



Sports Facilities Strategy for Huntingdonshire

2009-2014

Draft Copy





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1. Introduction

1.1 The Need to Develop a Sports Facilities Strategy

Huntingdonshire District Council has identified the need for a strategy to assist in guiding the future provision of sports facilities in the district. The need for a clear framework for future investment is particularly critical given the projected population growth within Huntingdonshire.

The development of the sports facilities strategy also provides the opportunity to assess the condition of existing provision, establish whether it is appropriate to meet local needs and demand and to ensure that potential new provision helps to address any current quantitative or qualitative deficiencies. In addition, there is a need to facilitate increased participation and improve the health of the local community.

Strategies have been developed regionally and at county level highlighting facility provision within the district, and so there is now a need to develop a complementary strategy at this local level. Therefore, a Director-led task and finish group has been established to help develop and implement the Sports Facilities Strategy, drawing on different areas of expertise across the council including both officers and elected members (a detailed breakdown of the steering group is provided in Appendix 1).

1.2 Strategy Vision:

The purpose of this strategy is to provide a clear framework for the prioritisation, provision and enhancement of sports facilities within Huntingdonshire. With this in mind, the overarching vision of this strategy is:

To promote active lifestyles: providing facilities/events and encourage participation in active leisure pursuits for everyone. (Huntingdonshire District Council's Corporate Plan, "Growing Success", 2008/9).

1.3 Scope of the Strategy:

This strategy examines all known sports facility provision within the district. Whilst Huntingdonshire District Council provides, manages and maintains a diverse range of sports facilities, this strategy recognises that the council is not solely responsible. Therefore, the remit of this strategy is to examine all sporting provision, including private, voluntary and education provision, all of which makes an important contribution to the sporting offer of Huntingdonshire.



This strategy is seeking to identify the following:

1. Sports facilities that need to be preserved and maintained because of identified strategic need.
2. Existing sports facilities that need to be repaired, upgraded/improved to meet identified strategic need.
3. Any new sports facilities that may be required to meet identified strategic need.
4. Sites where new facilities are required to meet identified strategic need.
5. A priority for future investment.
6. Those facilities that need to be expanded or redeveloped to meet identified strategic need, and a time table for any proposed sports-developments.
7. Future opportunities for disinvestment in or redevelopment of existing sports facilities in Huntingdonshire, as a result of under-use and perceived lack of future demand or inappropriateness.



2. The Wider Picture

2.1 The Agenda for Sport

Encouraging participation in physical activity is important. It is recognised that sedentary lifestyles can contribute to increased health problems, with obesity a major concern within the United Kingdom.

To address this, a range of documents and strategies have been driven forward by central government and leading national sports bodies that identify leisure and sports opportunities as a major contributory factor in helping to address health issues, which in turn impact positively on issues such as community cohesion, economic development, and crime reduction.

At the national level, the Chief Medical Officer's Report (2004) outlines that fundamental changes in attitude to active lifestyles should occur in every household. The report backs the recommendation that for health benefits to accrue the population must undertake a minimum of 5x30 minutes of moderate physical activity per week, which can help towards preventing coronary heart disease, musculoskeletal disorders, some forms of cancer, obesity, diabetes and mental illness. It also showed that not being physically active is a major risk factor for many diseases and chronic illnesses. People who are not active have been shown to have a poorer health outlook than active people.

Linked to this, the Department for Health White Paper, "Choosing Health" (2004), set out new far reaching proposals for supporting the public to make healthier and more informed choices with regard to their health in order to address the issues raised within the Chief Medical Officer's report. It emphasised that effective partnerships across communities are essential in making available and promoting healthier choices and lifestyles. It also identified the need to reduce the number of people who smoke, reduce obesity through diet and exercise, and increase activity levels with particular emphasis on targeting young people.

At the start of 2009, the Department of Health, in partnership with other Government Departments, published a new plan, "Be active, be healthy: a plan for getting the nation moving", setting out new ideas for determining and responding to needs of local populations and encouraging more physical activity.

Sport England is the strategic lead for sport nationally, responsible for the delivery of government wide objectives. In 2008, it published a new strategy, "Grow, sustain, excel – Sport England Strategy 2008 – 2011", aimed at encouraging more people to play and enjoy sport. In summary, it seeks to create a vibrant sporting culture, in which the needs of sports participants are addressed. Within the strategy, Sport England make a commitment to work closely with the national governing bodies of sport and forge strong partnerships with local authorities, acknowledging that local authorities are key to driving local provision and helping to deliver high class community sport infrastructure.



2.2 The 2012 Olympics

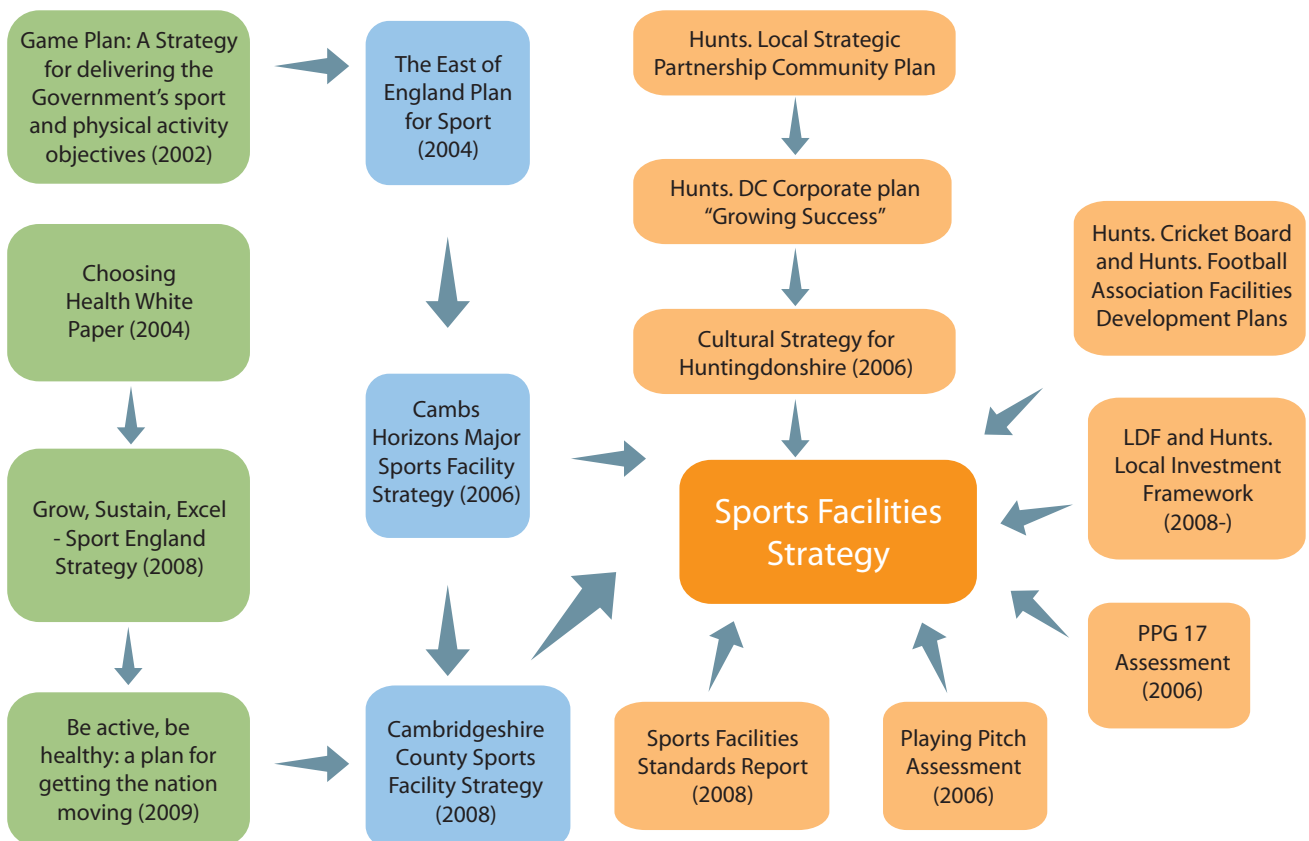
In 2012, London will be hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Central to this successful bid was the notion that hosting the Olympics in this country will inspire and encourage more people to get active, and increased participation in sport is a key goal underpinning legacy commitments and objectives designed to deliver improved community services and facilities as well as enhanced sporting opportunities within the United Kingdom.

In the lead up to the Games, it is crucial that local communities have the opportunity to access high quality sports facility provision. The Olympic and Paralympic Games provide an ideal opportunity to encourage participation and ensure that the games have a lasting effect on people’s participation levels.

2.3 How this Sports Strategy fits within the National Agenda

In light of the desire to improve the quality of provision and to seek an increase in sports participation, a number of studies have taken place, both locally and regionally, to examine the current distribution of sports facilities and to identify required provision in the future. The Cambridgeshire Horizons Major Sports Facility Strategy (2006), which has subsequently been followed by the Cambridgeshire County Sports Facility Strategy (2008), outlines a co-ordinated county-wide approach to improve sports facilities, identifying specific recommendations for Huntingdonshire.

Locally, a number of key documents are important when considering both current and future sports facility provision. The Council’s corporate plan, “Growing Success”, the Huntingdonshire Local Strategic Partnership “Community Plan”, the Huntingdonshire Local Investment Framework and a range of other service-led strategies and reports all have an impact and a detailed overview of these documents is provided within Appendix 2. The link between local, regional and national policy is shown chronologically below.



3. The Districts Sporting Needs

3.1 District Profile

The district of Huntingdonshire covers an area of approximately 350 square miles and has a population of 168,200 (based on the Government Actuary Department population figures published in 2007). This is anticipated to expand to 188,400 by 2021 and this has important implications when considering long-term management of the districts sports facilities as there is a need to ensure that there is sufficient provision to meet the demands of an increased local population.

A large proportion (approximately half) of the district's current population is found within four market towns; Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey, with the remaining residents distributed within key settlements and rural villages. Much of the anticipated population growth is expected to occur around the St Neots area and this needs to be considered when assessing future needs. Similarly, the rural nature of the district means that accessibility to community provision, including sports facilities, is a challenge (Sports Facilities Standards Report, 2008), and consideration needs to be made as to how best to provide participative opportunities and ensure accessibility to rural residents.

The district has a large younger population, and a high proportion of 30-44 year olds; this profile is important with regard to sports provision, as individuals tend to be more active when younger.

