

**Ploszajski Lynch
Consulting Ltd.**



**East Cambridgeshire District
Council**

Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Ploszajski Lynch Consulting Ltd. (PLC) was commissioned by East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) to produce an Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy for the district, comprising three distinct elements:

- Formal playing pitches for football, cricket, rugby and hockey.
- Formal outdoor sports facilities for bowls, netball, tennis and athletics.
- Informal outdoor provision for sport and physical activity, including multi-use games areas and walking, running and cycling trails.

1.2 Background

East Cambridgeshire is a predominantly rural district. The District Council does not directly control any outdoor leisure facilities, apart from a small country park in Ely. All such facilities in the district are owned and managed by parish councils, schools, or free-standing local trusts or sports clubs. It is recognised, however, that in order to respond to local aspirations and emerging opportunities a coherent overview of provision and needs is increasingly necessary. The purpose of strategy is to facilitate this.

ECDC is currently building on its 2015 Local Plan, through the production of Supplementary Planning Guidance documents. The Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy will form part of the evidence base, will inform the Local Plan and provide a strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing outdoor facilities between 2020 and 2036, in line with population projections. It will also be used to ensure that there is a good supply of high-quality provision to meet the sport and physical activity needs of local communities as far as possible. By providing valuable evidence and direction, it will be used to help provide significant benefits to a wide variety of interested parties.

1.3 The objectives of the strategy

The objectives of the strategy are as follows:

- To establish a comprehensive and up-to-date record of current facilities for outdoor sport and related leisure activities.
- To provide an objective evaluation of the quantity, quality, availability and use of all such facilities, taking account of relevant sports governing body or other technical benchmarks as appropriate.
- To identify and evaluate emerging and likely future influences on facility needs.
- To identify facility deficits and/or surplus provision, priorities for development and future provision, and opportunities for rationalisation, as appropriate, so as to guide planning and investment decisions for the period to 2036.

- To engage partner organisations and local stakeholders in the process and its outcomes.
- To support engagement with current or impending sport-specific development strategies.

1.4 Key outcomes

The strategy must provide two documents, covering respectively playing pitches and all other formal and informal outdoor sports facilities. Each document should include:

- A comprehensive record of all outdoor sports facilities and resources in East Cambridgeshire.
- A comprehensive understanding of:
 - Usage patterns, including effective catchments.
 - The strengths and weaknesses of all current facilities, including accessibility, management and usage arrangements, and ancillary facilities, as well as the core facilities.
 - The relevant objective standards of provision and/or user expectations which frame recommendations for development.
- A robust and workable facility development strategy, identifying:
 - Priorities for development, with indicative financial implications (both capital and revenue).
 - Opportunities for rationalisation or improved management arrangements.
 - Key policy approaches

1.5 Outdoor sports facilities strategy

This document comprises the formal and informal outdoor sports facilities strategy. The structure of the document is as follows:

- Assessing sports facilities needs in East Cambridgeshire.
- The local context for facilities provision.
- Strategic influences on facilities provision.
- Bowls greens.
- Tennis courts.
- Netball courts.
- Athletics facilities.
- Multi-use Games Areas (MUGAs).
- Provision for walking, running and cycling.
- Policies and recommendations.
- Applying and reviewing the strategy.

2 ASSESSING SPORTS FACILITIES NEEDS

2.1 Introduction

This section explains the basis upon which the outdoor sports facilities needs in East Cambridgeshire have been identified, along with the approach for identifying the additional provision that will be needed as a result of population growth.

2.2 Methodology

The methodology applied to assess the needs and opportunities for sports facilities follows Sport England's recommended approach, advocated in *'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance'* (2014). The process involves two parts and three stages as follows:

- **Part One** - Undertaking the assessment.
 - **Stage A:** Prepare and tailor the assessment.
 - **Stage B:** Gather information on supply and demand.
 - **Stage B:** Bring the information together.
- **Part Two - Stage C:** Applying the assessment.

2.3 Undertaking the assessment

2.3.1 Preparing and tailoring the approach

ECDC devised a project brief that defined:

- The aims and objectives of the review of sports and leisure facilities in the district.
- The scope of the exercise, including the types of facilities to include, the geographical scope and the overall timeframe for the assessment.
- The local and wider strategic context.
- The project management arrangements for the study, including the decision to engage assistance from external consultants.

A project brief was produced, approved and signed-off to complete Stage A of the process.

2.3.2 Assessing sports facilities supply

The assessment of formal and informal outdoor sports facilities supply at Stage B of the study involved four main elements:

- **Quantity:** Establishing what facilities there are in the district, with details of their dimensions, technical information like playing surfaces and floodlighting. This included consideration of

facilities not currently in use, not available to the community and significant provision in neighbouring areas that serves some needs of East Cambridgeshire residents.

- **Quality:** Auditing the quality of all aspects of all facilities. This involved assessing each facility in terms of its condition (its age, appeal, fabric and ancillary provision like changing and car parking - factors that will influence its attractiveness to users) and fitness for purpose (its technical specifications and ability to accommodate an appropriate standard of play).
- **Accessibility:** Determining spatial distribution of provision in the district by GIS mapping of each facility type, including catchment analysis appropriate to the scale and role of each facility.
- **Availability:** Identifying how much each facility is used, whether there is any existing spare capacity and if there is any scope to increase capacity. This involved consideration of programming and usage data, opening times and pricing levels, which was secured through consultation with facility providers and operators.

The information was collated and analysed in a facilities supply report, which was evaluated and approved by the project steering group.

2.3.3 Assessing sports facilities demand

The assessment of sports facilities demand at Stage B of the study involved five main elements:

- **Local population profile:** Establishing the local demography, including the size, age profile, affluence/deprivation, health indices and growth projections.
- **Sports participation:** Identifying local sports participation characteristics, through analysing the results of Sport England's 'Active People' and 'Active Lives' surveys, local facilities usage figures and a survey of local clubs to establish membership patterns and trends.
- **Unmet, displaced and future demand:** In addition to current expressed demand, analysis of unmet (demand which exists but cannot currently be satisfied), displaced (demand from within the district that is satisfied elsewhere) and future demand (based on projected population and participation increases) was identified.
- **Local participation priorities:** Establishing and local priorities for the use of sports facilities, such as those relating to corporate health and well-being policies.
- **Sport-specific priorities:** Determining through consultation with Living Sport, the governing bodies of sport and a local sports clubs survey, whether there are any sport-specific priorities for East Cambridgeshire.

The information was collated and analysed in a facilities demand report, which was evaluated and approved by the project steering group.

2.3.4 Assessing the balance between sports facilities supply and demand

To complete Stage B of the process, the supply and demand information was brought together for each type of facility to establish:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough facilities with sufficient capacity to meet needs?
- **Quality:** Are the facilities fit for purpose for the users?
- **Accessibility:** Are the facilities in the right physical location for the users?
- **Availability:** Are the facilities available for those who want to use them?

The information was collated and analysed in a supply and demand assessment report, which was evaluated, approved and signed-off by the project steering group to complete Stage B of the process.

2.4 Applying the assessment

2.4.1 Developing the strategy

The results of the assessment were applied to produce an outdoor sports facilities strategy for the district, which included:

- **Options for provision:** The options for meeting current and future facilities needs were identified under Sport England’s recommended headings of ‘Protect’, ‘Provide’ and ‘Enhance’.
- **Policy recommendations:** Arranged under the headings of ‘Protect’, ‘Provide’ and ‘Enhance’, planning policy recommendations were developed to ensure that the implementation of the strategy will be supported by the provisions of the Local Plan.
- **Action plan:** An action plan was developed for each type of outdoor sports facility, linking identified issues with specific actions, including the organisations responsible for lead and support roles, the resource implications and the respective priorities.
- **Delivery:** Mechanisms for securing developer contributions towards the costs of meeting additional facilities arising from housing growth in the district were developed.
- **Monitoring and review:** The arrangements for ensuring that the strategy remains robust and up-to-date were specified.

2.4.2 Stakeholder consultation

Information was gathered throughout the process from a wide range of consultees including:

- **Sport England:** Guidance on the assessment methodology.
- **East Cambridgeshire Council:** Consultation with officers from Leisure and Planning and on their respective areas of responsibility.
- **Living Sport (the county sport and physical activity partnership):** Information on local and wider strategic priorities.
- **Neighbouring local authorities:** Information on their facilities assessments and the impact of any cross-border issues.

- ***Governing bodies of sport:*** Information on local and wider strategic priorities and local supply and demand information.
- ***Parish councils:*** As major providers in the district, information on outdoor sports facilities provision and usage and assessments of local need.
- ***Individual sports clubs:*** Information on facility usage patterns, current and future needs and opinions on quality.
- ***Schools and colleges:*** Information on outdoor sports facilities needs and aspirations and attitudes towards community use.

2.5 Assessing the need for informal provision for physical activity

2.5.1 Introduction

The formalised supply and demand assessments of the ‘*Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance*’ (2014) do not lend themselves well to identifying how best to address the need for informal provision for physical activity such as walking, cycling and running. In particular:

- Most of the ‘supply’ involves either non-specialist provision such as open spaces and public rights of way, whose primary functions are not to specifically to accommodate physical activity. It is difficult therefore to define ‘capacity’ in this context.
- Much of the ‘demand’ is ‘unmetered’ - there is very little detailed data on the usage of specific open space sites or rights of way.

2.5.2 Assessment methodology

The following approach has therefore been devised and applied to assess the need for informal provision for walking, cycling and running in East Cambridgeshire.

- Establishing the extent of local opportunities to undertake short, medium and long forms (15 minutes, 45 minutes and 90 minutes) of each activity, on or off-road,
- Identifying what area of open space is available within walking distance of each settlement in the district.
- Assessing gaps in provision.

3 THE LOCAL CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

This section identifies the context within which outdoor sports facilities provision is made in East Cambridgeshire.

3.2 Background

East Cambridgeshire is a predominantly rural district located to the north-east of Cambridge within the county of Cambridgeshire. The district covers an area of 655km² and has a population of almost 90,000 people. The population has increased significantly in recent years and growth is expected to continue.

There are four main settlements - the cathedral city of Ely, the market towns of Soham and Littleport and the large village of Burwell. Together, these comprise approximately 56% of the district's population, with the remaining population spread between about 50 villages and other rural parts of the district.

- Ely is the largest urban area and acts as a retail, service and administrative centre for a wide rural catchment.
- Soham is a small market town with a range of shops, catering for day-to-day needs.
- Littleport is a small fenland town with a localised service catchment due to its proximity to Ely.
- The villages of Bottisham, Burwell, Haddenham and Sutton play a key service role for their rural hinterlands.

Landscape and economy: East Cambridgeshire can be broadly defined into two sub-areas:

- The northern part of the district is predominantly intensively farmed fenland, with many settlements located on higher ground on the old 'islands' in the fen. Flood risk is a key issue, with much of the land at or below sea level. With the possible exception of Ely, incomes are generally lower and deprivation is more marked than the southern part of the district.
- The south of the district consists of elevated chalk and heath land and contains a range of attractive villages and hamlets. The local economy and landscape is dominated by the horse racing industry with large areas of farmland converted to stud use. Residents in the south of the district mainly look to Newmarket and Cambridge for services and facilities.

3.3 Population

3.3.1 Current population

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) mid-2018 population estimates for East Cambridgeshire indicate 89,600 residents. This represents an increase of 5,782 people or 6.9% growth since the 2011 Census figure of 83,818.

3.3.2 Age structure

The ONS 2016 broad age estimates for East Cambridgeshire were as follows, with comparator figures for Cambridgeshire and England as a whole. The figures show that the district has a slightly polarised age structure, with proportionately more younger and older people than the county and the country as a whole.

<i>Age</i>	<i>East Cambs %</i>	<i>Cambs %</i>	<i>England %</i>
0-14	18.9%	17.6%	18.9%
15-64	61.1%	63.5%	64.7%
65+	20.0%	18.9%	16.4%
Total	100%	100%	100%

3.3.3 Ethnicity

East Cambridgeshire's population is less ethnically diverse than the national average. At the 2011 Census 95.9% of the resident population was White, 1.0% Asian/Asian British, 2.1% are Black/Black British and 1.1% are from mixed/multiple/other ethnic groups.

3.3.4 Population growth

East Cambridgeshire District Council's planners are currently basing population projections on the ONS mid-2014 estimates, which indicate that there will be 104,000 residents in the district by 2036. This represents a 16.1% increase (an additional 14,400 people) from the mid-2018 population estimate. The 'East Cambridgeshire Growth Study' (2017), recognises the need for 11,400 new homes in the district by 2036, equivalent to 570 additional dwellings per annum.

3.4 Deprivation

Based upon the Government's Indices of Local Deprivation, East Cambridgeshire is ranked as 262nd most deprived local authority in England (out of 326) and is therefore a relatively affluent area. However:

- 34.0% of the district's population are amongst the 20% most deprived in the country in terms of their access to housing and services, based upon geographical and affordability barriers.
- Life expectancy is 2.9 years lower for men in the most deprived areas of East Cambridgeshire than in the least deprived areas.
- 9.1% of all children and young people aged 0-18 live in low-income households.

3.5 Health

Public Health England's 'Health Profile for East Cambridgeshire' (2018) records that:

- Life expectancy at birth is slightly higher than the national averages by 2.1 years for men and 1.5 years for women.
- 11.3% of year 6 children in East Cambridgeshire are obese, compared with the national average of 20.0%.
- 58.5% of adults in the district are overweight or obese, compared with the national average of 61.3%.

3.6 Local demand for sport and physical activity

3.6.1 'Active Lives' survey

Sport England's 'Active Lives' survey measures physical activity rates amongst people aged 16 and over. The definitions used in the survey are as follows:

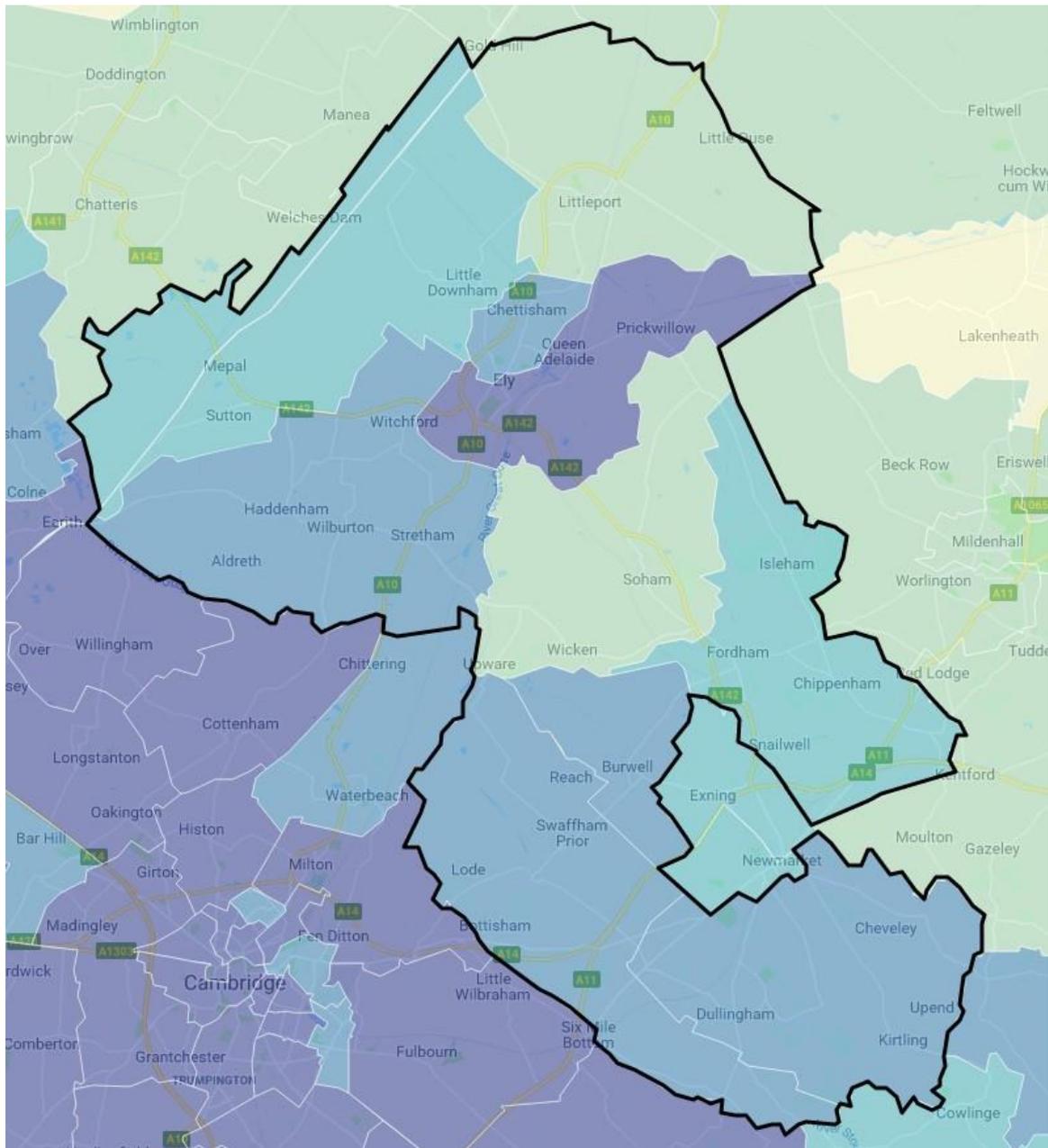
- **Sport and physical activity:** This includes at least 10-minutes of moderate or higher intensity sports activities, walking and cycling for leisure or travel, fitness and dance.
- **Active:** The 'Active' population is defined as those doing at least 150 minutes of the above activities per week.
- **Fairly active:** The 'Fairly active' population is defined as those doing between 30 and 149 minutes of the above activities per week.
- **Inactive:** The 'Inactive' population is defined as those doing 30 minutes or less of the above activities per week.

