designed to cater for gymnastics.

Recommendations for gymnastics

Council's role in gymnastics provision

10.11 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, performance and excellence, the Council will:

- continue to support community access to the existing gymnastics facilities, both dedicated and as a key activity within the sports halls network.
- keep under review the needs of gymnastics so action can be taken if needs arise in the future.

- ensure that the planning policies are in place for the proposed Gilston Area leisure centre joint use facility and that the sports hall will be specifically designed for gymnastics, in particular with appropriate storage.

Sites

Protect

10.12 It is proposed to protect the dedicated gymnastics sites.

Provide

10.13 The proposed joint use sports hall at the leisure centre in the Gilston Area, is specifically designed to cater for gymnastics.

SECTION 11: VILLAGE AND COMMUNITY HALLS

11.1 Village, church and community halls and similar venues provide essential space for many locally organised activities such as pilates, martial arts, short mat bowls and circuit training. This level of facility is particularly important for those people without a car or who do not wish to travel to a main sports centre to participate. They are also an important community resource for wider uses such as community celebrations, dance and drama, and consultation events. Larger halls of 3+ badminton court size are covered within the sports halls section of this report.

11.2 The geographical spread of village halls and community centres together with their quality, accessibility and attractiveness are therefore more important than simple quantitative rates of provision.

Current supply and demand

11.3 There are currently more than 56 village, community and church halls in East Herts. Almost all residents have access to at least one hall within 10 minutes drive time, and that many people have access within 10 minutes walking time (the 800m catchment).

11.4 The nature of the village halls and community centres varies significantly, from relatively large modern and purpose built multi-room community centres, to the smaller ageing halls usually in the smaller villages, often originally built for other purposes. The size of a facility usually reflects its location, with the smaller halls in the smaller villages, and the larger centres in the towns and larger villages. There are

also often other facilities used by the community, such as parish and church halls. The majority of the village halls and community centres are of at least a reasonable condition, but some require significant investment.

11.5 The ownership and management arrangements of the facilities are variable, with several being dedicated village hall charities, whilst others are church halls used by the community on a regular basis. However only those facilities which are used as a venue for active recreation have been included in this study i.e. the size of the rooms allows activities such as yoga or pilates, and the nature of the site encourages such bookings.

11.6 Most hall facilities are used for some active sport and recreation, but only three sites are both marked out for badminton and are actually large enough, including of sufficient height. The Drill Hall at Ware is identified as a community hall, but is also included in the sports hall section of this report as it is used extensively for a range of sports including badminton and martial arts.

Future requirements

11.7 Across the rural areas of the district, the priority will be to retain and maintain a network of halls and to ensure that they meet the requirements of their communities. For example, some buildings may require extensions or extra storage to enable them to host activities such as short mat bowls or gymnastics.

11.8 New community buildings are proposed in the Pre-Submission Plan for:

- Bishop's Stortford South
- North and East of Ware
- Gilston Area
- East of Welwyn Garden City

11.9 It will be important in these new development areas that the community facilities are both sufficiently accessible to support walking and cycling access, and are built to an appropriate size and design to enable the facilities to be multi-use.

Size and design of new community buildings

11.10 A multi-purpose community facility with hall space plus changing rooms and approximately 700-800 sq m of internal floor space is appropriate for larger housing developments, on the basis of 1 facility per 6,500 people, or at a rate of 0.12 sq m per person.

11.11 If this approach was to be adopted for the proposed development areas in East Herts, this would mean that there is a requirement for 1 multi-purpose community facility of at least 780 sq m in the Gilston Area in the period up to 2033, with a further 2-3 large community multi-purpose facilities from 2033 onwards.

11.12 The other locations where community facilities are proposed in the Pre-Submission Plan are in Bishop's Stortford South, North and East of Ware, and East of Welwyn Garden City. It is appropriate that these sites have slightly smaller facilities, based on the adopted standard of 0.1 sq m per 1000 population. The design should still be multi-purpose.

11.13 Sport England has a design guide for the community centres and village halls (Sport England, 2012) which may be useful in addition to other emerging best practice. This guidance is primarily for the provision of sport and recreation, and should be considered alongside the other criteria for a new facility.