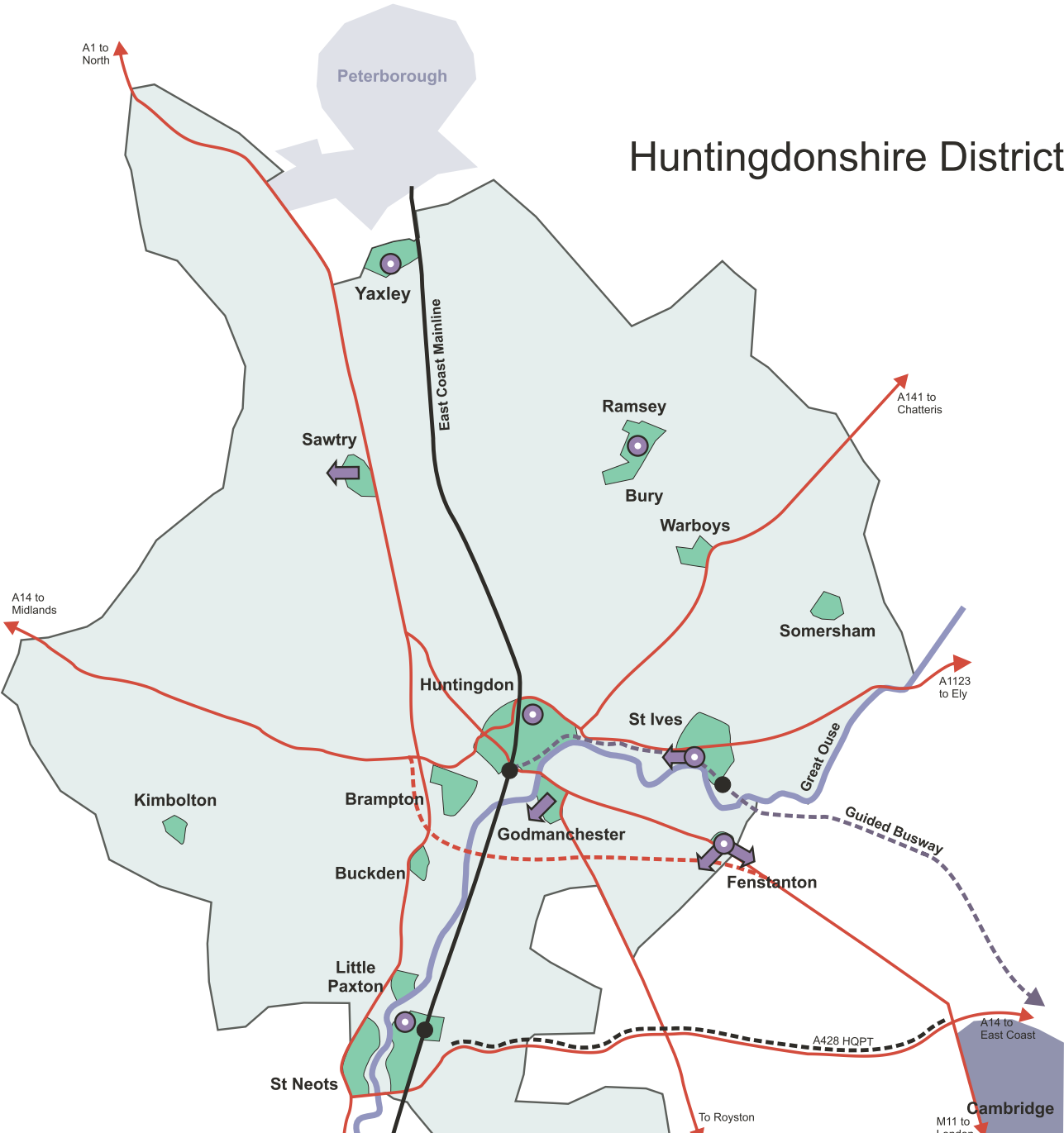
In 2008, Huntingdonshire's District Council Annual Survey highlighted that 84% of people were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with Huntingdonshire as a place to live and most have a good quality of life. Life expectancy in Huntingdonshire is high compared to the national average, and general health and well-being is good as demonstrated by the 2001 census, which highlighted that 73.4% of people described their health as 'good', a percentage that is almost 5 points higher than the national average.

Transport links within the district are good with roads such as the A1 and A14, which in turn link to the M1, M11, and M6 motorways. This network is important when considering accessibility issues and planning the location of new facility provision. It should also be noted that 4% more households in the district have access to two or more cars, compared with the national average. This again reflects the rural nature of the district and the need to travel by car.








When looking at the distribution of facilities, consideration needs to be given to the fact that some local communities experience higher levels of relative deprivation compared with the district as a whole or the region generally. For instance, Huntingdon North ward has the lowest levels of both household income and educational attainment in the district and is in the 10% most deprived areas in Cambridgeshire.



Huntingdonshire District



Legend

-  Market towns are Key Service Centres
-  Future residential growth
-  Future growth within built up area
-  Interchange
-  High Quality Public Transport
-  Guided Busway and bus priority measures
-  A14 re-alignment

3.2 Overview of Current Participation in Sport

There are 1.5 million annual visitors to the council's leisure centres and active users of these leisure centres accounts for approximately 10% of the local population. With regard to wider participation in sport and leisure activities, Sport England has published an 'Activity Profile' for Huntingdonshire, derived using data from the Active People Survey. This was first released in 2006 and subsequently updated in 2008, and contains a range of sports participation analysis for the district. The headline participation statistics are as follows:

Activity	Huntingdonshire District Council		East Region		National Level	
	2005-2006	2007-2008	2005-2006	2007-2008	2005-2006	2007-2008
Participation (3 x 30 minutes per week)	23.5%	22.8%	20.5%	21.4%	21.0%	21.7%

This shows that nearly one in four respondents in Huntingdonshire engage in regular sport or recreational activity, a level that exceeds both the regional and national figures, although it should be noted that there has been a slight decline in participation since the first survey was conducted in 2005/2006.

This measure of participation is important - at the national level, the Government sets a range of national indicators as a means of measuring agreed national priorities. National Indicator 8 (NI8) is the indicator for sport and active recreation and is measured by the percentage of the adult population in a local area who participated in sport and active recreation, at moderate intensity, for at least 30 minutes on at least 12 days out of the last 4 weeks (equivalent to 30 minutes on 3 or more days a week). Therefore, the above data shows that Huntingdonshire is performing well against NI8.

In addition to participation data, the second Sport England survey has shown that within Huntingdonshire, since 2006:

- The percentage of people volunteering – defined as people that offer support to sport for at least one hour a week - has increased from 5.1% to 8.1%
- The percentage of people that are a member of a sports club has decreased from 25.6% to 25.0%
- The percentage of people who have received tuition from an instructor or coach to improve sports performance has decreased from 22.0% to 21.1%
- The percentage of people who take part in any organised competition in any sport or recreational activity has increased from 17.2% to 18.5%
- The percentage of adults who are very or fairly satisfied with sports provision in their local area increased from 73.9% to 75.3%.



3.3 Participation by Age Group

Given that the 2008 update of the Activity Profile has only recently been released, there is currently no detailed analysis of the participation data by age group. Therefore, the 2006 data is still used as the baseline, and within this report, Huntingdonshire was identified as having higher levels of participation than those in the East of England.

One in six over 55 year olds participated 3 times a week compared to one in three 16-34 year olds and one in four 35-54 year olds. However, Huntingdonshire had among the lowest participation rates in the 16-34 age group when compared to similar Index of Multiple Deprivation and Office of National Statistics areas, yet the highest in the over 55 age group. This indicates that more needs to be done to develop facilities that will encourage greater levels of participation within the 16 to 34 year old demographic.

3.4 Do existing facilities meet the needs of local communities and clubs?

In addition to the information provided within 3.1 and 3.2, it is also important that future policy decisions relating to sports facility provision are based on an understanding of the sporting needs and aspirations of key stakeholders, including local communities and sports clubs. Therefore, detailed community engagement has been undertaken during the past four years and this is summarised in the diagram below. (A detailed breakdown of the consultation undertaken is displayed in Appendix 3).



Key findings from the consultation

- Current satisfaction levels concerning sport and leisure facilities are high, exceeding those of other authorities within the county (Sport England Active People Survey).
- There is scope for trying to encourage more people to use sports and leisure facilities with the Council's Customer Satisfaction Survey (2006/2007) showing that 1 in 5 people had never used sports or leisure facilities. However, encouragingly, the same survey showed that 37% of respondents used sports / leisure facilities at least once a month.
- Sports clubs within the district feel that there is sufficient pitch provision to meet demand, and many view the quality of provision as good.
- Although transport is seen as a major barrier to accessing cultural facilities within the district, particularly within rural areas, (Huntingdonshire District Council Cultural Strategy, 2007), the main mode of transport of respondents using outdoor sports facilities was via car (63%), indicating that people are willing to travel to reach their chosen facility (Planning Policy Guidance 17 assessment – Household Survey).
- When asked to assess how easy it is to get to a sports / leisure centre, more than 2 in 3 people (69%) of Huntingdonshire residents stated that it is very / fairly easy (Cambridgeshire Quality of Life Survey).
- Responses to the household survey suggested that perceived shortfalls in outdoor sports facilities relate to the provision of tennis and synthetic pitches.
- The Sports Club Survey (2005) highlighted that sports clubs generally felt that the quality and accessibility of pitch provision in the district was good. The only aspect that scored less than average was the provision of training areas. Most clubs did not possess a training area and hence scored this as zero, whilst changing rooms need improving in some instances. Similar to the scores given for pitch quality factors, the scores given for ancillary facilities were good, with only cycle parking scoring below average.
- Consultation suggests that access to training facilities is a key issue, with only limited slots available at synthetic pitches for clubs wishing to train midweek. There are few floodlit training areas and teams struggle to access facilities between the peak hours of 6 and 9pm, particularly at the leisure centres where there is high demand for facilities.





4. Sports Provision in Huntingdonshire

4.1 Collation of Sports Facilities Data

To help inform development of this strategy, a comprehensive database of all known sports facilities has been mapped on to the council's geographical information system including over 180 sites and 340 facilities. Furthermore, additional sites will be mapped as they are developed or identified. In the long-term this information will be continually updated and will be publicly accessible; functioning as an enhancement to the Active Places mapping system that is currently available through the Sport England website. The council has also compiled a database that identifies sports facilities that are located within each of the district's settlements, and this information is available on request from the council.

4.2 Development of Local Standards for Sport

There is a need for objective standards, as they are important tools when looking to measure change. In particular, keeping pace with changes in population numbers and needs is important when seeking to ensure accessibility to sports facilities. The dispersed nature of the district, means that district-wide standards are a means of maintaining a strategic overview of provision versus demand.

Given the potential population expansion within the district, local standards can be used when new developments are proposed to guide and inform the nature and extent of resources, financial and operational, which are needed to ensure that Huntingdonshire has sufficient up-to-date, fit-for-purpose, and accessible sports facilities. This should allow proactive planning to meet future demand.

In order to assist in the development of local standards, Strategic Leisure Limited were commissioned to undertake a comprehensive review of existing provision and to identify future needs based on predicted population growth using Sport England's nationally recognised model the 'Sports Facility Calculator'. This work focused on a select number of sports facilities but included all known provision irrespective of ownership, thereby incorporating local authority leisure centres, voluntary sector sports clubs, private sector facilities, and secondary schools - including those that will be re-built or re-furnished under PFI or the Building Schools for the Future programme. (The Sports Facilities Standards Report, produced by Strategic Leisure Limited, is available on request from Huntingdonshire District Council).



Following on from this report, on the 4th September 2008, the council formally adopted the following local standards for sports facilities, based on national methodology.

Facility	Standard
Sports halls	51.2 sq metres per 1,000 population
Swimming Pools	10.96 sq metres per 1,000 population
Indoor Bowls Rink	0.05 rinks per 1,000 population
Artificial Turf Pitch	0.04 turf pitch per 1,000 population
Fitness Stations	3.6 stations per 1,000 population

There are many facilities where there is no nationally agreed methodology to form standards. Therefore based on existing levels of provision the following standards are suggested for the following facilities:

Facility	Standard
Outdoor sports pitches, courts & greens	16.1 sq m per resident
Outdoor Tennis Courts	1 court per 2,200 people (Min 2 court facility)
Outdoor Bowling Greens	1 rink per 2,000 people (Min 5 rink facility/39m ²)
Indoor Tennis Facility	1 facility per 40,000 people
Changing Rooms	1 facility per 2,000 people
Active Lifestyle Contribution	£50,000 per 1,000 people



4.3 Existing Provision and Future Needs

The following section will provide an overview of current provision levels of each of these headline sports facilities (refer to appendix 4 to view maps showing the spatial distribution of these facilities) and explore whether existing levels are sufficient to meet current and future demand. Whilst the main focus is on provision within the boundary of Huntingdonshire, this strategy recognises that facilities in neighbouring local authority areas can have an important role for residents of the district, and where relevant, these facilities are also highlighted.