The key data for East Cambridgeshire, with county, regional and national comparators from the 2019 survey is set out below. The results showing activity levels below the county average, but above the regional and national averages:

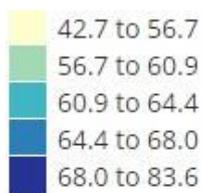
<i>Area</i>	<i>Active</i>	<i>Fairly active</i>	<i>Inactive</i>
East Cambs	63.3%	13.0%	23.7%
Cambs	64.7%	11.8%	23.5%
East	61.1%	13.3%	25.6%
England	62.6%	12.3%	25.1%

3.6.2 Geographical variations

Notwithstanding the district average figures, the 'Active Lives' survey data shows great variations at Middle Super Output Area (MSOA), with the figures for those from Ely in the 'Active' category being relatively high and those in Littleport and Soham being relatively low.



Key: Percentage of the population who are physically active for 150+ minutes per week



3.7 *The local outdoor sports facilities supply network*

Outdoor sports facilities provision in East Cambridgeshire comprises a mixed economy involving the public and voluntary sectors. The key providers are as follows:

- ***East Cambridgeshire District Council:*** The Council is a minority provider of outdoor facilities provision, with Ely Country Park the main element.
- ***Parish Councils:*** Parish councils are major providers of outdoor sports facilities in the district.
- ***Schools:*** The Village Colleges are significant pitch and outdoor sports facilities providers and most provision is community accessible.
- ***Sports clubs:*** Sports clubs provide and run a range of outdoor sports facilities, in particular tennis courts and bowling greens.

3.8 *The implications for outdoor sports facilities provision*

The implications of the local context for outdoor sports facilities provision in East Cambridgeshire are as follows:

- ***Population growth:*** The population is projected to increase by 14,400 people by 2036. This will provide additional demand for all types of sports facilities. New housing developments typically have a younger age profile, whilst the trend in the general population is towards an older age profile. The convergence of these factors suggests that the two trends may balance each other out in the district as a whole to maintain a similar age profile for the period of the strategy, although there will be variations at local level in areas where new development is prioritised (Ely, Littleport and Burwell).
- ***Local deprivation:*** Whilst the district is relatively affluent, which is traditionally associated with higher than average participation in sport and physical activity, deprivation relating to access to housing and services is relatively high. This relates in large part to geographical barriers to access in a relatively large rural area and emphasises the need to develop a wide geographical spread of facilities.
- ***Participation rates:*** General rates of participation in sport and physical activity are above the regional and national averages, which will inflate demand for facilities provision. However, the trends vary markedly within individual sports and these needs will be analysed later in this strategy in relation to specific types of facility.
- ***Geographical variations:*** Participation rates varies widely across the district, with the highest rates around Ely coinciding with the greatest concentration of good quality of sports facilities.

4 STRATEGIC INFLUENCES

4.1 Introduction

This section examines the influence of relevant policies and priorities on pitches and outdoor sports facilities provision in East Cambridgeshire, including the impact of national strategies.

4.2 East Cambridgeshire District Council's Corporate Plan

The *East Cambridgeshire Corporate Plan 2019-23* (2019) sets out the Council's overall promises and commitments:

- The Housing promises include 'seeking developer contributions for open spaces and walking and cycling infrastructure'.
- The Social and Community Infrastructure promises include 'supporting improvements to sporting and leisure facilities'.

4.3 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan

The *East Cambridgeshire Local Plan*' (2015 sets out the vision, objectives spatial strategy and policies for the future development of the district. The following elements are of relevance:

4.3.1 Spatial vision

This includes a commitment that 'communities will have improved social, recreational, health and educational facilities'.

4.3.2 Strategic objectives

These include:

- 'Support and enhance the vitality and viability of town and village centres, as places for shopping, leisure and community activities'.
- 'Ensure a high quality of life by maintaining and delivering strategic and local infrastructure and facilities needed to support local communities'.

4.3.3 Policies

The policies of relevance to pitches and outdoor sports facilities are as follows:

- **Policy COM3: Retaining Community Facilities:** The policy states that 'proposals that would lead to the loss of non-commercial community facilities (existing sites or sites last used for this purpose) will only be permitted if:
 - It can be demonstrated there is a lack of community need for the facility, and that the building or site is not needed for any alternative community use – and in the case of open space, that the site does not make an important contribution in amenity, visual or nature conservation terms; or

- Development would involve the provision of an equivalent or better replacement community facility (either on-site or in an appropriately accessible alternative location); or
- Development would involve the provision of an alternative community facility which brings demonstrable greater benefits to the settlement or neighbourhood - except in the case of open space, sports and recreational facilities which should be retained where possible in accordance with paragraph 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework’.
- ***Policy COM4: New Community Facilities:*** The policy states that ‘proposals for new or improved community facilities should be located within settlement boundaries wherever possible. In exceptional circumstances facilities may be permitted in the countryside, where there is a lack of suitable and available land within settlements, or where a rural location is required. Proposals for all new or improved community facilities should:
 - Be well located and accessible to its catchment population (including by foot and cycle).
 - Not have a significant adverse impact (itself or cumulatively) in terms of the scale or nature of traffic generated.
 - Not have a significant adverse impact on the character of the locality, or the amenity of nearby properties.
 - Demonstrate that opportunities to maximise shared use have been explored; and
 - Be designed to facilitate future adaptation for alternative community uses or shared use’.
- ***Policy COM5: Strategic green infrastructure:*** The policy states that ‘proposals which would cause loss of or harm to existing strategic green infrastructure will not be permitted, unless the need for and benefits of the development demonstrably and substantially outweigh any adverse impacts on the green infrastructure. The Council will support proposals for new and improved strategic green infrastructure where these:
 - Are consistent with the objectives of the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011).
 - Provide increased public access for quiet recreation and/or increased provision for biodiversity.
 - Do not harm the character and appearance of any existing buildings or the locality.
 - Will have no adverse effects on any existing designated sites of conservation or biological importance and impacts will be monitored to ensure the effectiveness of alternative provision away from more sensitive sites.
 - Would not (by itself or cumulatively) have a significant adverse impact in terms of the amount or nature of traffic generated.
 - Will not detract from residential amenity; and
 - Will aim to achieve Natural England’s Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) through improving accessibility, naturalness and connectivity of greenspaces, which are appropriate in scale and location to the needs of the local community.

New development will be expected to contribute towards the establishment, enhancement and ongoing management of strategic green infrastructure by contributing to the development of strategic green infrastructure network within the district’.

4.4 East Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The ‘*East Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy*’ (2015) is currently being updated and the consultation draft contains the following material of relevance:

4.4.1 Priorities

The priorities for the period 2019 to 2021 are:

- ‘Physical activity and healthy lifestyles’.
- ‘Partnership working’.

4.4.2 Vision

The vision includes a recognition that:

- ‘Open spaces are important for the health and well-being of local residents across the District’.
- ‘Providing and supporting the development of local community facilities and parks and open spaces including leisure facilities to help ensure that local people have the appropriate infrastructure to support their social well-being’.

4.4.3 Actions

The actions include the following:

- Support continuing development and improvement of leisure facilities and programmes.
- Support community sports development programmes.
- Develop targeted programme-linkages to health sector (e.g. exercise referral, weight management, falls prevention).
- Engage with key partners including schools, sports bodies, community groups and health agencies to identify development needs and opportunities.
- Support development of informal everyday activities, such as local walks groups.
- Promote and support all existing opportunities to get active.
- Promote the benefits of physical activity.

4.5 Living Sport Strategic Plan

Living Sport is the county sports partnership for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and its ‘*Strategic Plan 2017 - 2021*’ (2017) contains the following material of relevance:

4.5.1 Purpose

Living Sport's purpose is 'to inspire everyone to lead healthy lives by increasing and improving opportunities to be active and to participate in sport and physical activity'.

4.5.2 Priorities

The priorities are to increase and improve opportunities for:

- Older people's participation in sport and physical activity.
- Sport and physical activity participation by disabled people.
- Sport and physical activity amongst women and girls.
- Focused work to increase sport and physical activity participation in targeted areas of identified need.

4.6 The Government's Planning Policies

In July 2018, the Government published revisions to the 'National Planning Policy Framework' (2018), setting out its economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. Taken together, these policies articulate the Government's vision of sustainable development, which should be interpreted and applied locally to meet local aspirations. The policies of greatest relevance to pitch provision and retention are as follows:

- **Sustainable development:** 'The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' and there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- **Promoting healthy and safe communities:** 'Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:
 - Promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other - for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages.
 - Are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion - for example through the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high-quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
 - Enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs - for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.
- To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

- Plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.
- Take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.
- Guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs.
- Ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community.
- Ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services'.
- ***Open space and recreation:*** 'Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate'.
- 'Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:
 - An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements.
 - The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.
 - The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use'.

The Government also issued *Planning Practice Guidance* in 2014 to support the 2013 version of the *National Planning Policy Framework* and it remains a current document. The following is of particular relevance to outdoor sports facilities:

- ***Open space, sport and recreation provision:*** 'Open space should be taken into account in planning for new development and considering proposals that may affect existing open space. It can provide health and recreation benefits to people living and working nearby'.
 - 'Authorities and developers may refer to Sport England's guidance on how to assess the need for sports and recreation facilities'.
 - 'Local planning authorities are required to consult Sport England in certain cases where development affects the use of land as playing fields. Where there is no requirement to consult, local planning authorities are advised to consult Sport England in cases where development might lead to loss of, or loss of use for sport, of any major sports facility, the creation of a site for one or more playing pitches, artificial lighting of a major outdoor sports facility or a residential development of 300 dwellings or more'.

- **Health and well-being:** ‘Local planning authorities should ensure that health and wellbeing, and health infrastructure are considered in local and neighbourhood plans and in planning decision making’.
- ‘Development proposals should support strong, vibrant and healthy communities and help create healthy living environments which should, where possible, include making physical activity easy to do’.
- ‘Opportunities for healthy lifestyles must be considered (e.g. planning for an environment that supports people of all ages in making healthy choices, helps to promote active travel and physical activity and promotes high quality open spaces and opportunities for play, sport and recreation).

4.7 The Government’s Sports Strategy

The Government’s sports strategy ‘*Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation*’ (2015) sets the context for a national policy shift. It contains the following material of relevance to pitch provision in East Cambridgeshire:

- The Strategy seeks to ‘redefine what success looks like in sport’ by concentrating on five key outcomes: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and economic development.
- The benefit of engaging those groups that typically do little or no activity is immense. Future funding will therefore focus on those people who tend not to take part in sport, including women and girls, disabled people, those in lower socio-economic groups and older people.

4.7.1 Sport England Strategy

Sport England’s strategy ‘*Towards an Active Nation*’ (2016) contains a significant policy shift to encourage more currently inactive people to become active, with a relative move away from support for programmes aimed at existing participants. Elements of particular relevance to pitch provision in East Cambridgeshire are as follows:

- More money and resources will be focused on tackling inactivity because this is where the gains for the individual and for society are greatest.
- There will be greater investment in children and young people from the age of five to build positive attitudes to sport and activity as the foundations of an active life.
- Sport England will work with those parts of the sector that serve existing participants to help them identify ways in which they can become more sustainable and self-sufficient.

4.8 The implications for sports facilities provision

The implications of the key strategic influences on sports facilities provision in East Cambridgeshire are:

- **Local corporate priorities:** Given the increasing limitations on public finances, demonstrating the role that sports facilities can play in delivering wider agendas such as health

and wellbeing is a key requirement for attracting investment. Corporate priorities also emphatically support the value of local facilities, both as a general principle and to underpin healthy lifestyles.

- ***Planning policy:*** Whilst local and national planning policy is supportive of the retention and provision of sports facilities, the current work on the Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy will provide a methodologically robust basis for determining current and future needs. Policy COM4 in the Local Plan emphasises the general importance of healthy and safe communities and providing universally accessible opportunities to access open space and recreation provision.
- ***National sports policy shifts:*** The move in national sports policy towards prioritising new participants will create a challenge for individual sports to ensure that their ‘offer’ is sufficiently relevant and attractive to engage a wider participation base, including people who are currently inactive. Recent innovations such as walking and small-sided versions of many sports might prove more attractive than the more traditional models.

5 BOWLS NEEDS IN EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE

5.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of outdoor bowls facilities in East Cambridgeshire. Outdoor bowls greens are defined as effectively flat, fine turf grassed areas, 40 yards x 40 yards, with regulation banks and ditches around the perimeter and ancillary facilities for changing and equipment storage.

5.2 Strategic context

5.2.1 National bowls strategy

Bowls England’s strategic plan 2019 - 2023 is currently being finalised, but the following priorities emerged from consultation with members and stakeholders:

- To deliver a structure that supports bowlers, clubs and county associations.
- To develop the National Membership Register.
- To invest in member services.
- To develop stronger internal communication channels and share best practice.
- To raise the profile of the sport with external stakeholders.

5.2.2 Neighbouring local authorities

Outdoor sports facilities strategies in neighbouring districts identify cross-boundary issues:

West Suffolk District Council

The ‘*West Suffolk Playing Pitch Strategy*’ (2015) identifies that there is a strong level of supply across West Suffolk, with a large concentration of bowls clubs in Bury St Edmunds. However, it notes that membership of many clubs is in decline and that some will become unsustainable in the future.

Fenland District Council

The ‘*Fenland Playing Pitch Strategy*’ (2016) identifies that:

- In terms of provision, bowls in Fenland is well catered for with many small sized populations having good access to a bowling green of decent standard.
- Results from the consultation with the March and District League indicate that Fenland, much like the rest of the country, is facing a sharp decline in participation, is failing to attract younger players to the sport, is seeing an increase in the average age of its players and is failing to replace volunteers to run clubs and competitions.

- Clubs have identified better ancillary facilities might be a way of attracting people to their sport and keeping them there. As a result, several clubs from the area have submitted grant applications to refurbish or extend their ancillary facilities.

South Cambridgeshire District Council

The council does not have a current outdoor sports facilities strategy so there is no detailed analysis of bowls needs.

Huntingdonshire District Council

The council does not have a current outdoor sports facilities strategy so there is no detailed analysis of bowls needs.

Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk

The council does not have a current outdoor sports facilities strategy so there is no detailed analysis of bowls needs.

5.2.3 Implications of the strategic context

Bowls facilities assessments in neighbouring areas identify declining membership and spare capacity, so demand from adjacent local authorities is unlikely to impact on provision in East Cambridgeshire.

5.3 Stakeholder consultation

5.3.1 Bowls England

Consultation with Bowls England’s Operational Services Manager highlighted the following issues:

- Bowls England is currently working on a national facilities strategy.
- There are no identified facilities priorities in East Cambridgeshire.
- Haddenham BC and Isleham BC both received Lottery grants for pavilion improvements.
- The facilities at Bottisham BC, Fordham BC, Haddenham BC, Isleham BC and Littleport BC are all used for inter-county matches.
- Despite falling participation rates nationally, no bowls club in East Cambridgeshire has closed in the past ten years.
- There are clubs in the area that would like to improve their facilities, but are restricted by location as they cannot extend the current buildings, but could improve the internal layout but are unable to do so because of lack of funding.

5.3.2 Local bowls clubs

An electronic survey was circulated to all 14 clubs in East Cambridgeshire. The following clubs responded:

- Ely Beet Bowls Club.
- Isleham Bowls Club.
- Littleport Bowls Club.