Accessibility

11.14 The overall objective is to have a good quality local village or community hall which is easily accessible both on foot and by car. The accessibility standards for village and community halls should be:

- 800 m catchment in towns and larger villages
- 10 minutes drive time catchment elsewhere

Quality

11.15 The community centres, village halls and similar facilities should be able to offer a wide range of activities as well as meet modern standards for health and safety, the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, energy efficiency etc. It is important that the design of any new facilities should be highly flexible, to enable the local management of the sites to both provide a community facility, and also generate income where possible to ensure the viability of their provision.

11.16 Where an existing community centre/village hall lacks storage space, parking or does not meet modern requirements including in relation to the kitchen and disability accessibility, these should be improved as a priority. New facilities and improvements should reflect the current best practice guidance from the relevant agencies.

11.17 If a new community centre is proposed as part of a major housing development area then this should be a stand-alone facility i.e. not part of a school. If possible new centres should also be located adjacent to the playing fields and the changing facilities for the pitches be provided and managed as part of the community centre. This helps both in terms of the economy of scale and the long term efficient management of the building.

Recommendations for village and community halls

Council's role in village and community hall provision

11.18 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, the Council will:

- continue to generally support community access to the existing network of village and community halls, and their improvement. The delivery priorities are those identified by the parish and town councils.
- ensure that the planning policies are in place to deliver new village and community halls where there is identified need.

Sites

Protect

11.19 It is proposed to generally protect and improve village and community halls. Some halls may require replacement over time.

Provide

11.20 The following SUEs should be provided with multi-functional community facilities of a 530 – 600 sq m internal area:

- Bishop's Stortford South
- North and East of Ware
- East of Welwyn Garden City

11.21 The following SUEs should be provided with multi-functional community facilities with two halls and a minimum internal area of 780 sq m:

- Gilston Area – one facility up to 2033, two additional after 2033

11.22 The existing planning standards are updated:

- Quantity
  - For SUEs with a population of over 6,500, towns and larger villages 120 sq m per 1000 population
  - Elsewhere facilities of at least 530 sq m in size

- Accessibility
  - 800m walk in the SUEs, towns and larger villages
  - 10 minute drive elsewhere

- The quality and design of facilities should reflect current best practice from relevant agencies. New community centres should enable at least two separate groups to independently use the centres at the same time, without contact between the groups, e.g. for pre-school and for an adult social or activity group.

SECTION 12: OTHER SPORT AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES

12.1 There are a number of specialist sports facilities in East Herts, either built facilities or primarily using countryside and water spaces.

Specialist built facilities

Netball

12.2 There were 64 netball clubs in East Hertfordshire in May 2017, and the club returns provided by England Netball shows a mixture of netball activity, with some taking place outdoors, and some indoors. A high proportion of netball clubs travel to the central league venues, and many travel cross-border.

12.3 Only a relatively small proportion of the teams playing in the leagues at Bishop's Stortford and Ware are based in/training in East Herts. At the same time, there are a number of strong clubs located close by within the adjacent authority areas which are attracting players from East Herts.

12.4 Wodson Park is used for netball for the county fixtures and tournaments as well as acting as a club base. It has 4 floodlit outdoor courts plus 2 indoor courts. The courts are considered by England Netball to be good, but the ancillary facilities are average quality. England Netball estimate that there are around 700 netball players using Wodson Park each week, but that there is capacity to take more.

12.5 The Bishop's Stortford & District Netball League uses Birchwood High School. The league uses 4 dedicated courts and hosts both league and annual tournaments. The site has 8 courts in total, none of which are floodlit, plus an indoor court. Of the 8 courts, 4 are rated by Clubs as average (and are used), and 4 are rated as poor (unusable) and require improvement. England Netball estimates that around 500 people use the site each week.

12.6 Junior netball leagues are currently held in Broxbourne, Chelmsford, and Cambridge.

12.7 England Netball is clear that there is a real need for additional provision, both indoor and outdoor, in the Bishop's Stortford area. They have advised that even if all eight courts at Birchwood High School were to be floodlit and brought up to a good

standard which would help to meet the competition requirements, there is still a need for more space for netball around Bishop's Stortford.

12.8 England Netball with the support of East Hertfordshire Council, is therefore in discussion with the Hertfordshire and Essex High School about designing the sports hall to specifically cater for netball, and also the provision of six outdoor floodlit courts. The deliverability of these proposals is still to be confirmed.