Sports Halls

Overview

Sports halls are multi-purpose in their very nature, allowing for a range of indoor sporting activities to take place. This is important in ensuring the long-term viability of such facilities.

There are currently twelve sports halls located within the district with six sites being a minimum of four badminton courts in size. Of these, St Ivo Leisure Centre and Kimbolton School provide the largest halls, each providing up to six courts. A further five sites provide sports halls that are of three courts size, whilst Spring Common School provides a 1 court facility.

Is there sufficient provision within Huntingdonshire?

The adopted local standard for sports halls has been applied to current provision levels and is summarised below.

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Required level of provision based on suggested standards (population 168,200)	Current level of Provision (2008)
Sports Hall (@ min 594 sq m)	51.20 sq m	8612 sq m	4536 sq m

Notes: The survey discounted smaller sports halls. There is 2376 sq m of space within these smaller venues and there are 2 sports halls currently in development. Predicted need for <1 additional sports hall. There are issues about the types of activities small sports halls can support.

By excluding halls that are less than four badminton courts in size (i.e those less than 594 sq metres, there is currently a large deficit in sports hall provision within the district.



The table below identifies the level of provision required in 2021:

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Provision based on standards (predicted population 188,400)	Current level of Provision (2008)
Sports Hall (@ min 594 sq m)	51.20 sq m	9646 sq m	4536 sq m
Notes: 2 in development in 2008-11. Further 2 large sports halls required (by 2021) to cope with demand from population increase. There are some small halls in the district that may not be fit for purpose.			

Future Options:

There is a clear shortfall in existing provision, and additional developments at Huntingdonshire Regional College and Little Paxton will not address this deficit in the long-term. Spatially, there is a lack of fit-for-purpose sports halls within Sawtry and Ramsey. Four court halls are identified as ‘fit for purpose’ and one way in this could be addressed is through the Building Schools for the Future programme (BSF). The Sports Facilities Standards report suggests that the implementation of BSF in the north of the district may provide the opportunity to address the need for sports halls in these areas e.g. Sawtry Community College.

Furthermore, the Local Investment Framework also suggests the need for enhanced leisure facilities in St Neots, and so there is a need to look at the strategic options and feasibility of providing enhanced facilities within this locality.

More widely the need for an 8 court hall could be considered as part of any new development as identified in both the Cambs Horizons Major Sports Facility Strategy (2006) and the Cambridgeshire Sports Facility Strategy (2008).

Given the current deficit in provision, there is a long-term need to retain existing sports hall provision.



Indoor Swimming Pools

Overview

Swimming pools have to accommodate a range of users, including those of all ages and abilities and those wishing to swim for social, fun, fitness, health or competitive reasons.

There are currently fourteen indoor swimming pools across the district, although only four sites have 25 metre length swimming pools. The largest pools are located at Huntingdon Leisure Centre and Kimbolton School (each of which is 250 sq metres in size).

Is there sufficient provision within Huntingdonshire?

The adopted local standard for indoor swimming pools has been applied to current provision levels and is summarised below.

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Required level of provision based on suggested standards (population 168,200)	Current level of Provision (2008)
Indoor Swimming Pool (@ min 212 sq m)	10.96 sq m	1844 sq m	938 sq m

Notes: Recommended Community Pool size: 325 sq m. The survey discounted smaller pools. Including all smaller pools there is 2202.7 sq m of water space in the district. There are issues about both accessibility and the types of activities small pools can support.

In 2021, the level of provision required is calculated to be:

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Provision based on standards (predicted population 188,400)	Current level of Provision (2008)
Indoor Swimming Pool (@ min 212 sq m)	10.96 sq m	2065 sq m	938 sq m

Notes: Recommended Community Pool size: 325 sq m. The 2202.7 sq m of water space in the district, includes some very small pools that may not be fit for purpose.



Future Options:

When reviewing the data it is clear that the district currently has a deficit of swimming pools that are 25 metres in length. However, this masks the fact that there are a range of other pools (private and public) that are smaller in size.

With regard to the need for new provision, the Sports Facilities Standards Report (2008), identifies that there “could be demand” for a new swimming facility with St Neots, linked to the extensive population growth projected for this area. Furthermore, the district’s Local Investment Framework supports the notion of providing a new leisure facility, including an indoor swimming pool within the St Neots area to help address the large increase of population.

However, given that there is already a 25 metre length pool in St Neots, further consultation will be required to ascertain whether there is the need for an additional swimming facility within this location.

It is also necessary to highlight proposed developments outside of the district’s boundary. For instance, there are plans to provide a new community 25 metre swimming pool linked to a new residential development within Hampton. Communities within the north of this district may choose to access swimming provision here.



Indoor Bowls

Overview

Indoor bowls is a sport that offers social interaction, general fitness and well-being as well as competitive opportunities to a range of age groups.

There are currently two sites that provide indoor bowls facilities; Huntingdon Indoor Bowls Club and St Neots and District Indoor Bowls Club, with the latter providing the largest number of rinks, eight.

Is there sufficient provision within Huntingdonshire?

The adopted local standard for indoor bowls has been applied to current provision and is summarised below:

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Required level of provision based on suggested standards (population 168,200)	Current level of Provision (2008)
Indoor Bowls	0.05 rink	8.41 rinks	14 rinks

Notes: There is an apparent over supply of bowls facilities. These are club-based.

Predicted provision requirements are calculated as follows:

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Provision based on standards (predicted population 188,400)	Current level of Provision (2008)
Indoor Bowls	0.05 rink	9.4 rinks	14 rinks

Notes: There is still likely to be an apparent oversupply of bowls facilities. These are club-based.

Future Options:

Although there are only two indoor bowls facilities, this is sufficient to meet both current and future needs. Provision is centrally located and is within 20-30 minutes drive-time of the rest of the district, and so there is no requirement for additional provision.



Artificial Turf Pitches

Overview

Artificial turf pitches provide high quality provision for both sports training and matches.

The district currently has five full size artificial pitches (three sand-based and two third-generation pitches), and an additional four sand-based and two third generation sites of training size within the district.

Is there sufficient provision within Huntingdonshire?

The adopted local standard for artificial turf pitches has been applied to current provision levels and is summarised below.

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Required level of provision based on suggested standards (population 168,200)	Current level of Provision (2008)
Synthetic Turf Pitches (Full size) (min 640 sq m pitch per 25,000 population)	0.04 pitches	6.7	5
Notes: There was an identified need for more pitches.			

Predicted provision requirements are calculated as follows:

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Provision based on standards (predicted population 188,400)	Current level of Provision (2008)
Synthetic Turf Pitches (Full size) (min 640 sq m pitch per 25,000 population)	0.04 pitches	7.5	5
Notes: More pitches planned before 2021.			

Future Options:

There is currently a deficit of full size provision when compared to the adopted local standard, but it should be noted that the figures above do not show the important contribution made by six training pitches. Future options regarding new artificial turf pitch provision are being considered.

The Local Investment Framework identifies the potential need for a new artificial turf pitch in St Neots. This report acknowledges that there is insufficient demand generated for an artificial turf pitch based solely on the growth of St Neots, but given the level of growth across the district as a whole, an additional pitch is recommended.

The implementation of Building Schools for the Future may also lead to the development of additional facilities, including artificial turf pitches.

When considering artificial turf pitches it should be acknowledged that it is not just the quantity of provision that is important, but also the quality and type of provision. Some surfaces are not conducive to all types of sport, likewise, new surfaces are being developed such as new third-generation pitches. Therefore, it is important to keep updated with technological developments when seeking to provide new developments or re-surfacing existing provision.

Health and Fitness

Overview

Health and fitness centres are popular with people attending these facilities for a variety of reasons including general health and well being, and weight loss.

The District Council has five Leisure Centres with St Ivo Leisure Centre providing the largest number (75 stations - including free weights room). There are a range of other providers across the district providing almost twice as much provision as the council, with RAF Alconbury the largest provider of 100 stations.

Is there sufficient provision within Huntingdonshire?

The adopted local standard for fitness stations has been applied to the quantitative data available and is summarised below.

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Required level of provision based on suggested standards (population 168,200)	Current level of Provision (2008)
Fitness Stations	3.6 stations	605	586

Notes: Almost 40% of these facilities are in HDC leisure centres. At the time of the survey there was a shortfall of 19 fitness stations. Since the survey new fitness stations are being developed within HDC leisure centres.

Predicted provision requirements are calculated as follows:

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Provision based on standards (predicted population 188,400)	Current level of Provision (2008)
Fitness Stations	3.6 stations	678	586

Notes: Increasing demand for fitness stations set to continue.

Future Options:

The Sports Facilities Standards Report highlights that communities living in the four main settlements all have access to fitness stations within a 20 minute walk-time. Furthermore, the deficit / surplus table above does not take into account provision located outside of the district. Those residents living on the edge of Huntingdonshire may seek to use facilities outside of the district. Harper's in Wyboston attracts significant use from residents in and around the St Neots area, important when considering the projected growth within this location. Residents in the north of the district have easy access to Fitness Express on the outskirts of Peterborough.



Concerning council provision, each of the five leisure centres have 'Impressions Fitness Suites'. The Sports Facilities Standards Report states that all of the leisure centres are in 'reasonable condition, but none of them are fully DDA compliant', unsurprising given that the majority were built in the mid 1970's-early 1980's. Therefore, the council proposes to commit investment into these facilities to ensure that the quality of the facilities offered and the fabric of the buildings continue to meet users expectations given that increasing demand for fitness stations is set to continue.



Outdoor Grass Pitches, Courts and Greens.

Overview

Outdoor sports pitches, courts and greens provide a range of sporting opportunities for all ages. Usage levels are dependent upon the quality of the facility. This is particularly important for grass pitches where heavy usage can be to the detriment of the pitch quality.

The Council's Playing Pitch Strategy, undertaken in 2006 as part of the Planning Policy Guidance 17 assessment, identified all known provision as follows:

- 88 adult football pitches
- 54 junior football pitches
- 14 mini soccer pitches
- 43 cricket pitches
- 7 adult rugby pitches
- 7 junior rugby pitches
- 1 junior rugby league pitch
- 8 x 18 hole golf courses
- 2 x 6 lane athletics tracks

Is there sufficient provision within Huntingdonshire?

A detailed Playing Pitch Strategy has been completed by PMP Consultants in 2006. Within this, Sport England's Playing Pitch Methodology has been used to identify surplus / deficits in provision. However it should be noted that the overview of provision outlined above does not identify seasonal and temporal variations in pitch usage, an important factor when considering grass pitch provision. Furthermore, the analysis of provision is based upon the peak load of games to be played at a specific time during the week (i.e. am or pm on a day).