The key findings were as follows:

- **Membership trends:** Isleham BC and Littleport BC have increased their respective memberships over the past five years, whilst Ely Beet BC has remained static.
- **Waiting list:** None of the clubs has a waiting list.
- **Displaced demand:** 96% of Isleham BC members, 90% of Littleport BC members and 100% of Ely Beet BC members live in East Cambridgeshire, so there is little evidence of displaced demand.
- **Ely Beet BC:** The club commented that a lack of funding and a shortage of volunteers are both currently problematic for it.
- **Littleport BC:** The club commented that ‘we would like to further expand/modernise our pavilion building/kitchen area. There is limited space for car parking’.

5.4 Quantity

The location of bowls greens with community use in East Cambridgeshire is as follows:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>
Bottisham Bowls Club	Downing Close, Bottisham CB25 9DD
Burwell Bowls Club	The Causeway, Burwell CB25 0DU
Chippenham Bowls Club	Chippenham Park, Chippenham CB7 5PR
City of Ely Bowls Club	Nutholt Lane, Ely CB7 4PL
Ely Beet Bowls Club	Lynn Road, Ely CB6 1DD
Fordham Bowls Club	Recreation Ground, Carter Street, Fordham CB7 5NG
Haddenham Bowls Club	Church Lane, Haddenham, CB6 3TB
Hiams Bowls Club	Putney Hill Road, Prickwillow CB7 4UU
Isleham Bowls Club	Vicarage Meadow, Jubilee Close, Isleham CB7 5RW
Littleport Bowls Club	Hempfield Place, Littleport CB6 1NP
Mitchell Lodge Bowls Club	Quarry Lane, Swaffham Bulbeck CB25 0LU
Soham Town Bowls Club	Fountains Lane, Soham CB7 5ED
Stretham Bowls Club	Short Road, Stretham CB6 3LS
Sutton British Legion BC	The Brook, Sutton CB6 2QQ

5.5 Quality

5.5.1 The criteria assessed for outdoor bowls greens

The quality of bowls greens was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities during the playing season. The criteria that were assessed were as follows:

- **The green:** The quality of the grass, flatness and regulation ditches.
- **Changing facilities:** The capacity, condition and fitness for purpose.
- **Disability access:** The extent of full disabled access to the facility, including the provision of access ramps, dedicated changing, toilets and car parking.
- **General access:** Parking, signage and proximity to public transport.

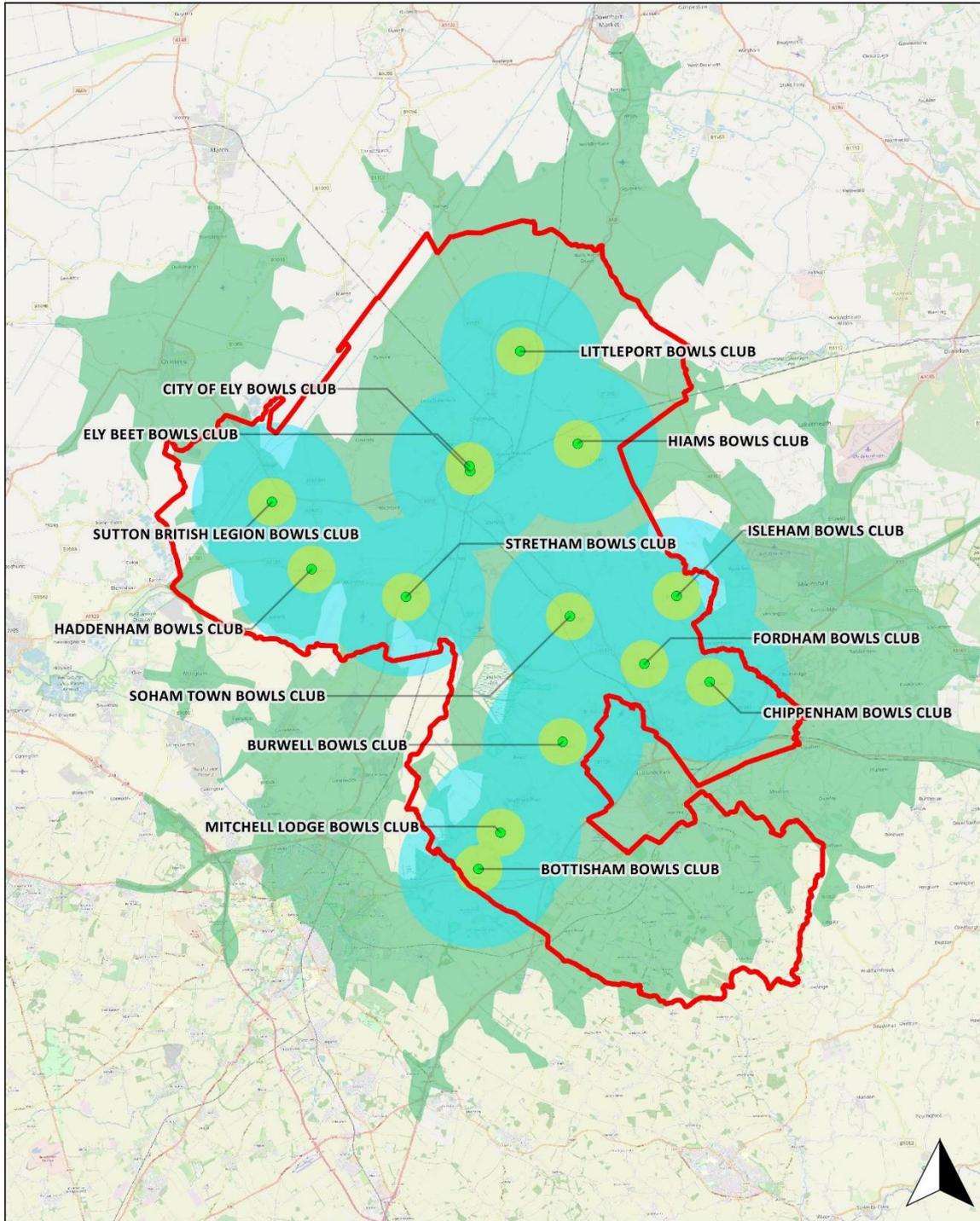
5.5.2 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to ‘very good’ (highlighted in green below), 4 to ‘good’ (also highlighted in green below), 3 to ‘average’ (highlighted in yellow below), 2 to ‘poor’ (highlighted in red below) and 1 to ‘very poor’. The ratings for the outdoor bowls greens in East Cambridgeshire are shown in the table below.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>Changing</i>	<i>Disability Access</i>	<i>General access</i>
Bottisham Bowls Club	5	5	5	5
Burwell Bowls Club	3	3	2	4
Chippenham Bowls Club	5	4	3	4
City of Ely Bowls Club	5	5	5	5
Ely Beet Bowls Club	5	5	5	5
Fordham Bowls Club	5	5	5	5
Haddenham Bowls Club	5	5	4	3
Hiams Bowls Club	4	4	4	4
Isleham Bowls Club	5	5	4	4
Littleport Bowls Club	5	3	4	3
Mitchell Lodge Bowls Club	5	4	4	4
Soham Town Bowls Club	5	4	2	2
Stretham Bowls Club	5	4	4	4
Sutton British Legion Bowls Club	5	5	4	4

5.6 Accessibility

Based on Sport England research, the ‘effective catchment’ for bowls greens (defined as the time/distance travelled and the prevailing mode of transport used by up to 90% of facility users) is 15 minutes driving time. The map overleaf shows that apart from some sparsely populated areas around the margins of the district, the whole population of East Cambridgeshire is within 15 minutes driving time of at least one bowling green.



	East Cambridgeshire	● Bowls Greens	 15 min drive time
	BOWLS GREENS	 15 min walk time	 East Cambridgeshire boundary
		 15 min cycle time	

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5.7 Availability

The table below identifies the basis of use of bowls greens in East Cambridgeshire:

<i>Club</i>	<i>Basis of use</i>
Bottisham Bowls Club	Membership only
Burwell Bowls Club	Membership only
Chippenham Bowls Club	Membership only
City of Ely Bowls Club	Membership only Introductory sessions for non-members
Ely Beet Bowls Club	Membership only
Fordham Bowls Club	Membership only
Haddenham Bowls Club	Membership only
Hiams Bowls Club	Membership only
Isleham Bowls Club	Membership only
Littleport Bowls Club	Membership only
Mitchell Lodge Bowls Club	Membership only
Soham Town Bowls Club	Membership only
Stretham Bowls Club	Membership only Introductory sessions for non-members
Sutton British Legion BC	Membership only

5.8 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are 14 bowls greens in East Cambridgeshire.
- The quality of facilities is generally good, but disabled access is rated as ‘poor’ at two sites.
- The whole population is within 15-minutes’ drive of the nearest outdoor bowls green.
- All facilities operate on a membership basis, although two clubs run introductory coaching sessions to attract new members.

5.9 Current demand for bowls facilities

5.9.1 Expressed demand

- **National demand:** Two separate national surveys have both identified the same trend:
 - **‘Active People’ survey:** Sport England’s survey recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for bowls at national level on an annual basis between 2005 and 2016. The results indicate that participation declined significantly over the period, with the number of regular (at least once a week) players falling by more than 98,000, from

309,800 in 2005 to 211,900 in 2016. This represents reductions of around 4% per annum.

- **'Active Lives' survey:** The survey superseded 'Active People' in 2016 and measured at national level the percentage of the adult population who played bowls at least twice in the preceding month. This showed statistically significant reductions from 0.8% in 2016 to 0.7 in 2018.
- **Local demand:** Whilst bowls participation has been in long-term decline at national level, the position in East Cambridgeshire is more positive, with no clubs folding over the past ten years, despite some reductions in membership numbers. All local clubs have significant spare capacity.

5.9.2 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to users of bowls greens from within the study area which takes place outside of the area. 98% of local bowls club members live in East Cambridgeshire, so there is little evidence of imported demand. A limited amount of demand is exported to clubs in Newmarket, although the *'West Suffolk Playing Pitch Strategy'* (2015) identifies that there is 'a strong level of supply' in the area.

5.9.3 Unmet demand

Clubs in the district have indicated that they can accommodate new users/members, so facility capacity is not an issue. The whole district population is within the catchment of at least one outdoor green, so there is no unmet geographical demand.

5.10 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in East Cambridgeshire, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. As an activity appealing primarily to older age groups, bowls is likely to have some appeal to new and lapsed sports participants in an expanding proportion of the local population.

5.11 Future demand for bowls

5.11.1 Population growth

East Cambridgeshire District Council's planners are currently basing population projections on the ONS mid-2014 estimates, which indicate that there will be 104,000 residents in the district by 2036. This represents a 16.1% increase (an additional 14,400 people) from the mid-2018 population estimate. The *'East Cambridgeshire Growth Study'* (2017), recognises the need for 11,400 new homes in the district by 2036, equivalent to 570 additional dwellings per annum.

5.11.2 Participation rates

One factor in considering future sports participation rates is to track historical trends, as a guide to possible future developments. National participation in bowls has declined significantly over the past decade, with the number of regular (at least once a week) players falling by more than 98,000, from 309,800 in 2005 to 211,900 in 2016, although the rate of decline locally has been more limited.

5.12 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Expressed demand for bowls in East Cambridgeshire has fallen in the past decade, but at an estimated rate of around 2% per annum, compared with the national reduction of around 4% per annum.
- Population growth of 16.1% in the district by 2036 is likely to increase the potential number of bowlers, although this needs to be set in the context of the likelihood of continued falls in participation rates in the sport in the future.

5.13 The balance between bowls supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between bowls green supply and demand in East Cambridgeshire:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough greens with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the greens fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the greens in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the greens available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

5.14 Quantity

5.14.1 Current needs

Current bowls facilities in East Cambridgeshire are assessed to be at operating with significant spare capacity, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used capacity:** Local clubs have indicated that there is significant spare capacity.
- **Satisfied demand:** There is no evidence of unmet demand in the district.
- **Changes in supply:** There are no known current planned changes to bowls green supply.

5.14.2 Future needs

Spare capacity at the existing bowls facilities will be able to accommodate all additional future demand, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Demand increases:** The district's population is projected to increase by 14,400 by 2036. This will represent an increase of 16.1% over the 2014 mid-year estimate figure.
- **Participation trends:** Local bowls participation rates have been projected to continue to fall at around the current rate of 2% per annum until 2036 (an overall 30% decline from the current levels by the end of the period).

- ***Additional outdoor bowls needs:*** With a projected net loss in the number of bowlers, there is no need for additional provision to be made and it is possible that some clubs may become unsustainable in the period to 2036.

5.15 Quality

5.15.1 Current quality

Most aspects of the bowls facilities are rated as at least ‘average’, with the exception of disabled access at two sites and general access at one site.

5.15.2 Future quality

Unless there is a reduction in the number of clubs due to falling demand, all providers will need to continue to invest in maintaining and improving their facilities.

5.16 Accessibility

5.16.1 Current accessibility

All of the population is within 15-minutes’ drive of the nearest bowls green.

5.16.2 Future accessibility

If some clubs close due to falling demand, geographical accessibility to bowls clubs may reduce in the period to 2036.

5.17 Availability

5.17.1 Current availability

Usage arrangements are overwhelmingly through club membership, although limited sessions for non-members are run at two bowls clubs in the district. Club membership fees are however generally set at reasonable rates and clubs have available capacity to accommodate additional members.

5.17.2 Future availability

There is no indication at present that prevailing usage arrangements will change. Given the downward trends in participation levels however, it would be reasonable for any support for bowls facility enhancements (such as developer contributions or grants) to be conditional upon substantive initiatives to develop the participation base.

5.18 The options for securing bowls capacity

The options for securing bowls capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

5.18.1 Protect

Protecting existing bowls facilities through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, unless the loss of a facility:

- Would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.
- Is the result of falling demand and a robust assessment demonstrates that the facility will not be required to meet the future needs of bowls or other sport and physical activity.

5.18.2 Provide

With spare capacity at existing greens there will be no need to provide additional facilities.

5.18.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing bowls facilities by:

- Ensuring that the greens and ancillary facilities receive regular maintenance and improvements, funded by developer contributions where appropriate.
- Strengthening the user base, for example by making the provision of access for non-members a condition of any developer contribution funding offered towards bowls facilities improvements.
- Improving disabled access at those facilities where it is currently rated as below ‘average’ quality.

5.19 Action Plan

5.19.1 Introduction

The tables below set out the action plan for bowls greens to guide the implementation of the strategy. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England’s *Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2019* (2019).

5.19.2 Key strategic actions

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Protection of existing bowls greens.	Include a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing bowls greens.	ECDC	-	-	High
Falling participation rates.	Encourage initiatives amongst clubs to increase their member base.	Bowls England	Clubs	-	High
Funding for future bowls greens' needs.	Ensure that S106 contributions are collected from developers, with associated provisions to broaden the participation base.	ECDC	Developers	-	High

5.19.3 Site-specific actions

<i>Site</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Bottisham Bowls Club	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Burwell Bowls Club	'Poor' quality disabled access	Improve access to clubhouse and green	Burwell BC	-	£5,000	Medium
Chippenham Bowls Club	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
City of Ely Bowls Club	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Ely Beet Bowls Club	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Fordham Bowls Club	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Haddenham Bowls Club	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Hiams Bowls Club	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Isleham Bowls Club	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Littleport Bowls Club	Need to modernise clubhouse and catering facilities	Internal improvements to clubhouse and kitchen re-fit.	Littleport BC	-	£20,000	Medium
Mitchell Lodge Bowls Club	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Soham Town Bowls Club	'Poor' quality disabled and general access	Improve access to clubhouse and green	Soham Town BC	-	£5,000	Medium
Stretham Bowls Club	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Sutton British Legion BC	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-

6 TENNIS NEEDS IN EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE

6.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of tennis courts in East Cambridgeshire. Tennis courts are defined as specialist outdoor facilities with appropriate playing surface, line markings and nets for tennis. In addition, multi-use games areas (MUGAs) that include marked tennis courts and are used for playing tennis are noted separately.

6.2 Strategic context

6.2.1 National tennis strategy

The Lawn Tennis Association's strategic plan 2019 - 2023 'Tennis for Britain' (2019) contains the following priorities of relevance to East Cambridgeshire:

Vision:

Tennis opened up - tennis is for everyone. All ages, all backgrounds, all levels of fitness. Anyone can pick up a racket, anyone can be part of the tennis family.

Mission:

To grow tennis by making it more relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable.