12.9 If the anticipated development of netball facilities is not delivered at the Hertfordshire and Essex High School, then alternative netball facilities will be required in the Bishop's Stortford area. This may best be achieved by ensuring the design of the proposed community use sports halls at Bishop's Stortford North meets the requirements of adult league netball, and that the hard courts are surfaced and floodlit to meet the needs of netball.

Martial arts including judo

12.10 Martial arts have a large number of separate disciplines but both they and judo usually require hall type facilities, sometimes with matting. The following responded to the club survey.

12.11 The Bishops Stortford Judokwai club in Bishop's Stortford has about 115 members and is seeking to develop a permanent dojo as the club is operating at full capacity. The club currently used Birchwood High School's old gym as their home site but it is described as being in poor condition with the floor requiring repair and is not suitable for the sport.

12.12 It is known that the club has been in discussions with the Hertfordshire and Essex High School about the provision of a dojo. The deliverability and details of a judo facility on the site is still to be confirmed. If it is not possible to deliver on this site, an alternative site may be at Leventhorpe School in Sawbridgeworth. The options for a dojo on this site, including potential costs, sustainability, timescales, and deliverability would require confirmation via a detailed feasibility study.

Archery

12.13 It is not known if the sport has particular growth potential in East Herts, and there are no national governing body identified priorities for investment. There are two main clubs in the area, the Hertford Company of Archers which has about 120 members which uses a purpose-built outdoor site, The Butts at Haileybury near Hertford. The facility is leased on an annual basis from Haileybury College. The club maintain the site but the grass field can be uneven and there are problems with dog and wild animal fouling. Evening shooting is restricted as there is no electricity, and the access to the site is poor. There are no permanent toilet or clubhouse facilities.

12.14 The Celtic Harmony Archery club has around 75 members, and is based at the Archery Barn Celtic Harmony Camp which is a specialist archery centre and has both indoor and outdoor space. The club has short term lease. The club uses the site year round. The club comments that it needs more toilets and storage space.

Countryside and water sports

12.15 There are a number of sport and recreation activities which are based in the countryside using the natural resources. These sports and activities include amongst others; walking, cycling, horse riding, climbing, sailing, canoeing, windsurfing, rowing, motorcycle trials, and air sports. The vast majority of these activities will take place at sites which are outside of the control of the local authority, so the role of the authority in relation to them is necessarily different compared to the built facilities.

12.16 It is neither possible nor appropriate to attempt to devise formal planning standards for these activities, as more important is appropriate and sufficient access to the resources. The appeal of these types of sports in East Herts is wide, with every one of the larger market segments using the countryside for at least one activity, particularly cycling, but also equestrian, angling, and athletics (including jogging).

12.17 East Herts Council will be addressing these activities in more detail as part of its forthcoming East Herts Physical Activity Strategy, however the roles of the Council in relation to these sports and activities are and will continue to be primarily:

- As an advocate working with partners to gain and retain access to a wide range of “natural resources”.
- Providing positive planning policy guidance to encourage provision for, and access by, a range of sport and recreation activities.
- Encouraging the development of safe cycling routes, both as part of sustainable transport and as part of green infrastructure provision.
- By providing grant aid, where appropriate, to clubs to gain, maintain and improve their facilities, particularly where this encourages or enables new participation.

Cycling

12.18 British Cycling believes that there is good potential for growth in East Herts but this is dependent on the provision of dedicated recreational, coaching and racing facilities accessible to existing and potentially new clubs. Training of a volunteer workforce, especially coaches and race organisers and officials is also key to growth.

12.19 There are no known investment needs for cycling at this time.

Rowing

12.20 There are no rowing clubs in East Herts but there are some on the boundaries, including at Welwyn Garden City and Broxbourne.

Sailing

12.21 There is one sailing club in the district at Stanstead Abbots in the Lea Valley, the Hertford County Yacht Club. The Lee and Stort Cruising Club is also based close by. The sailing clubs outside of the district are based at Nazeing, Welwyn Garden City, Chingford, Stevenage and Arlesley. There are no known investment needs at this time.

Canoeing

12.22 There are two British Canoeing affiliated canoe clubs, one is based on the River Stort (Bishop's Stortford Canoe Club), and one on River Lee at Hartham Common in Hertford (Herts Canoe Club). No investment priorities have been identified.