However, for some sports such as mini-soccer it may be possible to spread the games during the course of a Sunday morning and therefore not require the maximum number of pitches. The calculations take into account the capacity of pitches available. Improvements to pitch quality would increase the number of games a pitch is able to sustain (capacity) and would therefore reduce any shortfalls. (Refer to the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy for a detailed overview of the assessment process)

With regard to current outdoor pitch provision, key findings include:

- there is an oversupply of full size adult football pitches on the identified peak day across the district
- there is an undersupply of junior football pitches on the identified peak day and a large undersupply of mini-soccer pitches on the peak day
- there is a slight shortfall of cricket pitches on the identified peak day
- there is an undersupply of both adult rugby union pitches and junior rugby pitches on the identified peak day



Concerning future provision, as is the current situation, the most severe pitch shortage is of mini soccer pitches. In 2021, there will be a shortage of these pitches in all of the analysis areas in the district, whilst there will be a surplus of provision of adult football pitches.

Future Options:

The Local Investment Framework identifies the potential need for an additional 49.6 ha of outdoor grass pitches, courts and greens across the district, with slightly less than half of this being required within St Neots.

In terms of addressing this need, whilst the current quantity of pitches in Huntingdonshire secured for community use is high, there remain some pitches at school sites that are not dual use facilities at the present time and access to these facilities could provide a vital community resource, both in terms of access to open space (particularly in smaller settlements where there is limited provision) but more specifically through meeting the demand for pitch provision.

The Council should seek to secure section 106 contributions to improve the quality of existing outdoor playing fields or alternative sporting provision in the district and provide new ones where a shortfall has been identified. Developers cannot be asked to make up existing deficiencies, only to contribute to those caused by or exacerbated by their development. This is particularly relevant when considering the potential for new provision within the growth area of St Neots.

The quality of outdoor grass pitches, courts and greens vary across the district. Key sites to consider improving, based on poor quality identified within the Planning Policy Guidance 17 Assessment include:

Market Towns:	Stukeley Meadows Primary School (Huntingdon) Town Hall Pitch (Ramsey) Longsands College – St Neots
Key Centres:	Adam Lyons Recreation Field (Warboys) Fenstanton Sports Facility
Smaller Settlements:	Great Stukeley Sports Facility Southoe Football Pitch Broughton Sports Facility Colne Sports Facility Ashbeach – Ramsey St Marys Abbotsley Sports Pitch Hail Weston New Town Sports Area Thornhill Estates Archery Fields – Offords Yelling Cricket Club

4.4 Other Sports Facilities in Huntingdonshire

In addition to the headline facilities outlined in 4.3, there is a diverse range of additional sporting provision located within Huntingdonshire, including facilities such as horse riding schools and outdoor water sports facilities. Water sports in particular are important locally with a number of sites and clubs providing a good infrastructure of water sports venues, together with the River Ouse which flows through the district. In the quest to encourage physical activity, the potential contribution of water sports should not be underestimated.

5. Facility Prioritisation Work

Section 1.3 of this strategy outlined a number of key considerations that need to be addressed by this strategy, and in view of the information provided within sections 3 and 4, recommendations are now made to address the districts sporting requirements.

5.1 “Sports facilities that need to be preserved and maintained because of identified strategic need”

The following existing facilities and clubs have been identified as being strategically important to the district, and should therefore be maintained and enhanced:

St Ivo Leisure Centre (Community Leisure Centre)
St Ivo Outdoor Centre (Community Leisure Centre)
St Neots Leisure Centre (Community Leisure Centre)
Huntingdon Leisure Centre (Community Leisure Centre)
Ramsey Leisure Centre (Community Leisure Centre)
Sawtry Leisure Centre (Community Leisure Centre)
Hinchingbrooke School (Specialist Sports College)
Huntingdon Gymnastics Club (Gymnastics)
Grafham Water Centre (Water sports)
Paxton Lakes Sailing Club (Sailing)
Hunts Sailing Club (Sailing)
Kimbolton School (Multi-sports)
Hemingford Sports Pavilion (Squash)
Huntingdon Tennis Club (Indoor Tennis)
St Neots Table Tennis Club (Table Tennis)
St Neots Town Football Club (Artificial Turf Pitch)
St Ives Rugby Club (Rugby Union)
St Neots Rugby Club (Rugby Union)
St Neots Rowing Club (Rowing)
Jubilee Park, Huntingdon (Football)
Somersham Town Football Club (Football)¹
Stilton FC (Football)¹
Sawtry Colts (Football)¹
Warboys Colts (Football)¹
Ramsey Town Colts (Football)¹
Little Paxton Colts (Football)¹
Godmanchester Town Cricket Club (Cricket)²
St Ives Town Cricket Club (Cricket)²

¹ Identified as a priority by the Huntingdonshire Football Association

² Identified as a priority by the Huntingdonshire Cricket Board



5.2 “Existing sports facilities that need to be repaired, upgraded/improved to meet identified strategic need”

Significant investment has been made to sports facilities across the district in recent years and more is planned, as shown within Appendix 7. It is particularly important that leisure centres are maintained to a high standard given that they provide a range of sporting facilities including swimming, indoor hall provision and fitness stations.

Appendix 7a provides a summary of condition survey spending at each of the five district council leisure centres for the period 2007 to 2011.

A further condition survey will be undertaken in 2009 and this will provide a clear strategic framework for the management and maintenance of leisure centre facilities until 2016, and this is important given the high level of satisfaction regarding leisure centre provision within the district.

Aside from leisure centres, it is important that the quality of all sports facilities are maintained to a suitable standard to ensure high quality, fit-for-purpose sporting opportunities are available within Huntingdonshire. Furthermore, all facilities should comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (1995). As a result of this act, service providers have had to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people, such as providing extra help or making changes to the way they provide their services since October 1999. Service providers have also had to make reasonable adjustments to the physical features of their premises to overcome physical barriers since October 2004.

Another important consideration is that all existing sports facilities should seek to improve energy efficiency. Similarly, all new projects should aim to minimise energy usage and consider the potential impact on climate change. It is also important that all council maintained sites fully embrace the recommendations made within the Huntingdonshire District Council Environment Strategy.

Within Appendix 5, a number of priority sporting and leisure projects have been identified including improvements to a number of existing facilities, examples being the redevelopment of St Neots Table Tennis Club and Huntingdon Gymnastics Club.



5.3 “Any new sports facilities that may be required to meet identified strategic need, and proposed sites for where these facilities should be located”

Section 4 identified that there is a lack of fit-for-purpose sports halls within Huntingdonshire, particularly within Sawtry and Ramsey. Furthermore, there is the potential requirement for additional swimming pool provision, with St Neots identified as a possible location based on projected population growth.

Given the national agenda for encouraging participation in sport linked to positive health benefits, it is important that existing facilities are of a suitable standard to encourage participation. Linked to the health agenda, there is a need for more trim trails/active places/outdoor gyms, as shown in 5.4 - increasing this form of provision will hopefully encourage more 16 to 34 years to participate in sport, addressing the concerns raised in section 3.3.

One of the key aspects of the local consultation that has been conducted is that there is general satisfaction with the quantity of sporting provision within the district. However, a lack of provision and access to high quality training pitches and ancillary facilities was identified as key barriers to participation.

Therefore, new training facilities are required within the district to address this and changing facilities have been identified as priorities for football clubs such as Ramsey FC (particularly the colts site), Sawtry FC and Stilton FC. The Cambs Horizons Major Sports Facility Strategy (2006) and the Cambridgeshire Sports Facility Strategy (2008) also identify the need for a specialist minimum 2 lane indoor cricket facility to address the lack of adequate indoor cricket practice facilities. These key regional documents also highlight the need for an 8 court sports hall, as well as the need for a ‘dojo’ specialist martial arts facility.



5.4 “Sites where new facilities are required to meet identified strategic need”

Based on existing facility provision and utilising the database that was compiled to identify facilities across the district (highlighted in 4.1), settlements identified as priorities are summarised below:

Settlement	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
St Neots		-Trim Trails/Active Places/Outdoor Gyms	-Athletics Track (synthetic), Indoor Tennis
Huntingdon			
St Ives	- Synthetic Turf Pitch	- Trim Trails/Active Places/Outdoor Gyms	
Yaxley		- Outdoor Tennis Courts	- Trim Trails/Active Places/Outdoor Gyms
Godmanchester		- Outdoor Tennis Courts	- Trim Trails/Active Places/Outdoor Gyms
Ramsey (town)			- Football Grass Pitches (Adult, Junior, Mini)
Sawtry		- Football Grass Pitches (Adult, Junior, Mini) - Outdoor Cricket Pitch - Outdoor Tennis Court	- Trim Trails/Active Places/Outdoor Gyms
Brampton			- Trim Trails/Active Places/Outdoor Gyms - Tennis Courts
Warboys			
Little Paxton			- Outdoor / lawn bowls
Stilton			- Football Grass Pitches (Adult, Junior, Mini)

These settlements have been identified based on the fact that they are large enough to support additional provision, none currently exist, or the need for new facilities is identified within other strategies or through engagement with sports clubs and organisations. It should be noted that this information is continually being updated as knowledge of new provision emerges, and this impacts upon which settlements are prioritised for new facilities.



5.5 “A priority for future investment”

Appendix 5 outlines known sporting and leisure facilities projects within the district. Within this matrix, projects at Ramsey Football Club, Godmanchester Town Cricket Club, Huntingdon Gymnastics Club, St Neots Table Tennis Club, St Ives Golf Club, Paxton Lakes Sailing Club, St Neots Leisure Centre and St Ivo Outdoor Leisure Centre are identified as highest priority projects based on local strategic need, sustainability and current / potential participation.

A sports hierarchy has been developed to assist with the prioritisation of any future investment within the district. This hierarchy is summarised below and has been developed based on assessments made by Huntingdonshire District Council, with the priority level based on club infrastructure, current and potential participation levels, and facilities on offer (refer to Appendix 6 for a detailed overview).

Sporting types	Priority
Football, golf, swimming, cricket	1
Squash, tennis, athletics, gymnastics, rugby union, netball, rowing, sailing, martial arts	2
Hockey, bowls, basketball, canoeing, cycling, table tennis, equestrian, badminton	3
Angling, archery, boxing, fencing, judo, rugby league, volleyball	4
Triathlon	5

This shows that football, golf, swimming and cricket are the highest priority facilities within the district. Priority levels were calculated based on club infrastructure, current and potential participation levels and facilities available. Future investment should seek to address facilities where there is clear potential for improvement. For instance, there is scope for tennis to improve its overall priority classification by having greater levels of participation which can be encouraged through improved facilities and better access to some tennis courts. Accessibility is an important consideration within the district; in many instances it is not the quality of the provision that limits participation, instead it is a lack of accessibility that acts as the key barrier.

Future priorities should seek to address this issue of access. Another case-in-point of this is rugby union, with current participation levels good given the limited number of clubs in the district. However, there is scope for improving the working relationship between schools, clubs and the council to encourage even greater levels of accessibility to playing rugby. Therefore, future investment should not simply focus on providing new facilities, but looking at wider issues of access and capacity to increase participation.

Linked to participation, future investment also needs to contribute towards achieving the Local Area Agreement target of 1.5% growth in National Indicator 8 (as detailed within 3.2).



5.6 “Those facilities that need to be expanded or redeveloped to meet identified strategic need and a timetable for any proposed sports-developments”

Appendix 5 provides an overview of future sports and leisure projects within the district. This table provides details of projects that will help to improve existing facilities.