Priorities:

- ***Visibility:*** Broaden relevance and increase visibility of tennis all year round to build engagement and participation with fans and players.
- ***Innovation:*** Innovate in the delivery of tennis to widen its appeal.
- ***Investment:*** Support community facilities and schools to increase the opportunities to play.
- ***Accessibility:*** Make the customer journey to playing tennis easier and more accessible for anyone.
- ***Engagement:*** Engage and collaborate with everyone involved in delivering tennis in Britain, particularly coaches and volunteers, to attract and maintain more people in the game.
- ***Performance:*** Create a pathway for British champions that nurtures a diverse team of players, people and leaders.
- ***Leadership:*** Lead tennis in Britain to the highest standard so it is a safe, welcoming, well-run sport.

6.2.2 Neighbouring local authorities

Outdoor sports facilities strategies in neighbouring districts identify cross-boundary issues:

West Suffolk District Council

The 'West Suffolk Playing Pitch Strategy' (2015) identifies that:

- There is a relatively poor level of provision with only 29 courts across the two local authorities. This ensures a low (unfavourable) ratio of courts to residents, compared with neighbouring authorities.
- There is poor accessibility to tennis courts in West Suffolk, especially in Forest Heath where there are only two clubs available across the entire local authority. A strength of the tennis provision is the amount of pay per play or casual provision, which ties in with the LTA's objective of creating facilities with low barriers to entry and high flexibility.
- West Suffolk could consider the benefits of investing in the upgrading or reinstatement of tennis courts at local parks.

South Cambridgeshire District Council

The council does not have a current outdoor sports facilities strategy so there is no detailed analysis of tennis needs.

Huntingdonshire District Council

The council does not have a current outdoor sports facilities strategy so there is no detailed analysis of tennis needs.

Fenland District Council

The 'Fenland Playing Pitch Strategy' (2016) identifies that:

- There is a relatively good level of provision with 37 courts across the study area. This ensures a good ratio of courts to residents, compared with neighbouring authorities.
- There is adequate access to facilities. This is especially the case for those participants who are prepared to pay memberships or pay and play at leisure centre courts.
- There is a short fall in free to use tennis courts. This could create a case to the LTA to invest in development initiatives around the main market towns to help increase the number of easily accessing facilities and reduce the barriers to entry of existing sites.

Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk

The council does not have a current outdoor sports facilities strategy so there is no detailed analysis of tennis needs.

6.2.3 Implications of the strategic context

Tennis is embarking on an ambitious effort to attract new and lapsed participants and its programmes will be supported by strategic initiatives at county and local level to implement its strategy. Tennis facilities provision in the two neighbouring areas that have undertaken assessments

show contrasting positions in terms of court availability. Newmarket Tennis Club is close enough to East Cambridgeshire to offer some playing opportunities to residents.

6.3 Stakeholder consultation

6.3.1 Lawn Tennis Association

Consultation with the Lawn Tennis Association highlighted the following issues:

- ‘The LTA’s vision for tennis which has recently been introduced following a major consultative process. The vision is ‘Tennis Opened Up’ and the mission is to grow tennis by making it more relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable. Strategic initiatives at county and national level aim to support this’.
- ‘The only registered ‘Places to Play Tennis’ in East Cambridgeshire are the Soham, Ely and Burwell Tennis Clubs’.
- ‘The LTA a good relationship with Ely Tennis Club and feels that it could be developed to become a district hub. It has a dynamic committee, space to expand and a growing population within a 5-mile radius. Our experience is that a hub club is vital to provide a focus for tennis and to provide support for other clubs/players throughout winter. The LTA would be very supportive of initiatives here’.
- ‘Cambridgeshire as a whole lacks clubs of more than 4 courts and there is a need to develop hub clubs of sufficient size to support floodlit courts, coaches and other facilities such as a gym, cafe etc. Such clubs can then support the smaller surrounding rural clubs - especially during the winter when they can offer access to floodlit courts or even indoor facilities’.
- ‘Whilst the LTA maintains a dialogue with Ely TC and has some small-scale funding available to support both revenue and capital projects, the club has not come forward with any concrete plans at present. The LTA does not ignore smaller village clubs but these often prove less sustainable and very dependent on the dynamism of their committees’.
- ‘The LTA nationally does have funding for facilities development but it is in the form of interest free loans, not grants. It also favours development (particularly of indoor courts) in areas of high population density - well beyond that of anywhere in East Cambridgeshire. Tennis Cambridgeshire offers a service to clubs to assist them in obtaining third party grants. Ely TC has made use of this in the past’.
- ‘At national and county level there is a genuine desire to get more people playing tennis more often and to rid the game of any remaining elitist associations. Many clubs are open to pay and play - not just membership - and many also offer different forms of tennis adapted for those with disabilities’.
- ‘Our view would be that tennis in East Cambs would greatly benefit from the further development of Ely Tennis Club and that should be the focus of attention. My plan for Ely would be to:
 - Ensure all existing surfaces and surrounds are of good playing standard.

- Floodlighting to all courts.
- Provide more courts if demand from the actions above show membership/play and play growth.
 - Consider other options including padel tennis and possibly some indoor facility’.
- ‘This can largely be driven by the club committee and county LTA but any local government support of any kind would be greatly appreciated. This may be in terms of planning, land availability etc. rather than funding which we appreciate is challenging in the current financial climate’.
- ‘Ely becoming a “hub” club for the area will help the game and provides a winter venue for more serious players’.
- ‘Our experience elsewhere in the county of clubs based in schools or using MUGAs has not generally been successful in growing the game or (in most cases) sustaining membership’.
- ‘Along with other old-established sports, tennis must work hard to grow the game. I think the strategy advanced by LTA centrally of ‘Tennis Opened Up’ is sound. Having a local centre of excellence open to all is vital to this’.
- ‘We have found that new courts provided randomly in amongst new housing developments do not work well. Far better to put in a MUGA there and to invest some \$106 money in enhancing the facilities at an existing tennis venue that can then provide more tennis support in terms of coaching, social facilities etc. This can be linked in with a requirement to offer pay and play to the local community’.
- ‘A huge amount of work connected to the vision “tennis opened up” is being undertaken currently which could enhance the accessibility of certain venues in E Cambs. The LTA is very active in helping park courts and clubs to make available spare court time. A free App called Rally can point to venues (clubs and parks) which have free court time. This can be linked to booking systems, payment portals and gate opening systems’.

6.3.2 Local tennis clubs

An electronic survey was circulated to the three clubs and one tennis academy in East Cambridgeshire that are affiliated to the LTA. In the absence of any response from Ely Tennis Club, the largest in the district, the conclusions are necessarily qualified. Soham Tennis Club and the 10is Academy responded and the key findings were as follows:

- **Membership trends:** Membership at adult and junior level has decreased at Soham TC over the past five years, but numbers have increased in the veterans age group. The 10is Academy has increased its membership over the same period.
- **Waiting list:** The Academy has a waiting list, which it attributes to a lack of court capacity. Soham TC has no waiting list.
- **Displaced demand:** 100% of Soham TC’s membership is drawn from East Cambridgeshire. 75% of the Academy’s members live in the district, so there is some evidence of displaced demand. It is also reasonable to assume that some demand is exported to Newmarket Tennis Club, but no data is available to verify that assumption.

- **Soham TC:** The Club stated that ‘finding new members is the main challenge. Membership has been broadly static in the 20s for years with long-standing existing members (who are getting older!’.
- **10is Academy:** The Academy stated that ‘there are plenty of tennis courts around (mainly at the village colleges) but they are not great to create a club (child protection and limited court space during daytime). The main deterrent though is the price charged by the schools. It either puts the price of the lessons far too high or stops us growing. I am looking for a piece of land to create my own club, a club that is for families. I am ready to invest but finding land with planning permission is a nightmare’.

6.4 Quantity

6.4.1 Specialist tennis courts

The location and number of specialist tennis courts with community use in East Cambridgeshire is as follows:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Courts</i>
Burwell Village College	Buntings Path, Burwell CB25 0DD	3 tarmac
Chippenham Park courts	Parkside, Chippenham CB7 5PR	2 tarmac
Ely Beet Sports Club	Lynn Road, Ely CB6 1DD	1 tarmac
Ely Tennis Club	Ely Outdoor Sports Assoc., Downham Rd., Ely CB6 2SH	2 tarmac (1 floodlit) 2 artificial grass (floodlit)
Kings School	Barton Road, Ely CB7 4DB	5 tarmac
Littleport Leisure Centre	Camel Road, Littleport CB6 1EW	3 tarmac
Lode Tennis Club	High Street, Lode CB25 9EN	1 tarmac
Reach tennis court	Burwell Road, Reach CB25 0JD	1 tarmac
Soham Tennis Club	Soham Village College, Sand Street, Soham CB7 5AA	4 tarmac (2 floodlit)
Witchford Village College	Manor Road, Witchford CB6 2JA	5 tarmac

6.4.2 MUGAs used for tennis

In addition to the specialist tennis courts above, the following multi-use games areas are used for tennis in East Cambridgeshire is as follows:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Floodlit</i>
Bottisham Village College	Lode Road, Bottisham CB25 9DL	Artificial turf	65m x 40m	Yes
Brooklands Pavilion	The Brook, Sutton CB6 2QQ	Tarmac	40m x 20m	No
Burwell Recreation Ground	Hythe Lane, Burwell CB25 0EZ	Tarmac	40m x 40m	Yes
Burwell Sports Centre	Buntings Path, Burwell CB25 0DD	Artificial turf	40m x 30m	Yes
Coveney MUGA	School Lane, Coveney CB6 2DB	Tarmac	40m x 20m	No
Fordham Recn. Ground	Carter Street, Fordham CB7 5NG	Artificial turf	40m x 40m	Yes
Haddenham Recn. Ground	Hop Row, Haddenham CB6 3SR	Artificial turf	40m x 20m	Yes
Isleham Recreation Ground	Mill Street, Isleham CB7 5RY	Artificial turf	33m x 30m	Yes
Little Downham Recn. Grd.	School Lane, Little Downham CB6 2SY	Artificial turf	40m x 40m	Yes
Little Thetford Recn. Grd.	The Wytches, Little Thetford CB6 3HG	Tarmac	40m x 20m	Yes
Ross Peers Sports Centre	College Close, Soham CB7 5HP	Artificial turf	30m x 20m	Yes
Stretham Recreation Ground	Short Road, Stretham CB6 3LS	Artificial turf	40m x 30m	Yes
The Ellesmere Centre	Ley Road, Stetchworth CB8 9TS	Artificial turf	40m x 40m	Yes
Wicken Recreation Ground	Chapel Lane, Wicken CB7 5XZ	Tarmac	40m x 20m	No

6.5 Quality

6.5.1 The criteria assessed for outdoor courts

The quality of tennis courts was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were assessed were as follows:

- **The court:** Court surface, line markings and fitness for purpose.
- **Fencing:** Condition and appearance.
- **Disability access:** Provision for disabled access to the courts.
- **General access:** Parking, signage and proximity to public transport.
- **Lighting:** The quality, illumination levels and evenness of floodlights.

6.5.2 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to ‘very good’ (highlighted in green below), 4 to ‘good’ (also highlighted in green below), 3 to ‘average’ (highlighted in yellow below), 2 to ‘poor’ (highlighted in red below) and 1 to ‘very poor’ (also highlighted in red below).

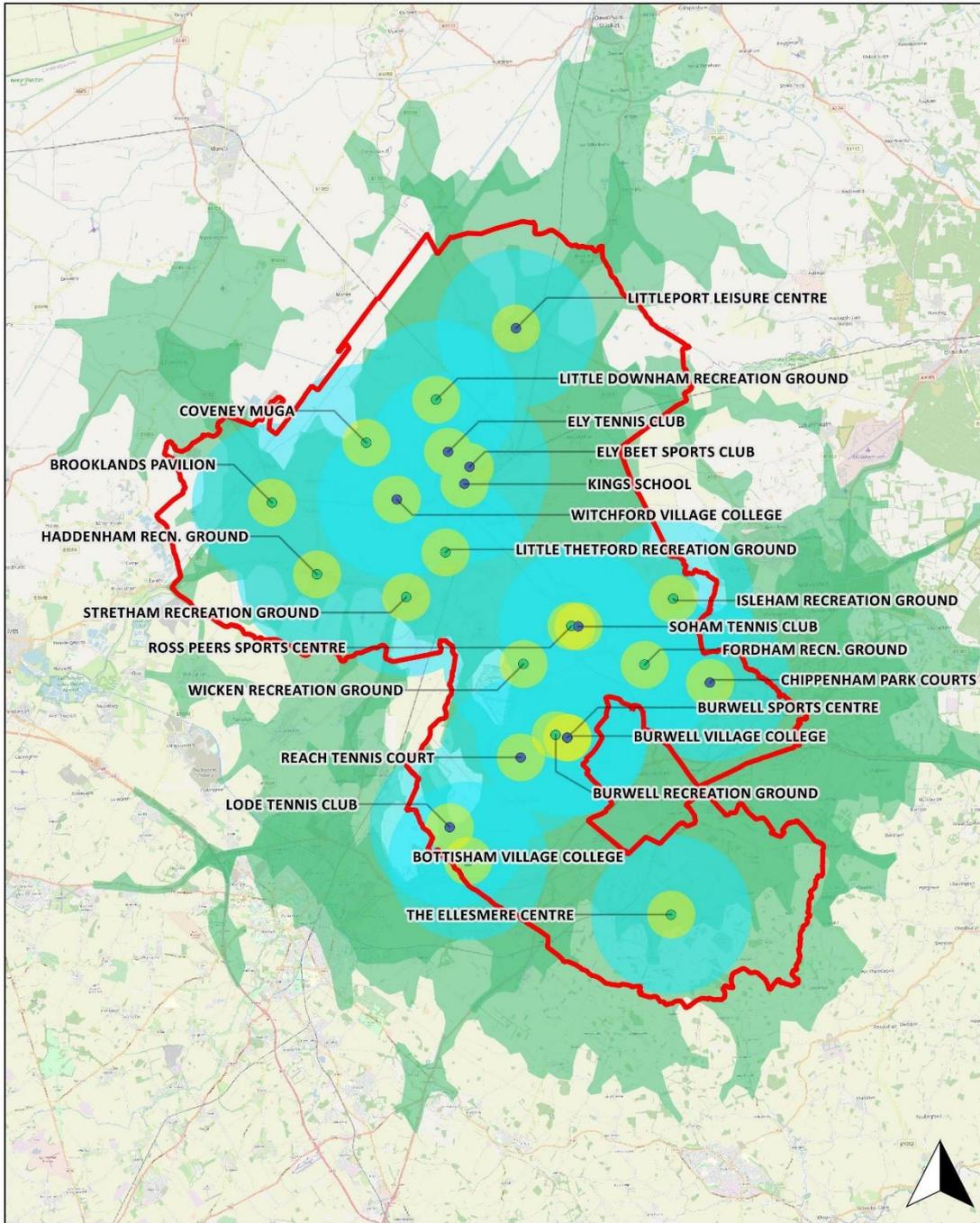
6.5.3 Tennis court assessment

The ratings for tennis courts in East Cambridgeshire are shown in the table below.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Court</i>	<i>Fencing</i>	<i>Disability Access</i>	<i>General access</i>	<i>Lighting</i>
Burwell Village College	4	4	4	4	-
Chippenham Park courts	5	5	3	3	-
Ely Beet Sports Club	4	4	3	4	-
Ely Tennis Club	5	5	4	4	5
Kings School, Ely	4	4	4	3	-
Littleport Leisure Centre	5	5	4	4	5
Lode Tennis Club	4	4	2	2	-
Reach tennis court	4	3	3	3	-
Soham Tennis Club	5	5	5	4	5
Witchford Village College	4	4	4	4	5

6.6 Accessibility

Based on Sport England research, the ‘effective catchment’ for tennis courts is 15 minutes driving time. The map below shows that apart from some sparsely populated areas around the margins of the district, the whole population of East Cambridgeshire is within 15 minutes driving time of at least one tennis court and/or MUGA marked for tennis:





East Cambridgeshire

Tennis Courts

- Tennis Courts
- Tennis MUGAs
- 15 min walk time
- 15 min cycle time
- 15 min drive time
- East Cambridgeshire boundary

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6.7 Availability

The table below identifies the basis of use and cost of tennis court usage in East Cambridgeshire:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Basis of use</i>
Burwell Village College	£5 per court per hour casual hire (£6 with lights)	'Pay-and-play'
Chippenham Park courts	Club use £30 per year membership Free	Membership Casual use
Ely Beet Sports Club	Club use only £38 per year membership	Membership only
Ely Tennis Club	£130 per year adult membership £40 per year junior membership £10 per court per hour casual hire	Membership 'Pay-and-play'
Kings School, Ely	£4,000 per annum club lease	Club use only
Littleport Leisure Centre	£10 per court per hour casual hire	'Pay-and-play'
Lode Tennis Club	£20 per year adult membership £7.50 per year junior membership	Membership
Reach tennis court	Free to residents	Casual use
Soham Tennis Club	£75 per year adult membership £20 per year junior membership	Membership
Witchford Village College	£10 per court per hour casual hire	'Pay-and-play'

The table below shows the basis of use and cost of MUGAs marked for tennis in the district:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Basis of use</i>
Bottisham Village College	£8.10 per hour casual hire	'Pay-and-play'
Brooklands Pavilion	Free	Casual use
Burwell Recreation Ground	£5 per hour casual hire (£6 with lights)	'Pay-and-play'
Burwell Village College	£5 per hour casual hire (£6 with lights)	'Pay-and-play'
Coveney MUGA	Free	Casual use
Fordham Recreation Ground	Free	Casual use
Haddenham Recreation Ground	£5 per hour casual hire	'Pay-and-play'
Isleham Recreation Ground	£5 per hour casual hire	'Pay-and-play'

Little Downham Recreation Ground	£4 per hour casual hire (£5 with lights)	'Pay-and-play'
Little Thetford Recreation Ground	Free	Casual use
Ross Peers Sports Centre	£10 per hour casual hire	'Pay-and-play'
Stretham Recreation Ground	£10 per hour casual hire	'Pay-and-play'
The Ellesmere Centre	£8 per court per hour casual hire	'Pay-and-play'
Wicken Recreation Ground	Free	Casual use

6.8 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are 29 tennis courts with community access in East Cambridgeshire, plus a further 13 courts marked on multi-use games areas in the district.
- The quality of all courts is at least 'above average' although the disabled access and general access is rated as 'poor' at Lode Tennis Club.
- The whole population of the district is within the catchment of a tennis court.
- Whilst courts are well-distributed across the district, organisational infrastructure for coaching and development is limited to one or two sites.
- 'Pay-and-play' or unrestricted access is available at 23 (79.3%) of the tennis courts.
- Only five of the 29 courts in the district are floodlit (17.2%), which restricts play in the winter months.