Equestrian

12.23 The British Horse Society (BHS) responded to the NGB consultation. They estimate that there are over 14,200 horses in Hertfordshire, most of which will be ridden on an almost daily basis. The Hertfordshire Horse Riders has a membership of around 10,600. Around 90% of riders are female and about a third are over 45 years in age. For most riders, this is their only form of exercise.

12.24 The BHS notes that the county Rights of Way Improvement Plan (p16-17) notes the high level of equestrian activity in East Herts and the need for safe off road and quiet lanes. Riders and carriage drivers are classed as "vulnerable road users". The main roads such as the A10 and A414 are major barriers to riders using the rights of way network and quiet roads.

12.25 There are currently 5 approved riding centres in East Herts but none of these host affiliated events. There are two Pony Club branches in the district but most of their events and activities are held outside of the district due to a lack of appropriate facilities for hire. The same problem is encountered by the Riding Clubs. There is a need for a competition facility with 2 arenas, hard standing for parking and safe ridden access.

12.26 Nationally, almost all equestrian competition facilities are provided by the private sector, although there are a small number on college sites. New provision is therefore likely to be led by one of these. The main support required from the Council relates to positive planning policies to enable the development of such a facility in the future.

Orienteering

12.27 British Orienteering (BO) does not have a formal facility strategy but is developing a database of all permanent orienteering courses. At this time there are no known investment needs.

Triathlon

12.28 The national governing body, Triathlon England, provided comment for the strategies. There are no specific investment priorities in the district, but there is a general national need for more swimming pool time and closed road cycle circuits. The NGB considers there to be potential to grow the sport in the area, and this will mainly be achieved by increasing the number of junior participants in Go Tri events.

Recommendations for other sports

Council's role in the provision of other sports

12.29 To support the Council's policies on health and well-being, as well as supporting sports participation, performance and excellence, the Council will:

- continue to support community access to the existing facilities networks.
- ensure that appropriate planning policies are in place to protect existing sites and enable the development of new sports facilities where the demand arises.

Enhance

12.30 Improve access track, and provide basic clubhouse with electricity at The Butts, Haileybury College. Secure community use.

12.31 Extend and improve the clubhouse facilities at The Archery Barn Celtic Harmony Camp. Secure community use.

Provide

12.32 Hertfordshire and Essex High School, Bishop's Stortford – 4 court sports hall designed for netball, 2 x floodlit outdoor netball courts also marked for tennis, dojo plus pitches by 2018.

SECTION 13: DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

Maximising health and well-being outcomes

13.1 East Hertfordshire Council and its partners have a clear stated objective of improving the health and wellbeing of the communities across the district. This sport facilities assessment and strategy has considered the current patterns of participation in sport and active recreation across all the communities in the district, and across all providers, and forecasts forwards the anticipated needs up to 2033 based on the expected future population, its age structure, and socio-economic characteristics. The facility proposals reflect what is expected to be required to meet the needs of the different communities across the district up to 2033. The network of sports facilities will be an essential element in the delivery of the health and wellbeing objectives for the district.

Maximising cost-effectiveness

13.2 The facility recommendations are expected to be the most cost-effective and deliverable route of achieving the facilities required. This is based on a recognition that the most cost-effective options may not be deliverable because of factors outside of the control of East Herts Council, and a recognition that the Council itself only controls a small proportion of the facilities across the district. Each element of the Action Plan (Appendix 3) should however in practice start with the most cost-effective option as the preferred option, moving to the more expensive as needed.

13.3 A fundamental principle for the provision of public leisure facilities are that they must be financially sustainable. It is also essential that any public investment into school sites should be linked to a legal agreement securing community use for an appropriate length of time, usually 25 years, either via a planning obligation or other mechanism.

Working across authority boundaries

13.4 A number of the strategy recommendations have identified that the most cost-effective way of delivering the sports facilities required is through co-operation with adjacent authorities. The planned housing growth on the boundaries of East Herts, particularly in the Gilston Area, East of Welwyn Garden City and East of Stevenage will all exacerbate the cross-boundary movement of people playing sport.

13.5 In these areas, there is a need to work strategically cross-boundary, as provision may be better located in one area than another. This is expected to require mechanisms to address developers' contributions and wider infrastructure planning. To be avoided are both the duplication of facilities, and a failure to provide any to meet the demand expected to arise. Such outcomes would fail to deliver the necessary infrastructure to support health and wellbeing, and / or be much more expensive and less financially sustainable in the long term.