5.7 “Future opportunities for disinvestment in or redevelopment of existing sports facilities in Huntingdonshire, as a result of under-use and perceived lack of future demand or inappropriateness”

At present, community engagement suggests that satisfaction levels concerning sport and leisure facilities are high, and most of the available evidence is that there is demand for existing facilities. Furthermore, given that there is a deficit in provision of most headline facilities (section 4.3), it is important that these facilities are protected and enhanced. Therefore, demand should be continually assessed by monitoring of national, regional and local trends as well as participation levels.

6. Strategic Overview

The district's future sporting requirements have been set out in section 5. In support of this, there is a need to establish a set of clear policy recommendations to help guide long-term decisions that are made about sports facility provision.

6.1 Policy Recommendations

1a: Seek to maximise section 106 contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy tariff to enhance sports facilities across the district through the creation of a Supplementary Planning Document within the Local Development Framework to secure contributions from housing developers.

Outcome: Contributions from housing developers to maintain and enhance sport and recreation facilities.

Timetable: On-going.

1b: Seek to maximise external funding, grant aid or sponsorship contributions to enhance sports facilities in the district.

Outcome: Reduced pressure on limited funding sources.

Timetable: On-going.

2: Embed the local standards advocated within this strategy into key documents such as the Local Development Framework and Local Investment Framework.

Outcome: High quality provision through new or improved sports facilities, as a result of engaging with the planning framework to ensure that provision meets strategic need.

Timetable: Complete by June 2009.

3: Encourage the retention of all 'strategically important sports facilities' as highlighted in section 5.1.

Outcome: Maintain a mix of strategically important facilities.

Timetable: On-going.

4: Given the current level of provision and identified need there is a long-term need to retain existing sports halls within the district.

Outcome: Public access to sports halls with indoor facilities for a range of sports activities.

Timetable: On-going.

5: To have regard to the recommendations made within the Local Investment Framework as it relates to new areas of growth.

Outcome: Potential new provision to meet demands within growth areas.

Timetable: On-going.



6: Ensure all council Leisure Centres provide facilities that are fit-for-purpose.

Outcome: High quality leisure provision that continues to meet the needs of all users.

Timetable: On-going.

7: Encourage the retention of good quality outdoor sports facilities.

Outcome: High quality pitches that meets the needs of users.

Timetable: On-going.

8: Seek to encourage greater use of all existing sports facilities irrespective of whether they are school, local authority or privately run.

Outcome: Enhanced access to existing facilities.

Timetable: On-going.

9: Work with neighbouring Local Authorities to identify key facilities that are located outside of Huntingdonshire that benefit this district. Consult with neighbouring councils when planning to improve or provide new facilities.

Outcome: Enhanced understanding of facility provision within the county and surrounding boundaries, and increased sharing of information.

Timetable: On-going.

10: Work with other sports and leisure facility providers to seek improvements in sports provision and encourage participation in sport.

Outcome: A comprehensive range of sports facilities within the district.

Timetable: On-going.

11: The district council does not currently have any dedicated funding for sports applications. In considering requests for support, the council will critically evaluate the contribution of the club and the associated club facilities in light of this strategy and wider council objectives, within the resources available.

Outcome: High quality, accessible leisure provision.

Timetable: On-going.

This Strategy has been produced by Huntingdonshire District Council working in partnership with the following consultant:



jones plus limited⁺

Consultant: Alex Jones

e-mail: jonesplusltd@yahoo.co.uk

Appendix 1:

Sports Facilities Strategy Task Group:

Elected Members:

Executive Councillor for Leisure Centres - Cllr Doug Dew
Deputy Leader of the Council - Cllr Mike Simpson

Officers:

Leisure Development Manager - Jo Peadon
Lifestyle Manager – Chris Lloyd
Director of Environmental & Community Services – Malcolm Sharp (Chairman)
Leisure Centres General Manager - Simon Bell
Operations Service Development Manager - John Craig
Head of Environmental & Community Health - Dr Sue Lammin



Appendix 2:

Key Local Policy Documents

i. Huntingdonshire's Community Strategy

The Huntingdonshire Local Strategic Partnership (HLSP) includes a number of organisations and community representatives formed to improve the area. This partnership includes key partners from the public, private and voluntary sector, including:

- Huntingdonshire District Council
- NHS Cambridgeshire
- Cambridgeshire Community Service
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Cambridgeshire Police
- Local businesses
- Voluntary Sector Organisations

One of the major tasks undertaken by the HLSP was the development, implementation and on-going monitoring of a 'Community Strategy' – a key document that outlines how members of the HLSP will work in partnership to improve the quality of life in the area.

Huntingdonshire's Community Strategy's long term vision is based on what local people have told the council is important for them now and in the future, which is:

Huntingdonshire is a place where current and future generations have a good quality of life and can:

- Make the most of opportunities that come from living in a growing and developing district;
- Enjoy the benefits of continued economic success;
- Access suitable homes, jobs, services, shops, culture and leisure opportunities;
- Realise their full potential;
- Maintain the special character of our market towns, villages and countryside; and
- Live in an environment that is safe and protected from the effects of climate change and where valuable natural resources are used wisely.

To support this Huntingdonshire District Council will strive to:

- Make the most of the opportunities that come from growth by promoting the development of sustainable communities;
- Enable people to realise their full potential and have access to suitable homes, jobs and services;
- Work towards achieving a balance between social, economic and environmental needs;
- Maintain 'excellent' standards.

ii. Growing Success - Corporate Plan

Huntingdonshire District Council is responsible for promoting the economic, social and environmental well being of its communities, with the desired objective of achieving a good quality of life. This is achieved by delivering actions and principles established within the Community Strategy.



'Growing Success' is Huntingdonshire District Council's Corporate Plan and details how the Council will achieve its part of the Community Strategy. It is based on detailed community engagement so that the council can identify local communities' needs. 'Growing Success' identifies aims that the council will work towards, and details how these aims will be delivered.

iii. Local Development Framework (LDF)

This is one of the principle vehicles for achieving the corporate plan. It is a spatial plan that goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influences the nature of places and how they function. The LDF consists of a number of documents including a core strategy and development control policies which together set out a spatial strategy to manage the amount and direction of growth and policies to help guide and judge that development. It also includes a document identifying where allocations for development will occur.

iv. Huntingdonshire Local Investment Framework (HLIF)

The Council commissioned a joint consultancy team, led by EDAW plc, to undertake an in-depth study into the physical and social infrastructure needs, including sports facilities, arising from the projected population growth within the district. The HLIF was produced to assist and inform the development of the Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework.

The HLIF divides the district into five key areas of Huntingdon, Yaxley, Ramsey, St Ives and St Neots, enabling for more detailed analysis of social infrastructure demand. For each area, priorities and demands are identified up until 2026 and the report provides information relating to leisure and recreation facilities including swimming pools, sports halls, indoor bowls halls, artificial turf pitches and outdoor sports facilities.

v. Huntingdonshire Cultural Strategy

This strategy sets out Huntingdonshire District Council's key targets and aspirations for culture between 2007 and 2010. It provides a distinctive vision for the development of cultural activities, facilities and services and focuses on improving the quality of life and wellbeing of Huntingdonshire's residents, workers and visitors through the provision and development of cultural activities, events and facilities and by helping to achieve other quality of life goals such as providing lifelong learning opportunities, improving health, stimulating economic development and helping to improve safety within local communities.



The strategy contains a comprehensive action plan with detailed outputs, outcomes and targets, which establishes a partnership-based approach to sustaining, developing and improving the cultural life of the district. The action plan will be monitored on a quarterly and annual basis. Huntingdonshire District Council has initiated this Strategy but its implementation requires the co-operation and partnership of many people, organisations and groups in the public, voluntary and commercial sectors. It has been developed as a strategy for the district and not a service plan for the council.

vi. Sports Facilities Standards Report (2008)

A need to develop and adopt local sports facility standards was identified through national best practice. As an aid to this, Strategic Leisure Limited undertook a comprehensive review of existing sports facility provision and identified future needs based on predicted population growth using Sport England's nationally recognised model the 'Sports Facility Calculator'. Their research focused on indoor sports facilities (swimming pools, sports halls, health and fitness facilities, indoor bowls) and artificial turf pitches, and this work has helped inform the development of this strategy.

vii. Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment (2006)

The Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment and Audit was undertaken by PMP consultants. The study covers informal open space, outdoor recreation facilities, children's play areas, allotments and outdoor sports pitch provision. The study was produced primarily to inform the planning process. Planning Policy Guidance 17 requires local authorities to carry out a needs assessment and audit of provision to inform the development of local standards for the provision of open space. The study identifies deficiencies and surpluses of provision and their spatial distribution.

Appendix 3: Community Engagement

Sport England - Active People Survey (2005 – 2008)

Sport England have undertaken two Active People Survey's since October 2005. The purpose of this survey was to identify the percentage of adults who are very or fairly satisfied with sports provision within their local area.

The first survey undertaken between October 2005 to October 2006, showed that 73.9% of people were very or fairly satisfied with sports provision. The repeat survey undertaken in 2007 – 2008 saw this figure rise slightly to 75.3%. When these results are compared with neighbouring authorities within Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire has the highest levels of satisfaction, as demonstrated below. Furthermore, this authority is the only one which had an increase in satisfaction when comparing the second survey with the initial consultation. These figures are also higher than the national average which was calculated as 67.5%.

Local Authority	Survey 1 (2005/2006)	Survey 2 (2007/2008)
Huntingdonshire	73.9%	75.3%
South Cambridgeshire	73.9%	72.7%
Cambridge	72.7%	70.7%
Peterborough UA	70.4%	64.3%
East Cambridgeshire	69.1%	64.0%
Fenland	65.1%	62.2%

Customer Satisfaction Survey 2006/07 (Best Value General Survey)

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) requires all local authorities to undertake customer satisfaction surveys every three years. Questionnaires were sent to 2,500 addresses within the district (49% return rate), and questions focused on a range of factors that impact on the residents of Huntingdonshire. With regard to sports and leisure facilities, 67% of respondents were satisfied with sports / leisure facilities and events, with only 10% dissatisfied. The level of satisfaction has increased since the previous consultation undertaken in 2003/04, with sports/leisure facilities now having a satisfaction rate which is six percentage points higher.

Concerning usage of the districts facilities, 37% of respondents stated that they used sports / leisure facilities at least once a month, but more than 1 in 5 people (22%) had never used sports / leisure facilities.

Those who use sports / leisure facilities were generally more satisfied than those who do not. To illustrate, those classed as non-users of the sports/leisure facilities and events (those who have never used them or last used them more than a year ago) had a satisfaction level of 50%, which is almost 30% lower than the satisfaction level among those who were users (77%).

When asked whether sports / leisure facilities had improved over the last three years, 17% of respondents stated that they had improved, whilst 8% stated that they had got worse.



When asked what needs improving locally, the second most popular answer in 2006/2007 was activities for teenagers (36% of the 1227 individuals who responded). The levels of residents who thought that this aspect was among those which most needed improving in 2006/7 were also similar to the levels in 2003/4, when 39% of respondents highlighted activities for teenagers.

Planning Policy Guidance 17 Assessment – undertaken by PMP Consultants (2006)

As the part of the district-wide audit, 5000 households were given the opportunity to comment on the overall provision, quality and accessibility of open space, sport and recreation facilities within Huntingdonshire. The questionnaire was distributed according to the total population living in each analysis area ensuring that geographically representative samples of residents living in the district were able to comment. In total, 565 postal surveys were returned and supporting this postal questionnaire was a number of community drop-in sessions.