6.9 Current demand for tennis courts

6.9.1 Expressed demand

- **National demand:** Two separate national surveys have both identified the same trend:
 - **'Active People' survey:** Sport England's 'Active People' survey recorded adult (16+) weekly participation rates for tennis at national level on an annual basis since 2005. The results show that participation has declined significantly, with the number of regular (at least once a week) players falling by more than 59,000, from 457,200 in 2005 to 398,100 in 2016.
 - **'Active Lives' survey:** The survey superseded 'Active People' in 2016 and measured at national level the percentage of the adult population who played tennis at least twice in the preceding month. This showed statistically significant reductions from 2.0% of the population in 2016 to 1.7 in 2018.
- **Local demand:** At local level, tennis demand has been broadly stable in recent times, but all clubs have spare capacity to accommodate new members.

6.9.2 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to users of tennis courts from within the study area which takes place outside of the area. There is some evidence of limited imported demand for the 10is Academy, but most usage is more localised and involves East Cambridgeshire residents only. It is reasonable to assume that some demand is exported to Newmarket Tennis Club by virtue of its location, although no data is available to verify this assumption.

6.9.3 Unmet demand

There is no evidence of unmet demand in the district.

6.10 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in East Cambridgeshire, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. As an activity appealing to both genders and most age groups, tennis is likely to have some appeal to new and lapsed sports participants.

6.11 Future demand for tennis courts

6.11.1 Population growth

East Cambridgeshire District Council's planners are currently basing population projections on the ONS mid-2014 estimates, which indicate that there will be 104,000 residents in the district by 2036. This represents a 16.1% increase (an additional 14,400 people) from the mid-2018 population estimate. The *'East Cambridgeshire Growth Study'* (2017), recognises the need for 11,400 new homes in the district by 2036, equivalent to 570 additional dwellings per annum.

6.11.2 Participation rates

One factor in considering future sports participation rates is to track historical trends, as a guide to possible future developments. Nationally, tennis participation has declined significantly over the past decade, with the number of regular (at least once a week) players falling around 0.8% per annum. Locally, demand has been stable.

6.12 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Contrary to national trends, demand for tennis courts in East Cambridgeshire is stable.
- Population growth of 16.1% in the district by 2036 is likely to increase the potential number of tennis players, although this needs to be set in the context of the likelihood of continued falls in participation rates in the sport in the future.

6.13 The balance between tennis court supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between tennis court supply and demand in East Cambridgeshire:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough courts with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?

- **Quality:** Are the courts fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the courts in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the courts available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

6.14 Quantity

6.14.1 Current needs

Current tennis courts in East Cambridgeshire are assessed to be at operating with significant spare capacity, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used capacity:** All local providers have indicated that there is significant spare capacity at most courts.
- **Satisfied demand:** There is limited evidence of unmet demand in the district.
- **Changes in supply:** There are no known planned changes to tennis court supply.

6.14.2 Future needs

Spare capacity at the existing tennis courts should be able to accommodate all additional future demand, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Demand increases:** The district's population is projected to increase by 14,400 by 2036. This will represent an increase of 16.1% over the 2014 mid-year estimate figure.
- **Participation trends:** Local tennis participation rates have been projected to remain static until 2036.

6.15 Quality

6.15.1 Current quality

The quality of outdoor courts is generally at least 'average' although the disability and general access are 'poor' at Lode tennis court.

6.15.2 Future quality

All court providers will need to continue to invest in maintaining and improving their facilities, so if this process can be assisted with funding from developer contributions in the future, it seems reasonable to assume that local provision will continue to be upgraded regularly.

6.16 Accessibility

6.16.1 Current accessibility

All of the population is within 10-minutes' drive of the nearest tennis court.

6.16.2 Future accessibility

Providing locally accessible outdoor tennis courts within Multi-use Games Areas, as part of the housing developments would be consistent with meeting health and well-being objectives in the new developments.

6.17 Availability

6.17.1 Current availability

'Pay-and-play' or unrestricted tennis is available at 26 (81.3%) of the existing courts.

6.17.2 Future availability

It is reasonable to assume that a similar balance of access arrangements will be offered in the future and if developer contribution funding is offered to enhance the facilities at club sites, it could be conditional on the provision of 'pay-and-play' access.

6.18 The options for securing additional tennis court capacity

The options for securing existing and additional tennis court capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

6.18.1 Protect

Protecting existing tennis courts through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

6.18.2 Provide

With spare capacity at outdoor courts, all additional demand can be accommodated by current spare capacity, although there is a case for enhancing quality issues at existing sites with funding from developer contributions.

6.18.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing tennis court capacity by:

- Addressing the disabled access issues at the two sites where this is rated as 'poor'.
- Ensuring that the courts and ancillary facilities receive regular maintenance and improvements, funded by developer contributions where appropriate.
- Considering the addition of floodlights at appropriate sites, particularly in conjunction with netball developments at shared use sites.
- Supporting the 'Tennis Opened Up' initiative, including the 'Rally' booking app and related court access systems.

6.19 Action Plan

6.19.1 Introduction

The tables below set out the action plan for tennis courts to guide the implementation of the strategy. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England's 'Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2019' (2019).

6.19.2 Key strategic actions

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Protection of existing tennis courts.	Include a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing tennis courts.	ECDC	-	-	High
Funding for future tennis court needs.	Ensure that S106 contributions are collected from developers.	ECDC	Developers	-	High

6.19.3 Site-specific actions

<i>Site</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Burwell Village College	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Chippenham Park courts	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Ely Beet Sports Club	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Ely Tennis Club	Based upon Cambs LTA aspirations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish as a 'Hub Club' • Floodlighting to all courts • Additional courts as demand increases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LTA to pursue dialogue with Ely TC • Provide extra floodlighting • Review the need for extra courts 	LTA	Ely TC	£15,000 for floodlights £80,000 for 2 extra courts	High
Kings School	No secured access	Negotiate a Community Use Agreement	ECDC	Kings School	-	Medium
Littleport Leisure Centre	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Lode Tennis Club	Poor disability and general access	Provide a tarmac path from the access point	Lode PC	-	£5,000	Medium
Reach tennis court	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Soham Tennis Club	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Witchford Village College	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-

7 NETBALL NEEDS IN EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE

7.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of netball courts in East Cambridgeshire. Netball courts are defined as specialist outdoor facilities with appropriate playing surface, line markings and posts for netball. The game is also played indoors in sports halls (although dimensions of 34.5m x 20m are required to accommodate a netball court and only The Hive sports hall complies with this. In all instances in the district, outdoor netball courts double as tennis courts and/or multi-use games areas (MUGAs), so demand from other sports also impacts upon the availability for netball.

7.2 Strategic context

7.2.1 National strategy

England Netball's strategic goals are as follows:

England Netball remains committed to its 10-1-1 mission and vision to

- Establish netball as a top ten participation sport.
- Make netball the first choice of team sport for women and girls.
- Achieve and maintain world number one status.

Its strategic goals are to:

- Grow participation by at least 10,000 participants per annum.
- Deliver a first-class member and participant experience.
- Establish England as the number one team by winning the World Championships.
- Lead an effective and progressive infrastructure.

7.2.2 Neighbouring local authorities

Outdoor sports facilities strategies in neighbouring districts identify cross-boundary issues:

West Suffolk District Council

The '*West Suffolk Playing Pitch Strategy*' (2015) identifies that:

- There is insufficient supply of both indoor and outdoor netball courts across West Suffolk. All regional matches are played in Ipswich due to the lack of high-quality supply.
- The main issue with quality is the lack of floodlights, which means leagues cannot utilise outdoor courts during the winter, therefore increasing the demand for indoor facilities.

- There is not currently a central venue in West Suffolk and there are minimal indoor courts across Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury.

South Cambridgeshire District Council

The council does not have a current outdoor sports facilities strategy so there is no detailed analysis of netball needs.

Huntingdonshire District Council

The council does not have a current outdoor sports facilities strategy so there is no detailed analysis of netball needs.

Fenland District Council

The 'Fenland Playing Pitch Strategy' (2016) does not include an assessment of netball needs.

Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk

The council does not have a current outdoor sports facilities strategy so there is no detailed analysis of netball needs.

7.2.3 Implications of the strategic context

Most neighbouring areas have not assessed netball needs, but the one that has (West Suffolk) has identified some significant deficiencies.

7.3 Stakeholder consultation

7.3.1 England Netball

Consultation with England Netball's Netball Development Officer for Cambridgeshire highlighted the following issues:

- 'Bee Netball' is aimed at 5 to 11 year olds as an introduction to the sport, although there are no local opportunities in the East region whilst the scheme is piloted.
- Traditional 7-A-Side Netball Is played by over 180,000 women every week. All age ranges and levels of ability are catered for with traditional netball - from primary school children, to people playing in local leagues, plus returning players through to regional or premier league right up to elite international athletes - anyone can play the game at the level that suits them.
- 'Back to Netball' is aimed at lapsed participants and provides a gentle reintroduction to the sport. Courses in East Cambridgeshire are based at Witchford Village College and Littleport Leisure.
- Walking Netball has evolved from a growing demand for walking sports. Often, one of netball's strengths is that people never forget playing the sport and the memories as well as the love for the game never leave. Walking Netball is a slower version of the game - it is netball, but at a walking pace. The game has been designed so that anyone can play it regardless of age or fitness level. Sessions in East Cambridgeshire are run at Ely College and Littleport Leisure Centre.

- Most competitive matches are played at central venues. There are no such facilities in East Cambridgeshire, with the county leagues based at Impington Village College, Milton Community Centre and Thomas Clarkson Academy in Wisbech.

7.3.2 Local netball clubs

A meeting was held with local netball clubs in May 2018 to discuss local facilities issues in the Ely area, which identified a shortage of suitable outdoor courts, indoor courts are either undersized or not marked for netball and matches have to be played outside the district.

- Witchford Village College has three floodlit outdoor courts and one indoor court, although the latter is not a full-sized court (27m x 18m). Netball clubs suggested expanding the current courts to up to four outdoor courts with floodlights, giving the College the opportunity to offer a netball hub (the potential would then exist for clubs to expand and weekly leagues could be run from the site).
- The Hive has a sports hall with suitable dimensions for netball, but no court markings. There are no outdoor courts at the site.
- The Paradise Centre has a 33m x 18m sports hall, which is too small to accommodate a full-sized netball court and no outdoor courts at the site.

An electronic survey was circulated to the netball clubs in East Cambridgeshire that are affiliated to England Netball. The following clubs responded:

- Ely Netball Club.
 - ‘We have increased membership so more players attend training sessions and cannot filter into the five teams we already have due to being full. We can only field five teams in the local Cambs District Netball Team for matches due to their capacity. We do not turn any player away from training and ideally a bigger facility would be wonderful?’.
 - ‘Competitive matches are played at Impington, Milton or Netherhall through Cambs District Netball League (who currently have no facility at Impington College due to repairs). Ely Netball club members have to travel to/from matches on a weekly basis’.
 - ‘Indoor netball courts could be an asset in Ely. There is only one provided, at Paradise Sports Centre - which we use for our Walking Netball sessions. The Hive has a lovely indoor court but no provision for netball. It would be great to see the Ely Outdoor Sports Assoc. incorporate netball under their umbrella, but I believe space is a limiting factor. Netball has seen a national increase in people taking up the sport with plenty more opportunities through the success of the World Cup held in Liverpool in July 2019, the pending Commonwealth Games in 2022 (as we won Gold in 2018) - the interest is there. It would be good to be able to expand our club to more juniors but we hold off due to not being able to field them through to competitive competitions due to limitations on where and how many matches can be played’.
- Haddenham Netball Club
 - ‘Haddenham Netball Club has 25 members, of which 18 play regularly in the winter league the remaining members play friendlies, mid-week matches and attend training’.

- 'We use the MUGA, which we use for training once a week and we play mid-week matches and friendlies on there too. We play league matches away due to lack of facilities'.

7.4 Quantity

7.4.1 Netball courts

The location and number of netball courts with community use in East Cambridgeshire and used by clubs is as follows:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Courts</i>
Ely College	Downham Rd., Ely CB6 2SH	2 tarmac
Haddenham Recreation Ground	Hop Row, Haddenham CB6 3SR	1 artificial turf
Littleport Leisure Centre	Camel Road, Littleport CB6 1EW	2 tarmac
Soham Village College	Sand Street, Soham CB7 5AA	5 tarmac
Witchford Village College	Manor Road, Witchford CB6 2JA	3 tarmac

7.4.2 MUGAs marked for netball

In addition to the netball courts that are currently used by clubs in the district above, the following multi-use games areas are also marked for netball:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Floodlit</i>
Bottisham Village College	Lode Road, Bottisham CB25 9DL	Artificial turf	65m x 40m	Yes
Brooklands Pavilion	The Brook, Sutton CB6 2QQ	Tarmac	40m x 20m	No
Burwell Recreation Ground	Hythe Lane, Burwell CB25 0EZ	Tarmac	40m x 20m	Yes
Burwell Sports Centre	Buntings Path, Burwell CB25 0DD	Artificial turf	40m x 30m	Yes
Coveney MUGA	School Lane, Coveney CB6 2DB	Tarmac	40m x 20m	No
Fordham Recreation Ground	Carter Street, Fordham CB7 5NG	Artificial turf	40m x 40m	Yes
Haddenham Recn. Ground	Hop Row, Haddenham CB6 3SR	Artificial turf	40m x 20m	Yes

Isleham Ground	Recreation	Mill Street, Isleham CB7 5RY	Artificial turf	33m x 30m	Yes
Little Downham Grd.	Recn.	School Lane, Little Downham CB2 2SY	Artificial turf	40m x 40m	Yes
Little Thetford Grd.	Recn.	The Wytches, Little Thetford CB6 3HG	Tarmac	40m x 20m	Yes
Ross Peers Sports Centre		College Close, Soham CB7 5HP	Artificial turf	30m x 20m	Yes
Stretham Ground	Recreation	Short Road, Stretham CB6 3LS	Artificial turf	40m x 30m	Yes
The Ellesmere Centre		Ley Road, Stetchworth CB8 9TS	Artificial turf	40m x 40m	Yes
Wicken Ground	Recreation	Chapel Lane, Wicken CB7 5XZ	Tarmac	40m x 20m	No

7.5 Quality

7.5.1 The criteria assessed for netball courts

The quality of netball courts was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were assessed were as follows:

- **The court:** Court surface, line markings and fitness for purpose.
- **Fencing:** Condition and appearance.
- **Disability access:** Provision for disabled access to the courts.
- **General access:** Parking, signage and proximity to public transport.
- **Lighting:** The quality, illumination levels and evenness of floodlights.