Securing provision of sport through development

13.6 A key output from the study is the securing of sports provision through development. This can include on-site provision through master-planning and planning obligations, and securing developers' contributions to off-site provision. These contributions can be secured through s106, or in the future may be via CIL.

13.7 Developers' contributions have already been sought in relation to the Bishop's Stortford North housing development and S106 negotiations have also been completed for a number of other housing projects in the district. The funding already collected will be used towards agreed facility requirements.

13.8 The new planned housing should be assessed against the planning policy and Provision Guide. The authority will be seeking contributions via s106 and will ensure that it meets the three CIL tests set out in CIL Reg 122 and NPPF para 204:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
- Directly related to the development
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

13.9 Although the population of a single development (e.g. on a small site or an individual stage of a larger site) may not in itself generate the needs for a full facility, it will still generate additional demand, which should be quantified and be met. Other contributions could then be sought from other applications to enable the delivery of the facility.

13.10 There may also be specific facility needs identified in the strategy which are required to be provided on a development site, as this is the most deliverable opportunity. This may include leisure centres or other facilities which potentially have a wider catchment than the development site itself or where the development itself generates the whole or a large proportion of the facility need.

13.11 EHC will develop detailed policies for developers' contributions in relation to sport and recreation, and these will be set out in the Local Plan and supporting policy documents.

Assessing if contributions are justified

13.12 The assessment steps to determine if a contribution is justified include:

- identifying the development's expected population;
- assessing the demand and cost of meeting this demand from the development for different facility types, based on the additional population;
- identifying if the demand can be met by existing facilities (where these have a sufficient capacity, are accessible, and acceptable quality);

- if the demand cannot be met by existing facilities, then use the local evidence base and/or consult with relevant stakeholders to find the best approach to meeting these needs;
- identifying the costs of the new or extended facility, or other quality improvements to increase an existing facility's capacity; and
- then applying the costs proportionate to the development's population.

13.13 The following will be used to assess whether the existing provision within an area can provide for the development. The tests relate to Quantity, Accessibility and Quality:

- The quantity requirements are based on the demand generated by the development. The approach towards assessing the amount of demand is outlined in the 'Provision Guide' (see Figure 2).

- The accessibility requirement determines the acceptable travel distance to a facility based on known travel patterns for different sports. Catchments are set out in the 'Provision Guide' (see Figure 2). This information can be used to guide whether provision should be on-site or off-site, and the maximum distance to existing facilities which potentially have capacity to meet the new demand generated from the development. The accessibility requirement also needs to consider the facility ownership, management and availability for community use. The 'availability' must be sufficient for the expected community's needs and include hours of use, pricing policy, and security of the community access (i.e. it is affordable, is fully available to the community at evenings and weekends and generally has secure community use for 25 years or more).

- The quality requirement relates to the quality and design of facilities, and that they should reflect current best practice, including current design guidance from Sport England and the National Governing Body. This should apply to refurbishment as well as to new build proposals, as the age and condition of a facility will impact upon its attractiveness and ability to meet the demand generated from a development.

13.14 In some cases, the nearest current or potential new facility may be across a local authority boundary. In this case it is appropriate to consider offering funding to such a facility.

Costs

13.15 To calculate the scale of a developer's financial contribution for the provision of a facility which has been identified as being justified and appears in the strategy project list, the Contributions Assessment Calculator can be used (for worked example see Appendix 2).

13.16 This calculator uses current national costs, but if there are robust and up-to-date local facility or project costs, then these may be used instead, particularly where the project is to enhance the existing facility provision.

13.17 The cost of maintenance and sinking funds, where justified, should be calculated and included in the contributions expected from the developer. These may be based either on the Sport England or NGB costs advice incorporated in the calculator, or where there are known robust local costs, these should be used in preference.

13.18 In addition to the calculator derived costs:

- when a land cost is justified, this will also need to be included in the developers' contributions, based on the local market cost for the relevant sport/leisure land use.
- there may be a need to add the cost of other local and site-specific costs (e.g. abnormal ground conditions, site access needs, landscaping, acoustic fencing etc).

13.19 It should be noted that all costs should be date related, and inflation should be taken into account. For example, if a facility is to be delivered in 3 years' time, an appropriate inflation index, such as Spons Building Costs Indices, should be applied.