The results from this showed that one in four people (25.7%) had visited outdoor sports facilities more than once a month, with an additional 24% visiting less than once a month. One in two people (50.3%) of respondents did not use outdoor sports facilities, indicating that there is a need to seek to encourage more people to actively participate in sport.

The main mode of transport of respondents using outdoor sports facilities was via car (63%). The most frequent travel time to the facility was between five and ten minutes (37%), followed by between 11 and 14 minutes (29%). This indicates that people are willing to travel to reach their chosen facility. This was influenced by the overall type of facility, with more people expecting to drive to synthetic pitches. This information is important to consider when planning additional facility provision that will be required to meet future increases in population within Huntingdonshire.

There are mixed views regarding the overall quantity of provision in Huntingdonshire, with similar proportions feeling the quantity of provision was about right to the proportion who felt provision was not enough. This is likely to be reflective of the vast array of facilities that the outdoor sports facilities typology covers. Further analysis of the household survey response suggested that perceived shortfalls particularly relate to the provision of tennis and synthetic pitches.

Cambridgeshire Quality of Life Survey 2006 - The Cambridgeshire Joint Consultation Partnership

Postal questionnaires were sent to a random sample of 7,500 households across the county, and 3206 responses were received. These responses were weighted based on population within each of Cambridgeshire's districts.

Within Huntingdonshire, a total of 671 completed questionnaires were returned (45% response rate). With regard to facility provision, when asked to assess how easy it is to get to a sports / leisure centre, more than 2 in 3 people (69%) of Huntingdonshire residents stated that it is very / fairly easy. This figure compared favourably to the county wide response of 64%.

Huntingdonshire Leisure Centre User Surveys

User Surveys were carried out at all five of the council's leisure centres to assess usage patterns and needs. When asked whether there are any facilities/services that could be improved, the most common answers were 'changing rooms/showers' and 'equipment'.

17.4% of users at Huntingdon Leisure Centre wanted improved changing facilities, more than twice as many people than at Sawtry Leisure Centre (8.6%), and Ramsey (6.5%).

24.2% of users at St Neots wanted improved equipment; with better gym facilities and a larger pool the most commonly cited factors. In contrast, only 3% wanted improved equipment at St Ives Indoor Leisure Centre.

Huntingdonshire District Council Sports Club Survey (2005)

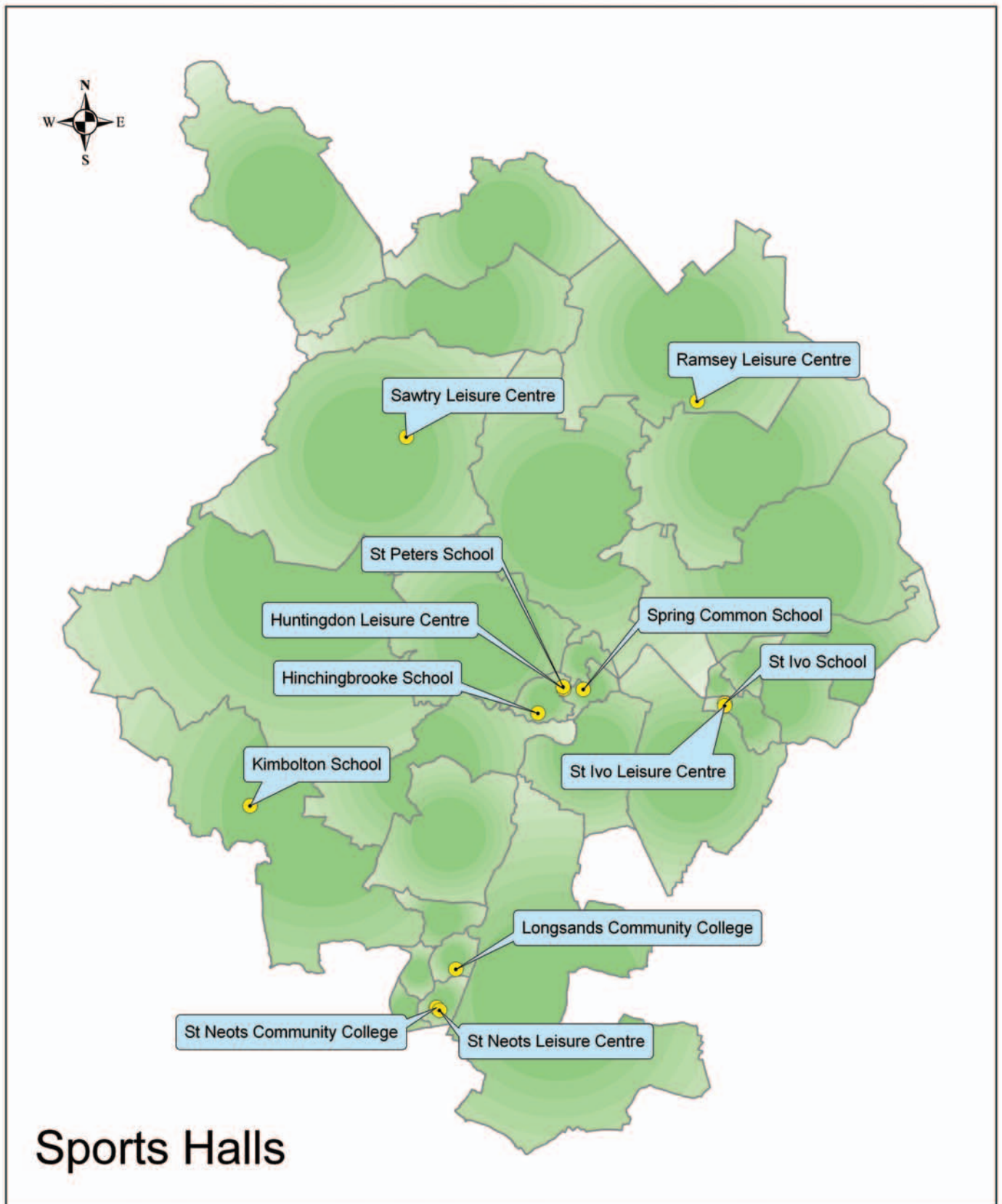
A sports club survey was undertaken by the council to all known football, cricket, rugby, hockey, tennis and bowls clubs during 2005, with a total of 62 clubs responding to this questionnaire.

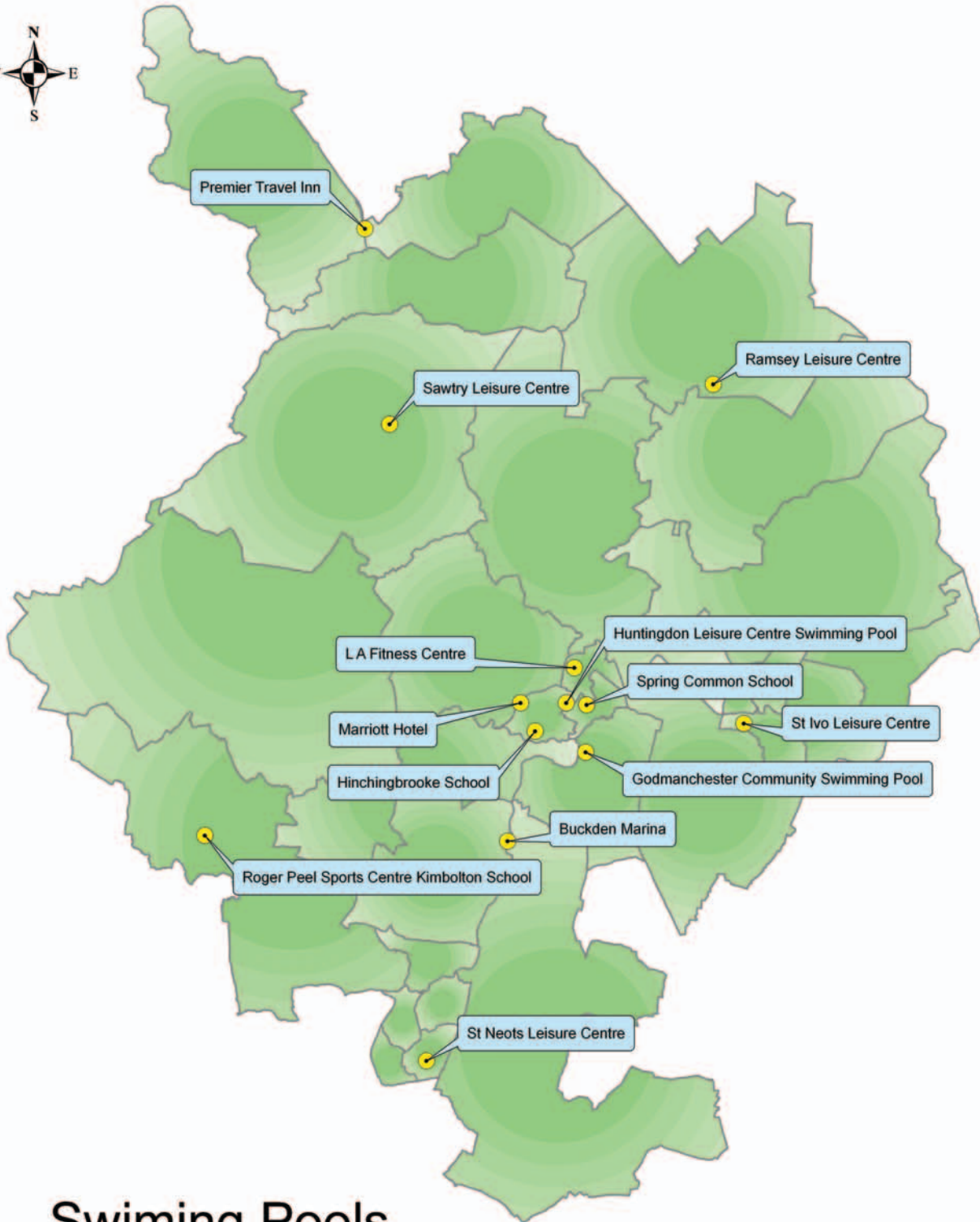
Responses indicated that 77% of the clubs felt that number and availability of pitches met the demand within the district. In line with this, 47.6% of clubs rated the availability of pitches in the district as very good or excellent. This related to an average score of 3.42 (out of 5) and a modal score of 4 (very good). 59.7% of clubs rated the accessibility of pitches as very good or excellent. This relates to an average score of 3.61 (out of 5) and a modal score of 4 (very good).

Sports clubs generally felt that the quality of pitch provision in the district was of a good standard. The only aspect that scored less than average was training area. Most clubs did not possess a training area and hence scored this as zero. Similar to the scores given for pitch quality factors, the scores given for ancillary facilities were good, with only cycle parking scoring below average. Consultation suggests that access to training facilities is a key issue, with only limited slots available at synthetic pitches for clubs wishing to train midweek. There are few floodlit training areas and teams struggle to access facilities between the peak hours of 6 and 9pm, particularly at the leisure centres where there is high demand for facilities.