7.5.2 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to ‘very good’ (highlighted in green below), 4 to ‘good’ (also highlighted in green below), 3 to ‘average’ (highlighted in yellow below), 2 to ‘poor’ (highlighted in red below) and 1 to ‘very poor’ (also highlighted in red below).

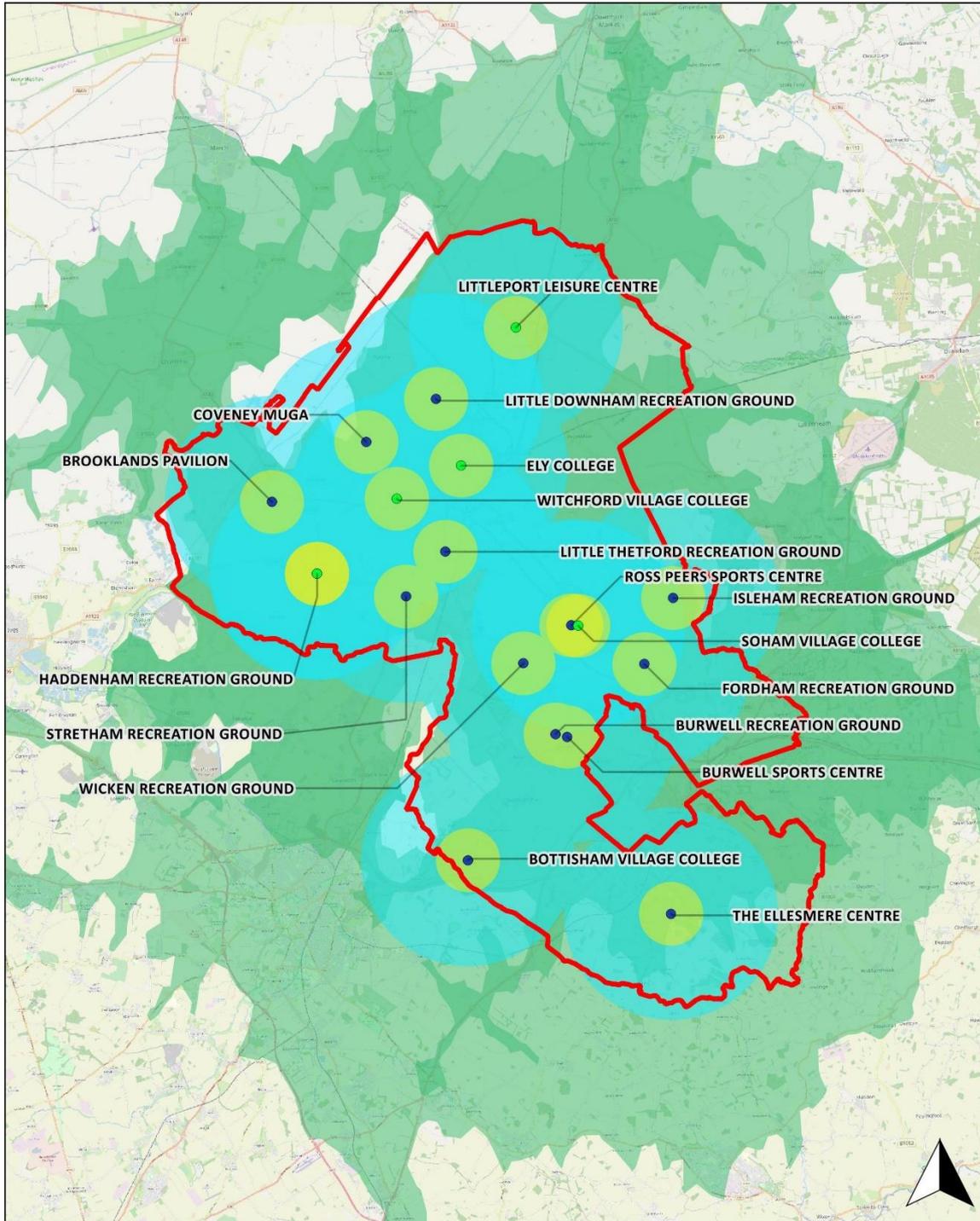
7.5.3 Netball court assessment

The ratings for netball courts used by clubs in East Cambridgeshire are shown in the table below.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Court</i>	<i>Fencing</i>	<i>Disability Access</i>	<i>General access</i>	<i>Lighting</i>
Ely College	4	4	4	4	4
Haddenham Recreation Ground	5	4	4	4	4
Littleport Leisure Centre	5	5	4	4	5
Soham Village College	5	5	5	4	5
Witchford Village College	4	4	4	4	5

7.6 Accessibility

The ‘effective catchment’ for netball courts is 20 minutes driving time. The map below shows that the whole population of the district is within the catchment of at least one court.



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7.7 Availability

The table below identifies the basis of use and cost of netball court usage in East Cambridgeshire:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Ely College	£10 per hour
Haddenham Recreation Ground	£5 per hour
Littleport Leisure Centre	£10 per hour
Soham Village College	£8 per hour
Witchford Village College	£10 per hour

7.8 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are 13 netball courts that are currently used by local clubs in East Cambridgeshire. In addition, there are a further 19 courts marked on multi-use games areas.
- There are no sites with the four floodlit outdoor courts that are required to host a central venue league, so all clubs in the district currently play matches at sites outside East Cambridgeshire.
- Only one sports hall in the district (at The Hive) has dimensions suitable for indoor netball and the facility is not marked with a netball court.
- The quality of all outdoor courts is ‘above average’ or better.
- The whole population of the district is within the catchment of a netball court.
- 10 of the 13 the courts in the district are floodlit, which facilitates play in the winter months.

7.9 Current demand for netball courts

7.9.1 Expressed demand

- **National demand:** Sport England's ‘Active Lives’ survey identified that more than 286,000 people played netball at least twice in the preceding 28 days. The survey revealed that 180,200 people aged 16 and over, took to the court at least once a week, an increase of 25,400 (16.4%) on the same period the previous year and a rise of 68,500 (61.3%) since 2006. England Netball 103,000 members of the governing body for the 2016-17 season, a 3.42% increase in members on the previous year. ‘Back to Netball’ schemes have seen more than 60,000 people return to the sport since their introduction in 2009

.Local demand: Current netball clubs in East Cambridgeshire and the courts where they train are as follows. Courts outside the district are shown in italics:

<i>Club</i>	<i>Courts</i>
Burwell Netball Club	<i>Newmarket Leisure Centre</i>
City of Ely Netball Club	Witchford Village College
Ely Netball Club	Ely College Witchford Village College
Haddenham Netball Club	Haddenham MUGA
Little Thetford Netball Club	Little Thetford Recreation Ground
Littleport Falcons Netball Club	Littleport Leisure Centre
Stretham Netball Club	Soham Village College

7.9.2 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to users of netball courts from within the study area which takes place outside of the area. There is some evidence of exported demand:

- All clubs play league matches at central venue sites outside East Cambridgeshire (Impington, Milton and Wisbech).
- Burwell Netball Club trains at courts at Newmarket Leisure Centre.

7.9.3 Unmet demand

The City of Ely Netball Club has a waiting list for its junior section. Other clubs also cite the lack of available court capacity as limiting the potential to attract additional members.

7.10 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in East Cambridgeshire, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. As a sport with versions of the game appealing to most age groups, netball is likely to have some appeal to new and lapsed sports participants.

7.11 Future demand for netball courts

7.11.1 Population growth

East Cambridgeshire District Council's planners are currently basing population projections on the ONS mid-2014 estimates, which indicate that there will be 104,000 residents in the district by 2036. This represents a 16.1% increase (an additional 14,400 people) from the mid-2018 population

estimate. The 'East Cambridgeshire Growth Study' (2017), recognises the need for 11,400 new homes in the district by 2036, equivalent to 570 additional dwellings per annum.

7.11.2 Participation rates

One factor in considering future sports participation rates is to track historical trends, as a guide to possible future developments. Netball participation has increased significantly over the past decade, with the number of regular (at least once a week) players rising by 68,500, from 111,700 in 2005 to 180,200 in 2016. This represents a 61% increase (or just over 5% per annum).

7.11.3 Future projections

Given the recent growth in participation and continued netball development initiatives, it would be reasonable to assume further growth in demand to 2036. In addition, population growth of 16.1% will further increase demand for netball court capacity.

7.12 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Demand for netball nationally has been increasing at more than 5% per annum for the past decade.
- Population growth of 16.1% in East Cambridgeshire by 2036 will further increase demand for netball court capacity.

7.13 The balance between netball court supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between netball court supply and demand in East Cambridgeshire:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough courts with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the courts fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the courts in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the courts available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

7.14 Quantity

7.14.1 Current needs

Current netball courts in East Cambridgeshire are assessed not to be meeting current needs, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used capacity:** Whilst all local courts have some spare capacity, many also double as tennis courts and/or multi-use games areas so demand from other sports has to be accommodated.

- **Satisfied demand:** There is substantial evidence of unmet demand in the district, with no site capable of hosting a central venue league.
- **Changes in supply:** There are no known planned changes to netball court supply.

7.14.2 Future needs

Spare capacity at the existing netball courts should be able to accommodate all additional future demand, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Demand increases:** The district's population is projected to increase by 14,400 by 2036. This will represent an increase of 16.1% over the 2014 mid-year estimate figure.
- **Participation trends:** Based on national trends, local netball participation rates have been projected to increase by 6% per annum until 2036.

7.15 Quality

7.15.1 Current quality

The quality of outdoor courts is generally 'above average'.

7.15.2 Future quality

All court providers will need to continue to invest in maintaining and improving their facilities, so if this process can be assisted with funding from developer contributions in the future, it seems reasonable to assume that local provision will continue to be upgraded regularly.

7.16 Accessibility

7.16.1 Current accessibility

All of the population is within 20-minutes' drive from the nearest netball court.

7.16.2 Future accessibility

Providing locally accessible netball courts as part of the housing developments would be consistent with meeting health and well-being objectives in the new developments.

7.17 Availability

7.17.1 Current availability

All existing courts are available for hire at reasonable rates.

7.17.2 Future availability

It is reasonable to assume that similar access arrangements will be offered in the future.

7.18 The options for securing additional netball court capacity

The options for securing existing and additional netball court capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

7.18.1 Protect

Protecting existing netball courts through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

7.18.2 Provide

Providing a four-court facility with floodlights would allow a central venue league to be hosted within the district and also create additional training capacity.

7.18.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing netball court capacity by:

- Ensuring that the courts and ancillary facilities receive regular maintenance and improvements, funded by developer contributions where appropriate.
- Considering the addition of floodlights at appropriate sites, particularly in conjunction with tennis developments at shared use sites.

7.19 Action Plan

7.19.1 Introduction

The tables below set out the action plan for netball courts to guide the implementation of the strategy. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England's *Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2019*' (2019).

7.19.2 Key strategic actions

Issues	Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Priority
Protection of existing netball courts.	Include a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing netball courts.	ECDC	-	-	High
Funding for future netball court needs.	Ensure that S106 contributions are collected from developers.	ECDC	Developers	-	High
Need for a floodlit 4-court central league venue	Add one floodlit court at Witchford Village College	Witchford VC	ECDC	£155,000	High

7.19.3 Site-specific actions

<i>Site</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Ely College	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Haddenham Recreation Ground	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Littleport Leisure Centre	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Soham Village College	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
The Hive	No netball court marked in the sports hall at The Hive	Mark netball court in sports hall	Better	ECDC	£1,000	High
Witchford Village College	Develop extra court capacity to host a central venue league	Add one floodlit court	Witchford VC	ECDC	£155,000	High

8 ATHLETICS NEEDS IN EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE

8.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of athletics facilities in East Cambridgeshire.

- Athletics tracks are defined as 400m synthetic surfaced tracks with full field events provision.
- Athletics training facilities comprise either Club Training Venues or Compact Athletics Facilities, both of which are flexible in terms of the precise composition of facilities.

8.2 Strategic context

8.2.1 National strategy

England Athletics' *Facilities Strategy 2018 - 2025* contains the following material of relevance:

The strategic ambition is 'to create an innovative and inspiring network of sustainable athletics facilities, with the capacity to meet both current and future demand across England'.

England Athletics has adopted UK Athletics' Hierarchy of Facilities. This includes **Compact Athletics Facilities** - 'a new generation of affordable and sustainable satellite athletics facilities that provide a stepping-stone into Club Venues'.

- England Athletics is aware that athletics facilities have traditionally been built to a very rigid design (a 400m oval with 6-8 lanes with a natural turf infield). With the challenges faced by public sector bodies, a key driver of this strategy is to 'break the mould' and give clubs, operators and investors the ability to innovate and develop a new generation of athletics facilities that are both inspiring and viable. Not all clubs/athletes need a 400m oval track. The fundamentals of run, jump, throw can be taught on scaled down facilities that are much more appropriate and attractive for beginners/younger users and cost much less to build and maintain'.
- 'England Athletics has adopted UKA's strategic position to concentrate on preserving and improving the existing stock of 400m tracks rather than seeking to build additional ones. However, there are areas in the country where journey time to the nearest full-size outdoor track is greater than ideal and there are places where good coaching has created significant demand despite the lack of a local athletics facility. The Compact Athletics concept is intended to fill this gap, providing training facilities in places where there is insufficient demand, funding or land to accommodate a full-size track. A Compact Athletics facility can take a number of forms, but essentially provides a strip of synthetic track plus some capacity for jumps and throws, enabling core athletic skills to be taught, enjoyed and developed. It can then be linked into a wider network of athletics facilities using a 'hub and spoke' approach'.
- 'Priority will be given to developing compact athletics facilities at locations where there is proven demand, a base of athletics participation and a partnership that enables the facility to be maintained, managed and financially secure. It may, for example, be a useful, first stage enabling development for clubs that do not have access to a facility or for those seeking to establish a base for the sport in a town or community that is presently not served by a standard synthetic athletics track. Suitable locations might include primary/ secondary schools to complement existing sport/play provision. As additions to existing sports and leisure facilities. Aligned to tracks developed for seasonal running, such as grass marked

routes at secondary schools. Compact facilities will mainly develop athletes up to the age of 16, so ideal locations will have a high under 16 population within 20 minutes’.

8.2.2 Neighbouring local authorities

Outdoor sports facilities strategies in neighbouring districts identify cross-boundary issues:

West Suffolk District Council

The ‘*West Suffolk Playing Pitch Strategy*’ (2015) identifies that:

- There are two athletics tracks in West Suffolk, one of which is available to the public.
- The West Suffolk arena track [in Bury St. Edmunds] is seen as a high-quality facility, which is suitable for all levels of amateur athletics.
- No latent demand has been identified as part of the assessment. The recommendation is therefore to maintain the current levels of supply.

South Cambridgeshire District Council

The council does not have a current outdoor sports facilities strategy so there is no detailed analysis of athletics needs.

Huntingdonshire District Council

The council does not have a current outdoor sports facilities strategy so there is no detailed analysis of athletics needs.

Fenland District Council

The ‘*Fenland Playing Pitch Strategy*’ (2016) does not include an assessment of athletics needs.

Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk

The council does not have a current outdoor sports facilities strategy so there is no detailed analysis of athletics needs.

8.2.3 Implications of the strategic context

- The England Athletics Facilities Strategy identifies Compact Athletics Facilities as an alternative to full-sized tracks in areas like East Cambridgeshire with no provision at present.
- Most neighbouring areas have not assessed athletics needs, but the one that has (West Suffolk) has identified that existing provision meets local needs.

8.3 Stakeholder consultation

Consultation with England Athletics’ Club Support Manager for Cambridgeshire highlighted the following issues:

- ‘England Athletics has no specific facilities priorities for East Cambridgeshire’.
- ‘Ely Runners are keen to identify a long-term training facility, to provide grass track facilities with toilets, changing facilities and floodlighting, to allow a permanent training base all year round’.

8.4 Demand

There are two local running clubs in East Cambridgeshire:

8.4.1 Ely Runners

- Ely Runners was formed in 1985 and has over 300 members. The club has Community Amateur Sports Club status.
- The club trains from the Paradise Sports Centre in Ely on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, and Sunday mornings. The evening sessions have varied daylight and dark programmes with options according to ability. They attract a typical attendance of 30-50 members.
- The club has a wide membership from Juniors to over 70 years of age. About a third are ladies. The club current activities are cross-country, trail running, road running, fell running, track racing, and race walking. Whilst the club caters for runners of all abilities, it has achieved many successes in national, regional, open, championship, relay and league events.

8.4.2 Village Runners Ely

- Village Runners provides training opportunities for runners in Wilburton, Stretham, Haddenham and Ely.
- Activities are based at Stretham School, Wilburton Cricket Pavilion and Ely Country Park.