Figure 2: Provision Guide for new housing developments

Facility type	Quantity per 1,000 population	Accessibility	Quality
Sports Halls	0.29 badminton courts **fully available** at peak time	20 minutes by car	Design and quality to meet Sport England or the relevant national governing body guidance
Swimming pools	11.31 sq m water space **fully available** at peak time	20 minutes by car	Design and quality to meet Sport England or the relevant national governing body guidance
Fitness facilities (stations)	7.17 stations **fully available** at peak time	15 minutes by car	Design and quality to meet Sport England guidance
Fitness facilities (studios)	0.13 studios **fully available** at peak time	15 minutes by car	Design and quality to meet Sport England guidance
Outdoor bowls	0.59 rinks per 1,000 provided as 6-rink green	15 minutes by car	Design and quality to meet Sport England and national governing body guidance
Outdoor tennis courts	0.32 courts per 1,000 available at all times	10 minutes by car	Design and quality to meet Sport England or the relevant national governing body guidance
Multi-purpose community halls	Gilston Area: facility with minimum internal area of 780 sq m Bishop's Stortford South, North and East of Ware and East of Welwyn Garden City: facility with minimum internal area of 530 sq m	800 m walk	Design to be agreed with Council.

*Note: * fully available at peak time means open to community use in the evenings and weekends.*

Priorities for Action

13.20 East Herts Council and its partners will treat this assessment and recommendations as a rolling document and will aim to undertake a number of action points arising from it. The first priority for implementation will therefore be an action plan which is led and coordinated by East Herts Council on an interdepartmental basis, and will involve the key stakeholders. The Action Plan (Appendix 3) sets the priorities for Years 1-3. It should be reviewed annually along with a review of the key proposals of the strategy, which will help to maintain the momentum and commitment to its implementation.

13.21 The project specific proposals set out in Appendix 4 are based on the needs evidenced by this strategy assessment. The ongoing assessment of the deliverability of the projects will need to be kept under regular review and alternative options identified if the preferred site/location is not possible to deliver. The next stage of the strategy work is the testing of the project proposals via further detailed partnership discussions and feasibility studies, including detailed costing and business planning. The outcomes of these actions will help to confirm the draft project list.

Phasing

13.22 The large housing site proposals for East Herts in the Pre-Submission Plan are mainly for the period between 2022 and 2027, although some such as Bishop's Stortford North will have substantial new housing before 2022. The phasing of the sports and community facilities will need to reflect the phasing of the housing.

Site specific proposals

13.23 The site specific proposals are listed in Appendix 4 which sets out the projects, the priority, estimated costs, timescales and the partnerships expected to be involved in each project.

13.24 Where the project requirement is for the improvement of sites or facilities, the costs have generally not been given as they will depend upon the specifics of each site. Where some feasibility work has already been undertaken and estimated costs are known, then these have been included in the table.

Funding

13.25 It is important to ensure that all of the available resources are carefully targeted and tailored to meet the needs of the whole community so that any initial capital investment and long term revenue commitments can be fully justified.

13.26 The proposals arising from the strategy are likely to be funded and supported by a range of partners and new facility provision might be via a mix of public and private

sources. There are likely to be an increasing number of innovative partnership arrangements over the next few years, both in relation to capital and revenue projects, and consideration should be given by the Council to exploring all of the available options to enable the delivery of the strategy's proposals.

13.27 There are some major projects planned in this strategy which will require significant capital funding. Funding sources and programmes vary significantly over time, so as each facility is considered, all available options for funding should be explored by the project team.

Procurement and management

13.28 The nature and process of the procurement of the facilities covered by this strategy and their long term management will fundamentally depend upon the type and scale of facility. It is likely that many sports and recreation facilities will increasingly become the responsibility of a sports club(s), but the leisure centres are likely to remain the council's responsibility, either directly or indirectly.

Review and Monitoring

13.29 There should be an annual review of the strategy which will help to maintain the momentum and commitment to its implementation. This will also help to ensure that the original supply and demand information is no more than two years old without being reviewed.

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Nortoft Partnerships Limited
2 Green Lodge Barn, Nobottle, Northampton NN7 4HD
Tel: 01604 586526 Fax: 01604 587719
Email: info@nortoft.co.uk Web: www.nortoft.co.uk