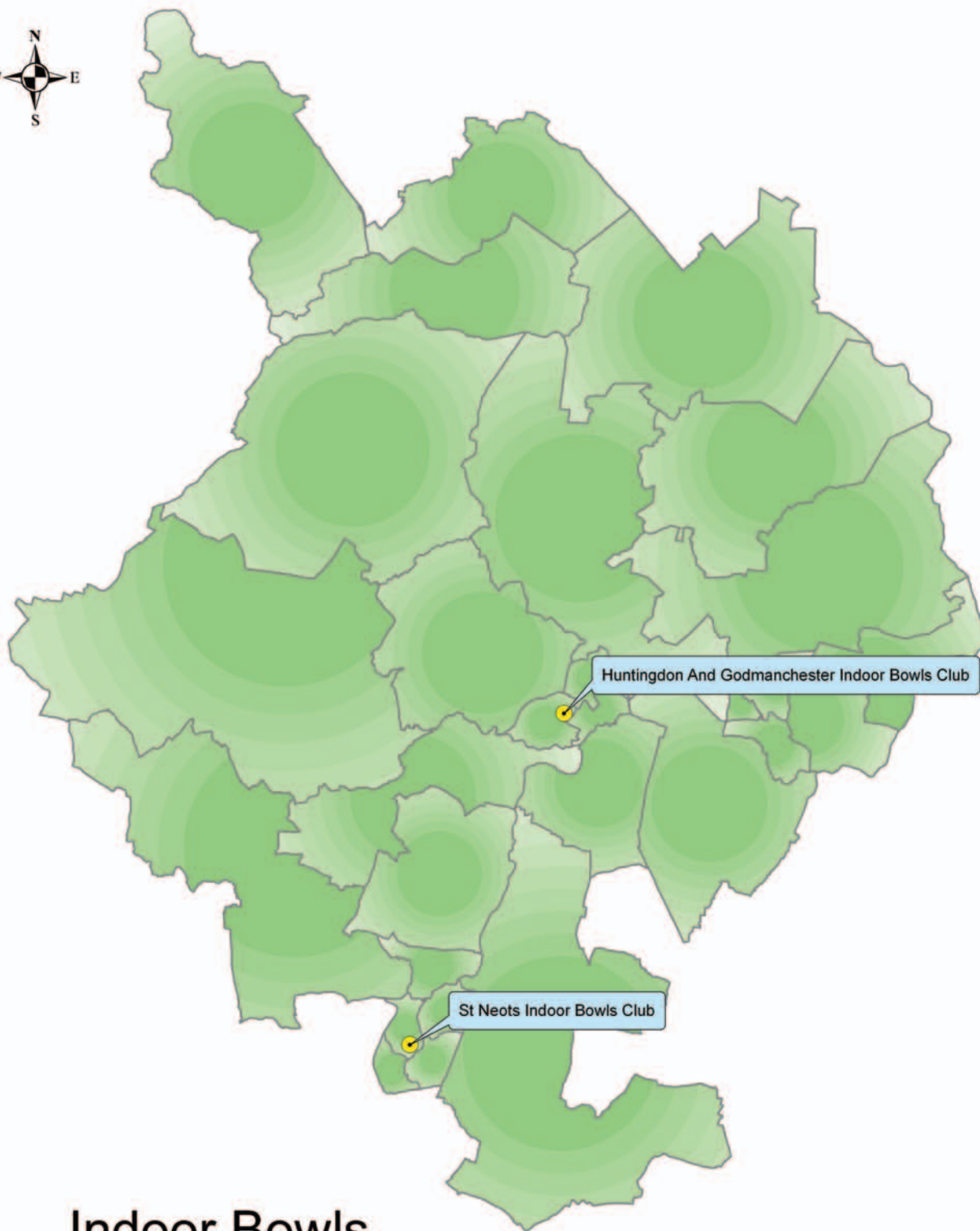


Appendix 4: Spatial distribution of headline facilities

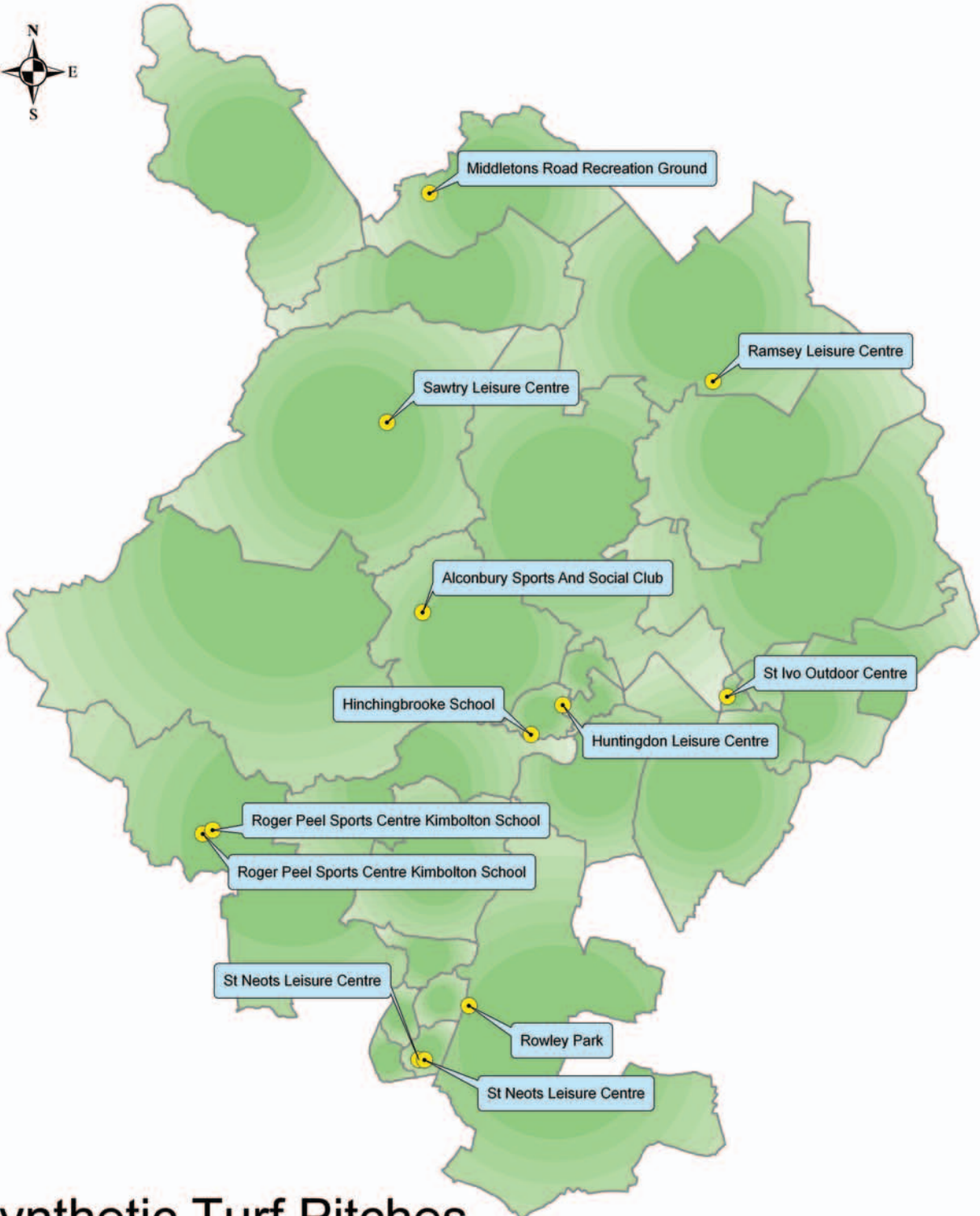




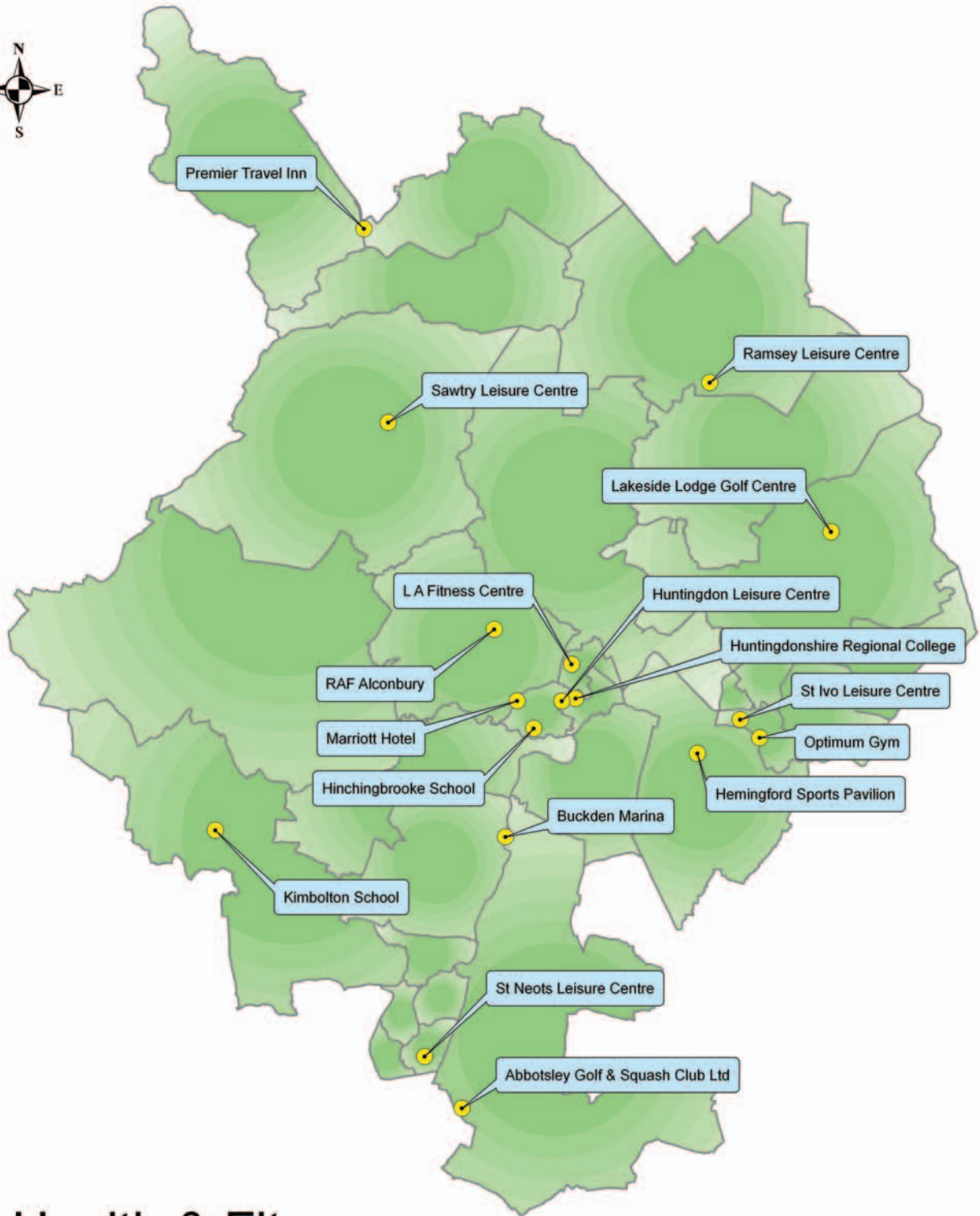
Swimming Pools



Indoor Bowls



Synthetic Turf Pitches



Health & Fitness

Appendix 5: Future sports and leisure projects

Project	Type of Organisation	Project Summary	Total project cost (estimated)	Estimated Timescales	Sports Development	Ward	Indices of Deprivation	Local Strategic Need/ Priorities (3 - High/ 1 - Low)	Sustainability (3 - High/ 1 - Low)	Participation (3 - High/ 1 - Low) Current & potential	Local Priority
Ramsey Football Club & Ramsey Youth Club	Sports Clubs	Clubhouse Changing facilities Ancillary Facilities May be one joint or two separate projects			Increase Participation Potential to become Community Club	Ramsey	Barriers to Housing and Services, Rural accessibility issues, Education, Skills & Training Domain, Health Deprivation & Disability Domain, Income Domain	3 colts 2 adults	2	3	High
Sawtry Football Club/Juniors	Sports Clubs	Field and Changing Rooms			Increase Participation Potential to become Community Club	Sawtry	Barriers to Housing and Services, Rural accessibility issues	2	2	3	Medium
Offords Recreation Field	Community	Develop recreation field Drainage, access, planting all required	£100,000		Community benefit as no alternative facility serving village	Gransden & the Offords	Barriers to Housing and Services, Rural accessibility issues	2	3	2	Medium
Godmanchester Town Cricket Club	Sports Clubs	Upgrade Clubhouse Install NTP Nets	£230,000		Good club with successful track record at adult and junior level	Godmanchester	Living Environment Domain	2	3	3	High
Stilton Football Club	Sports Clubs	New pitches 2 changing rooms / pavilion Drainage Muga Floodlighting	£400,000		Community benefit as no alternative facility serving village. A developing club in need of environmentally sustainable facilities - currently have to travel to Yaxley.	Stilton	None of note Rural accessibility issues	3	2	2	Medium