In addition, weekly 5km Parkruns are organised in Littleport and (from November 2019) Soham.

8.5 Supply

8.5.1 Athletics tracks

There are no athletics tracks in East Cambridgeshire, the closest facilities are as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Address</i>
West Suffolk Athletics Arena	Beeton's Way, Bury St. Edmunds IP33 3TT
St. Ives Leisure Centre	Westwood Road, St. Ives PE27 6WU
Cambridge University Track	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge CB3 0EQ
Lynnsport	Greenpark Avenue, King's Lynn PE30 2NB

8.5.2 Compact Athletics Facilities

There are no Compact Athletics facilities in East Cambridgeshire or adjoining areas.

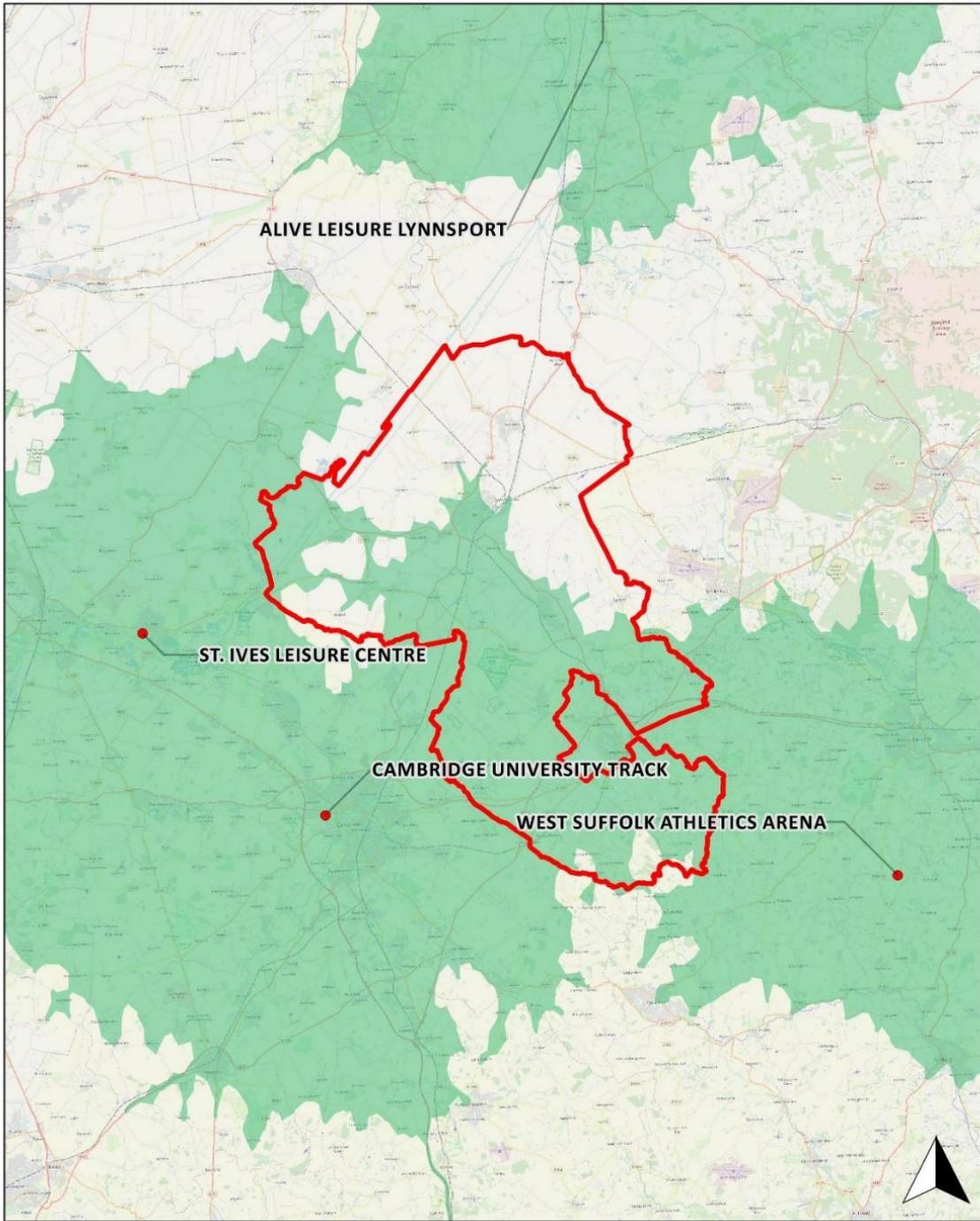
8.6 Quality

One measure of track quality is the standard of events accommodated. UK Athletics certifies tracks on this basis. Level 1 tracks can host local open meetings and leagues, whilst Level 2 tracks host area and county leagues and championship events. Tracks in adjoining areas rate as follows:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Track certification</i>
West Suffolk Athletics Arena	Level 2
St. Ives Leisure Centre	Level 1
Cambridge University Track	Level 2
Lynnsport	Ungraded (no pole vault)

8.7 Accessibility

The ‘effective catchment’ for athletics tracks is 30 minutes driving time. The map below shows that the whole of the northern part of the district, including north Ely and Littleport, are outside the catchment of the nearest track:




East Cambridgeshire
Athletics Tracks

- Athletics Tracks
- 30 min drive time
- East Cambridgeshire boundary

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8.8 Availability

The table below identifies the basis of use and cost of athletics track usage at the closest facilities:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Cost</i>
West Suffolk Athletics Arena	£4.70 (adult) £3.70 (junior)
St. Ives Leisure Centre	£5.00 (adult) £3.50 (junior)
Cambridge University Track	£15 per month Track Pass
Lynnsport	£5.10 (adult) £3.60 (junior)

8.9 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are no athletics tracks or Compact Athletics Facilities in East Cambridgeshire, but there are four tracks in adjacent areas.
- The quality of all tracks in adjacent areas is variable, with St. Ives and Lynnsport certified only to accommodate local scale competitions.
- The whole of the northern part of the district, including north Ely and Littleport, are outside the catchment of the nearest track.
- The pricing levels at tracks in neighbouring areas are reasonable for most potential users.

8.10 Current demand for athletics facilities

8.10.1 Expressed demand

- **National demand:** Two separate national surveys have identified variable findings:
 - **England Athletics' 'Strategic Plan' (2017):** The plan states that 1,000,000 people were active in track and field in 2017 (at least once a month).
 - **'Active Lives' survey:** Sport England's survey measures at national level the percentage of the adult population who participated in track and field athletics at least twice in the preceding month. This showed statistically significant reductions from 0.6% of the population in 2016 to 0.5 (equivalent to 211,600 people) in 2018.
- **Local demand:** There is some local demand for track and field facilities.

8.10.2 Displaced demand

Any residents of East Cambridgeshire wanting to compete in track and field athletics currently have to do so at tracks outside the district.

8.10.3 Unmet demand

In the absence of any specialist facilities in the district, there is unmet demand for track and field facilities in East Cambridgeshire.

8.11 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in East Cambridgeshire, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. Whilst track and field athletics is a specialist sport, given the wide appeal of running and the availability of programmes such as ‘Couch to 5k’, there is some potential to attract new and lapsed participants to the sport.

8.12 Future demand for athletics facilities

8.12.1 Population growth

East Cambridgeshire District Council’s planners are currently basing population projections on the ONS mid-2014 estimates, which indicate that there will be 104,000 residents in the district by 2036. This represents a 16.1% increase (an additional 14,400 people) from the mid-2018 population estimate. The ‘*East Cambridgeshire Growth Study*’ (2017), recognises the need for 11,400 new homes in the district by 2036, equivalent to 570 additional dwellings per annum.

8.12.2 Participation rates

One factor in considering future sports participation rates is to track historical trends, as a guide to possible future developments. Sport England’s ‘*Active Lives*’ survey showed statistically significant reductions from 0.6% of the adult population in 2016 to 0.5 (equivalent to 211,600 people) in 2018. However, this excludes under 16s, many of whom experience the sport in some form through PE programmes at school.

8.12.3 Future projections

Given the current slightly downward participation trend it would be reasonable to assume no increase in demand rated until 2036. However, population growth of 16.1% will further increase demand for athletics and provision.

8.13 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- Sport England’s ‘*Active Lives*’ survey showed statistically significant reductions from 0.6% of the adult population in 2016 to 0.5 (equivalent to 211,600 people) in 2018.
- Population growth of 16.1% in East Cambridgeshire by 2036 will increase demand for athletics provision by a similar amount.

8.14 The balance between athletics facilities supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between athletics facilities supply and demand in East Cambridgeshire:

- **Quantity:** Is there enough provision with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Is the provision fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Is provision in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?

- **Availability:** Are the facilities available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

8.15 Quantity

8.15.1 Current needs

There is some evidence of a shortfall in current provision for track and field activities, based upon the following evaluation:

- **No current athletics facilities:** With no athletics tracks or Compact Athletics Facilities in East Cambridgeshire, there are no local opportunities for those who want to participate in track and field activities.
- **Unmet demand:** Ely Runners have indicated an aspiration to develop track and field activities, based upon their perceptions of local demand.

8.15.2 Future needs

Unless some provision is made to meet current needs, existing shortfalls in track and field provision will be further exacerbated in the future, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Demand increases:** The district's population is projected to increase by 14,400 by 2036. This will represent an increase of 16.1% over the 2014 mid-year estimate figure.
- **Participation trends:** Given the current slightly downward participation trend it would be reasonable to assume no increase in demand rated until 2036.

8.16 Quality

8.16.1 Current quality

The quality of all tracks in adjacent areas is variable, with St. Ives and Lynnsport certified only to accommodate local scale competitions.

8.16.2 Future quality

Tracks require periodic re-surfacing and therefore preserving the quality of provision in neighbouring areas will be dependent on on-going investment in the facilities.

8.17 Accessibility

8.17.1 Current accessibility

The whole of the northern part of the district, including north Ely and Littleport, are outside the catchment of the nearest track. This suggests a current accessibility deficiency.

8.17.2 Future accessibility

Unless some form of facility provision is made to meet local track and field needs, the accessibility deficiency will remain in the future.

8.18 Availability

8.18.1 Current availability

The user charges at athletics tracks in neighbouring areas are all set at reasonable rates.

8.18.2 Future availability

It is reasonable to assume that similar access arrangements will be offered in the future.

8.19 The options for securing additional athletics facilities capacity

The options for securing existing and additional athletics facilities provision to meet current and future needs are as follows:

8.19.1 Protect

There are no formal track and field facilities to protect at present.

8.19.2 Provide

Consideration should be given to providing a Compact Athletics Facility in the district, to address track and field needs.

8.19.3 Enhance

There are no formal track and field facilities to enhance at present.

8.20 Action Plan

The table below sets out the action plan for athletics facilities to guide the implementation of the strategy.

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Lack of specialist athletics facilities in the district at present	Investigate the feasibility of providing a Compact Athletics Facility at a location in Ely	ECDC	England Athletics	£10,000 for feasibility study	High

9 MULTI-USE GAMES AREA NEEDS IN EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE

9.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision of Multi-use Games Areas (MUGAs) in East Cambridgeshire. MUGAs are defined as outdoor facilities with all-weather playing surface, markings for a range of sports including basketball, five-a-side football, netball and tennis and full perimeter fencing. Some facilities are also floodlit.

9.2 Stakeholder consultation

Parish Councils are the principal providers of MUGAs and the parish councils' survey identified the following:

- **Soham Parish Council:** The Council noted that 'we have closed our MUGA due to continual vandalism. The area was also under-used and largely ignored by the community. It did nothing but cost Soham vast amounts of money to keep repairing it for no gain'.
- **Ashley Parish Council:** The Council noted that 'the population doesn't seem to support a full-sized team sport, despite having a large and flat playing field. Other than the play area, we have no facilities for small groups of young/teenage children to play informal sport on, other than a small goal post made from scaffolding poles. Ashley as a village would benefit from a multi-use all weather facility for use by children, teens and adults i.e. football/tennis'.

9.3 Quantity

The location of MUGAs in East Cambridgeshire is as follows:

<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Floodlit</i>
Bottisham Village College	Lode Road, Bottisham CB25 9DL	Artificial turf	65m x 40m	Yes
Brooklands Pavilion	The Brook, Sutton CB6 2QQ	Tarmac	40m x 20m	No
Burwell Recreation Ground	Hythe Lane, Burwell CB25 0EZ	Tarmac	40m x 40m	Yes
Burwell Sports Centre	Buntings Path, Burwell CB25 0DD	Artificial turf	40m x 30m	Yes
Coveney MUGA	School Lane, Coveney CB6 2DB	Tarmac	40m x 20m	No
Ely Beet Sports Club	Lynn Road, Ely CB6 1DD	Tarmac	40m x 20m	No

Ely Community Centre	High Barns, Ely CB7 4SB	Tarmac	15m x 10m	No
Ely St. John's Road Recn. Grd.	St. John's Road, Ely CB6 3SG	Tarmac	25m x 15m	No
Fordham Recn. Ground	Carter Street, Fordham CB7 5NG	Artificial turf	40m x 40m	Yes
Haddenham Recn. Ground	Hop Row, Haddenham CB6 3SR	Artificial turf	40m x 20m	Yes
Isleham Recreation Ground	Mill Street, Isleham CB7 5RY	Artificial turf	33m x 30m	Yes
Little Downham Recn. Grd.	School Lane, Little Downham CB2 2SY	Artificial turf	40m x 40m	Yes
Little Thetford Recn. Grd.	The Wytches, Little Thetford CB6 3HG	Tarmac	40m x 20m	Yes
Littleport Leisure Centre	Camel Road, Littleport CB6 1EW	Tarmac	40m x 40m	Yes
Ross Peers Sports Centre	College Close, Soham CB7 5HP	Artificial turf	30m x 20m	Yes
Stretham Recreation Ground	Short Road, Stretham CB6 3LS	Artificial turf	40m x 30m	Yes
The Ellesmere Centre	Ley Road, Stetchworth CB8 9TS	Artificial turf	40m x 40m	Yes
Wicken Recreation Ground	Chapel Lane, Wicken CB7 5XZ	Tarmac	40m x 20m	Yes

9.4 Quality

9.4.1 The criteria assessed for MUGAs

The quality of MUGAs was assessed by a non-technical visual inspection during a site visit to all facilities. The criteria that were assessed were as follows:

- **The court:** Court surface, line markings and fitness for purpose.
- **Fencing:** Condition and appearance.
- **Disability access:** Provision for disabled access to the courts.
- **General access:** Parking, signage and proximity to the community served.
- **Lighting:** The quality, illumination levels and evenness of floodlights.

9.4.2 The basis of the ratings

The facilities were rated on a five-point scale, where 5 equates to ‘very good’ (highlighted in green below), 4 to ‘good’ (also highlighted in green below), 3 to ‘average’ (highlighted in yellow below), 2 to ‘poor’ (highlighted in red below) and 1 to ‘very poor’ (also highlighted in red below).