Project	Type of Organisation	Project Summary	Total project cost (estimated)	Estimated Timescales	Sports Development	Ward	Indices of Deprivation	Local Strategic Need/ Priorities (3 - High/ 1 - Low)	Sustainability (3- High/ 1 - Low)	Participation (3 - High/ 1 - Low) Current & potential	Local Priority
Eynesbury Rovers FC	Sports Clubs	Looking to relocate to new pitch site with additional training facilities and new club house/ancillary facilities	£1m-£3m		Club ability to progress through pyramid structure	Eynesbury		1	2	1	Low
Paxton Lakes Sailing Club	Sports Clubs	May be relocated due to expansion/developments at Paxton Lakes			Potential to be Centre of Excellence. Good links with Leisure Development.			3	2	2	High
St Neots Leisure Centre	Leisure Centre	Increase in provision - larger fitness studio, additional aerobics, health suite, soft play and fun zone	£1.6m	2009/10	Additional facilities - No depletion of existing stock	Eynesbury		2	3	3	High
St Ivo Leisure Centre (Outdoor)	Leisure Centre	New Synthetic Pitch (soccer only), additional changing rooms, car park, cycleway	£1.5m	2009/10	Potential for significant benefit	St Ives (West)		3	2	3	High
Huntingdon Leisure Centre	Leisure Centre	2 x 3G 5-a-side pitches, floodlit	£150,000	2008/09	Potential for significant benefit	Huntingdon (North)		1	3	2	Medium
Sawtry Cricket Club	Sports Clubs	Relocation to new site including sports facilities, clubhouse etc			Hunts CB think it would be key strategic site	Sawtry		2	2	2	Low
St Ivo Leisure Centre (Indoor)	Leisure Centre	Conversion of Rifle Range, and likely improvements to reception, catering, creche, childrens product, and increased fitness provision.	£600,000	2010		St Ives (South)		1	2	2	Low
Ramsey Cricket Club	Sports Clubs	Install 2 or 4 lane indoor cricket net	£500,000-£1m			Ramsey		2	2	1	Low

Appendix 6: Sports Typology Prioritisation Matrix

Sport	Overall	Club Infrastructure	Participation		Facilities	Total	Information in support of the prioritisation
			Current (out of 5)	Potential (out of 5)			
	Priority Classification	(out of 5)	(out of 5)	(out of 5)	(out of 5)	(max 20)	
Football	1	5	4	5	4	18	County FA means resources better on the ground for ngb. Excellent supply of clubs with high participation levels. LFP and Hunts FA have development plans.
Golf	1	5	3	4	5	17	Excellent supply of facilities across the district. Some work on going with School Sports Partnership and Leisure Development holiday programmes & afterschool programmes. Private businesses and others require more support.
Swimming	1	4	4	5	4	17	5 district council swimming facilities plus Hinchingsbrooke, Godmanchester and Kimbolton. Good supply of clubs with good participation levels.
Cricket	1	5	4	4	4	17	County Cricket Association means resources better on the ground for ngb. Good supply of facilities and clubs with junior sections. Huntingdonshire Cricket Board has own development plan.
Squash	2	4	3	4	4	15	Hunts County Squash Club at Hemingford pride of place but other good facilities and clubs including Abbotsley, SIOC, St Neots etc.
Tennis	2	4	3	4	4	15	Very nearly a 1. Hunts tennis club with indoor facilities a good advantage for the district. Elite performance track record. Good supply of clubs across the district – facilities can be variable and access can be variable.

Sport	Overall	Club Infrastructure (out of 5)	Participation		Facilities (out of 5)	Total (max 20)	Information in support of the prioritisation
	Priority Classification		Current (out of 5)	Potential (out of 5)			
Athletics	2	4	3	4	3	14	St Ivo Outdoor Centre facilities & locally based club – Huntingdonshire Athletics Club & St Neots Riverside Runners
Gymnastics	2	4	3	4	3	14	Huntingdon Olympic Gym Club – ambitious club with approved development plans. Track record for elite athletes and waiting lists for grass roots participation.
Rugby Union	2	4	3	4	3	14	3 good clubs across the district although Huntingdon require a new home. High participation levels. Not higher because of ngb structure – scope for improving schools / clubs working relationship.
Netball	2	3	3	4	3	13	Lack of high quality facilities probably holds it back but good clubs in Hawks and Icons. New social club starting in St Neots. Excellent work going on in schools with High 5's.
Rowing	2	4	3	3	3	13	High participation levels at 3 clubs in the area – St Neots, St Ives & Huntingdon. St Neots track record at elite level & St Ives participation in Leisure Development holiday activity programme
Sailing	2	4	3	3	3	13	Good facilities at Grafham, Little Paxton & St Ives. Little Paxton SC participation in holiday programmes.
Martial Arts	2	4	3	4	2	13	Recognised governing body structure required.
Hockey	3	4	2	3	3	12	Adequate clubs and facilities across the district. Issue with Huntingdon and full size synthetic turf pitch access. Not as strong as some of the others but obvious potential.

Sport	Overall	Club Infrastructure (out of 5)	Participation		Facilities (out of 5)	Total (max 20)	Information in support of the prioritisation
	Priority Classification		Current (out of 5)	Potential (out of 5)			
Bowls	3	3	3	3	3	12	Good indoor facilities in the district and good supply of outdoor facilities. Need to work on junior development but a good asset to the district.
Basketball	3	2	2	4	3	11	Huntingdon Hawks seeking to expand - very keen and enthusiastic. Facilities may be a bit limited (only 1 double court venue) but there is untapped potential.
Canoeing	3	2	2	3	3	10	Good facilities across the district. Leisure Development holiday programmes with independent instructor and Huntingdon Canoe Club.
Cycling	3	2	2	4	2	10	New partnership building with British Cycling over holiday programmes. St Ives Cycling Club looking to expand junior programme.
Table Tennis	3	2	2	3	3	10	St Neots Table Tennis Club provides an opportunity for the sport in the area. Other facilities also host and there are a few clubs around. Potential but limited impact across the whole district.
Equestrian	3	2	2	2	3	9	There are facilities within the district but limited available information to rate higher
Badminton	3	2	2	3	2	9	
Angling	4	1	2	3	2	8	Angling – Countryside Services do some excellent work with angling for young people. Disabled platforms being added to the district. Good facilities at Grafham.
Archery	4	2	1	2	2	7	

Sport	Overall	Club Infrastructure	Participation		Facilities	Total	Information in support of the prioritisation
			Current (out of 5)	Potential (out of 5)			
	Priority Classification	(out of 5)			(out of 5)	(max 20)	
Boxing	4	2	1	3	1	7	Boxing – couple of clubs in the district and always seem to be interest for more. Limited access to facilities though and always needing support.
Fencing	4	2	1	2	1	6	Fencing – Excellent Club at St Neots Leisure Centre. Good track record at competition level as well.
Judo	4	1	1	3	1	6	
Rugby League	4	1	1	2	2	6	1 club, no dedicated facility – limited potential but still fulfils a minority interest
Volleyball	4	1	1	2	2	6	
Triathlon	5	0	0	0	0	0	

Appendix 7: Sports Facilities Investment

a: Condition Survey Spending (2007- 2011)

Type of works	HLC	RLC	SLC	SNLC	SILC*	SIOC	Total
Exterior works	£207,185	£119,240	£64,625		£664,730	£17,050	£1,072,830
Sportshall	£4,400	£56,595	£22,990		£64,900		£148,885
Circulation routes and general areas	£108,735	£68,200	£8,360		£122,595	£233,860	£541,750
Heating, ventilation and mechanical services	£56,760	£56,100	£26,180		£258,115	£9,020	£406,175
Swimming pool including changing rooms	£37,950	£99,770	£46,970	£539,880	£111,760		£836,330
Astro/athletics track/ tennis courts	£99,000		£66,000	£156,200		£18,150	£339,350
SNLC dryside refurbishment				£339,240			£339,240
Total	£514,030	£399,905	£235,125	£1,035,320	£1,222,100	£278,080	£3,684,560

All figures correct at 30/01/2009

* Does not include Burgess Hall and Drama Studio

HLC	Huntingdon Leisure Centre
RLC	Ramsey Leisure Centre
SLC	Sawtry Leisure Centre
SNLC	St Neots Leisure Centre
SILC	St Ivo Leisure Centre
SIOC	St Ivo Outdoor Centre

b: Recent Investment Sites (>£50,000)

Site	Funding source	Completed	£ (Total cost)
Hinchingbrooke School (3G STP)	Football Foundation Partnership Funding Plus Revenue Grant	2009	600,000 140,000
Alconbury Sports & Social Club (STP)	Football Foundation	2009	280,000
St Neots Leisure Centre (Swimming Pool)	HDC	2008	500,000
St Neots Leisure Centre (Tennis/ Netball Courts)	HDC NOF Lottery	2008	330,000
Huntingdon Leisure Centre (Gym/Sports Hall)	HDC	2008/09 (Phased)	1,300,000
Priory Park, St Neots (Changing Provision)	Football Foundation	2008	500,000
Hemingford Sports Pavilion	Community Club Development Fund	2008	500,000
St Neots Town FC & Community Facilities (New Stadium & 3G STP)	Section 106	2008	
Ferndale, Yaxley (Changing Provision)	Football Foundation Section 106/PC	2008	514,000
Grafham Water Centre (Indoor Activity Hall)	HDC NOF Lottery	2007	300,000



c: Planned Investment Sites (>£50,000)

Site	Funding source	In Progress	£ (Total cost)
St Ivo Outdoor Centre (STP, Changing Provision, Leisure Room)	HDC/Section 106 Football Foundation		1,500,000
Jubilee Park, Huntingdon (Changing Provision / Stadia)	Football Foundation Partnership Funding Plus Revenue Grant		1,100,000 46,000
Hunts Olympic Gym (Extended Facilities)	HGF		500,000
St Neots Table Tennis Club	Community Club Development Fund		390,000
Grafham Water Centre (Extended Ancillary Facilities)	HGF		500,000