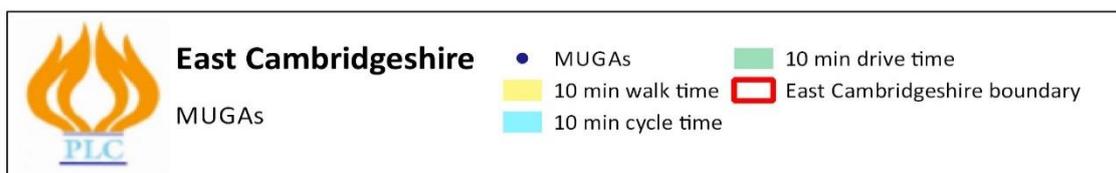
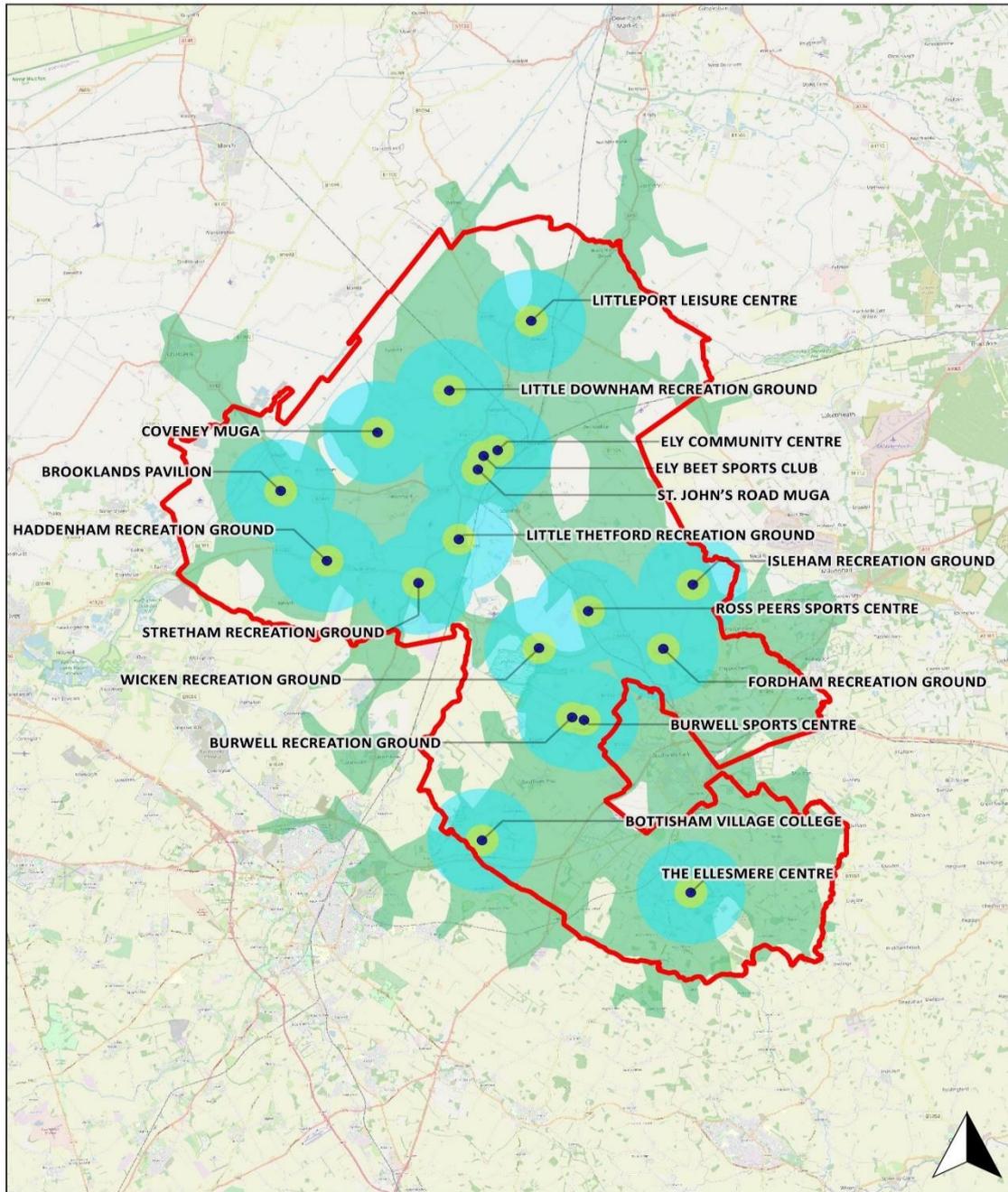
9.4.3 MUGA assessment

The ratings for MUGAs in East Cambridgeshire are shown in the table below.

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Court</i>	<i>Fencing</i>	<i>Disability Access</i>	<i>General access</i>	<i>Lighting</i>
Bottisham Village College	4	4	4	4	4
Brooklands Pavilion	3	4	2	2	-
Burwell Recreation Ground	5	5	5	4	5
Burwell Village College	4	4	4	4	-
Coveney MUGA	3	4	2	2	-
Ely Beet Sports Club	3	4	4	4	-
Ely Community Centre MUGA	4	5	3	3	-
Ely St. John’s Road Recreation Ground	5	5	3	3	-
Fordham Recreation Ground	3	4	3	3	3
Haddenham Recreation Ground	5	4	4	4	4
Isleham Recreation Ground	5	4	2	2	4
Little Downham Recreation Ground	2	5	3	3	4
Little Thetford Recreation Ground	3	5	3	3	5
Littleport Leisure Centre	5	5	4	4	5
Ross Peers Sports Centre	5	5	4	4	-
Stretham Recreation Ground	5	5	3	3	5
The Ellesmere Centre	4	5	4	4	4
Wicken Recreation Ground	4	4	2	2	3

9.5 Accessibility

The 'effective catchment' for MUGAs is 10 minutes driving time. The map below shows that whilst most of the population of the district is within the catchment of at least one MUGA, there are some gaps in some of the sparsely populated rural areas.



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9.6 Availability

The table below identifies the basis of use and cost of MUGA usage in East Cambridgeshire:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Basis of use</i>
Bottisham Village College	£8.10 per hour casual hire	'Pay-and-play'
Brooklands Pavilion	Free	Casual use
Burwell Recreation Ground	£5 per hour casual hire (£6 with lights)	'Pay-and-play'
Burwell Village College	£5 per hour casual hire (£6 with lights)	'Pay-and-play'
Coveney MUGA	Free	Casual use
Ely Beet Sports Club	Club use only £38 per year membership	Membership only
Ely Community Centre MUGA	Free	Casual use
Fordham Recreation Ground	Free	Casual use
Haddenham Recreation Ground	£5 per hour casual hire	'Pay-and-play'
Isleham Recreation Ground	£5 per hour casual hire	'Pay-and-play'
Little Downham Recreation Ground	£4 per hour casual hire (£5 with lights)	'Pay-and-play'
Little Thetford Recreation Ground	Free	Casual use
Littleport Leisure Centre	£10 per hour casual hire	'Pay-and-play'
Ross Peers Sports Centre	£10 per hour casual hire	'Pay-and-play'
St. John's Road MUGA	Free	Casual use
Stretham Recreation Ground	£10 per hour casual hire	'Pay-and-play'
The Ellesmere Centre	£8 per court per hour casual hire	'Pay-and-play'
Wicken Recreation Ground	Free	Casual use

9.7 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- There are 18 MUGAs with community access in East Cambridgeshire.
- The quality of all MUGAs is generally ‘average’ or better, although the court surface of the MUGA at Little Downham Recreation Ground is rated as ‘poor’.
- Whilst most of the population of the district is within the catchment of at least one MUGA, there are some gaps in some of the sparsely populated rural areas.
- 12 courts in the district are floodlit, which facilitates play in the winter months.

9.8 Current demand for MUGAs

9.9.1 Expressed demand

Several of the MUGAs in the district operate in a free access basis and therefore demand and use is ‘unmetered’. However, the following estimated peak utilisation rates (evenings and weekends) relate to facilities where charges are levied:

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Peak utilisation rate</i>
Burwell Recreation Ground	50%
Haddenham Recreation Ground	30%
Isleham Recreation Ground	25%
Little Downham Recreation Ground	10%
Littleport Leisure Centre	40%
Ross Peers Sports Centre	30%
Stretham Recreation Ground	45%
The Ellesmere Centre	30%

Little Downham Parish Council commented that their MUGA ‘used to be well used Monday - Friday, but teams have dwindled off over the years and there have been no regular booking this year. The Council would like to upgrade the floodlights to LED and when done will promote the area’.

9.9.2 Displaced demand

Displaced demand relates to users of MUGAs from within the study area which takes place outside of the area. There is no evidence of exported demand for MUGAs in East Cambridgeshire.

9.9.3 Unmet demand

Ashley Parish Council has identified unmet demand for a MUGA in the village.

9.9 Local sports participation priorities

There are no specific local sports participation priorities in East Cambridgeshire, other than a general policy commitment to promote health and well-being through increased levels of physical activity. As a facility that provides for a range of sports, including informal versions that are likely to appeal to young people, MUGAs represent a good opportunity to provide for a range of needs.

9.10 Future demand for MUGAs

9.11.1 Population growth

East Cambridgeshire District Council's planners are currently basing population projections on the ONS mid-2014 estimates, which indicate that there will be 104,000 residents in the district by 2036. This represents a 16.1% increase (an additional 14,400 people) from the mid-2018 population estimate. The *'East Cambridgeshire Growth Study'* (2017), recognises the need for 11,400 new homes in the district by 2036, equivalent to 570 additional dwellings per annum.

9.11.2 Participation rates

One factor in considering future sports participation rates is to track historical trends, as a guide to possible future developments. Of the sports that make use of MUGAs, netball participation has increased over the past decade, whilst basketball, football and netball have all decreased.

9.11.3 Future projections

Given the recent trends in participation, it would be reasonable to assume static participation growth in the sports using MUGAs, with netball growth offset by further modest declines in the other sports. However, population growth of 16.1% will increase demand for MUGA capacity.

9.11 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- There is significant peak-time spare capacity at all MUGAs in the district for which usage figures are available.
- Population growth of 16.1% in East Cambridgeshire by 2036 will increase demand for MUGA capacity.

9.12 The balance between MUGA supply and demand

Four criteria have been assessed to evaluate the balance between MUGA supply and demand in East Cambridgeshire:

- **Quantity:** Are there enough MUGAs with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Quality:** Are the MUGAs fit for purpose for the users now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Are the MUGAs in the right physical location for the users now and in the future?
- **Availability:** Are the MUGAs available for those who want to use them now and in the future?

9.13 Quantity

9.14.1 Current needs

Current MUGAs in East Cambridgeshire are assessed to be at operating with significant spare capacity, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Used capacity:** All local providers have indicated that there is significant spare capacity at MUGAs where usage is metered.
- **Satisfied demand:** There is limited evidence of unmet demand in the district.
- **Changes in supply:** There are no known planned changes to MUGA supply.

9.14.2 Future needs

Spare capacity at the existing MUGAs should be able to accommodate all additional future demand, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Demand increases:** The district's population is projected to increase by 14,400 by 2036. This will represent an increase of 16.1% over the 2014 mid-year estimate figure.
- **Participation trends:** Local participation rates in the sports that use MUGAs have been projected to remain static on a net basis across all the sports until 2036.

9.14 Quality

9.15.1 Current quality

The quality of MUGAs is generally 'average' or better, although the court surface at Little Downham Recreation Ground is rated as 'poor'.

9.15.2 Future quality

All MUGA providers will need to continue to invest in maintaining and improving their facilities, so if this process can be assisted with funding from developer contributions in the future, it seems reasonable to assume that local provision will continue to be upgraded regularly.

9.15 Accessibility

9.16.1 Current accessibility

Whilst most of the population of the district is within the catchment of at least one MUGA, there are some gaps in some of the sparsely populated rural areas.

9.16.2 Future accessibility

Providing locally accessible MUGAs as part of the housing developments would be consistent with meeting health and well-being objectives in the new developments.

9.16 Availability

9.17.1 Current availability

All existing MUGAs are available for hire at reasonable rates.

9.17.2 Future availability

It is reasonable to assume that similar access arrangements will be offered in the future.

9.17 The options for securing additional MUGA capacity

The options for securing existing and additional MUGA capacity to meet current and future needs are as follows:

9.18.1 Protect

Protecting existing MUGAs through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing facilities, unless the loss of a facility would involve its replacement with a facility of at least the equivalent size, quality and accessibility.

9.18.2 Provide

With spare capacity at MUGAs, all additional demand can be accommodated by current capacity, although there is a case for making locally-accessible provision in any major new housing developments.

9.18.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing MUGA capacity by:

- Addressing the quality issues at the site where the court surface is rated as ‘poor’.
- Ensuring that the MUGAs and ancillary facilities receive regular maintenance and improvements, funded by developer contributions where appropriate.
- Adding floodlights at those MUGAs without lighting at present, to extend their hours of use in the winter months.

9.18 Action Plan

9.18.1 Introduction

The tables below set out the action plan for MUGAs to guide the implementation of the strategy. The capital cost estimates are based upon Sport England's *Facility Costs - Second Quarter of 2019* (2019).

9.18.2 Key strategic actions

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Protection of existing MUGAs.	Include a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing MUGAs.	ECDC	-	-	High
Funding for future MUGAs.	Ensure that S106 contributions are collected from developers.	ECDC	Developers	-	High

9.18.3 Site-specific actions

<i>Site</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Bottisham Village College	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Brooklands Pavilion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Poor' disabled and general access • No floodlighting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a tarmac path from the access point • Provide floodlighting 	Sutton PC	-	£5,000 for path £10,000 for floodlights	Medium
Burwell Recreation Ground	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Burwell Village College	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Coveney MUGA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Poor' disabled and general access • No floodlighting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a tarmac path from the access point • Provide floodlighting 	Coveney PC	-	£5,000 for path £10,000 for floodlights	Medium
Ely Beet Sports Club	No floodlighting	Provide floodlights	Ely Beet SC	-	£10,000	Medium
Ely Community Centre MUGA	No floodlighting	Provide floodlights	ECDC	-	£10,000	Medium
Fordham Recreation Ground	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-

<i>Site</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Haddenham Recreation Ground	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Isleham Recreation Ground	'Poor' disabled and general access	Provide a tarmac path from the access point	Isleham PC	-	£5,000	Medium
Little Downham Recreation Ground	'Poor' quality court surface	Resurface the MUGA	Little Downham PC	-	£20,000	High
Little Thetford Recreation Ground	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Littleport Leisure Centre	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Ross Peers Sports Centre	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
St. John's Road MUGA	No floodlighting	Provide floodlights	ECDC	-	£10,000	Medium
Stretham Recreation Ground	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
The Ellesmere Centre	No current issues	No action	-	-	-	-
Wicken Recreation Ground	'Poor' disabled and general access	Provide a tarmac path from the access point	Wicken PC	-	£5,000	Medium

10 INFORMAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND EXERCISE NEEDS IN EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE

10.1 Introduction

This section examines the provision for informal physical activity and exercise needs in East Cambridgeshire. It covers two different types of provision:

- Specific designated running, cycling and walking trails.
- Recreation grounds and public open space that accommodates informal physical activity.

10.2 Assessing the need for informal provision for physical activity

10.2.1 Introduction

The formalised supply and demand assessments of the *'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance'* (2014) do not lend themselves well to identifying how best to address the need for informal provision for physical activity. In particular:

- Most of the 'supply' involves either non-specialist provision such as open spaces and public rights of way, whose primary functions are not to specifically to accommodate physical activity. It is difficult therefore to define 'capacity' in this context.
- Much of the 'demand' is 'unmetered' - there is very little detailed data on the usage of specific open space sites or rights of way.

10.2.2 Assessment methodology

The following approach has therefore been devised and applied to assess the need for informal provision for walking, cycling and running in East Cambridgeshire.

- Establishing the extent of designated running, cycling and walking trails providing local opportunities to undertake short, medium and long forms (15 minutes, 45 minutes and 90 minutes) of activity, on or off-road,
- Identifying what areas of open space are available within each parish in the district and the extent to which per capita levels of provision vary.
- Assessing gaps in provision.

10.3 Strategic context

General physical activity

Sport England defines and measures physical activity as follows. 'We measure activity based on the number of moderate intensity equivalent minutes whereby each 'moderate' minute of

activity counts as one minute and each 'vigorous' minute of activity counts as two moderate minutes.

Moderate activity is defined as activity where you raise your breathing rate, and vigorous activity is where you're out of breath or are sweating. Depending on the number of minutes of moderate intensity equivalent (MIE) physical activity, people are described as being:

- **Inactive:** Doing fewer than 30 minutes a week
- **Fairly active:** Doing 30-149 minutes a week
- **Active:** Doing at least 150 minutes a week.

Taking part in sport and physical activity is measured as the equivalent of 30 minutes' activity at least twice in the last 28 days. Each session must last at least 10 minutes and be of at least moderate intensity. An individual can reach the minimum threshold by a combination of two 30-minute sessions across the last 28 days or by six 10-minute sessions, for example. This is measured for all the following activities:

- Sporting activities
- Fitness activities
- Dance
- Cycling and walking for leisure
- Cycling and walking for travel.

Activity-specific strategies

Cycling: The relevant strategic priorities identified by British Cycling (2017) are as follows:

- A comprehensive network of accessible traffic-free multi-disciplined cycling facilities enabling the effective and safe delivery of cycling activities both at a participation and excellence level.
- Support for clubs and groups who wish to develop new, or improve existing, facilities and infrastructure.

Running: England Athletics' *Facilities Strategy 2018 - 2025* contains the following material of relevance:

The number of people running in England has grown by 67% in the last 10 years. Running does not require a specific facility, with the majority of participants making use of non-specialist (and largely free of charge) existing infrastructure, including roads, rights of way, parks and open spaces. More than 50% of runners always run alone.

- **Public parks:** 'England Athletics is of the opinion that activity that drives people to local parks and generates a variety of positive health and community benefits should be encouraged and that it is not appropriate to charge non-profit making voluntary groups that want to use parks for running.'

- **Marked running routes:** 'England Athletics owns two marked running route products - '3-2-1' and 'Greenline Urban Running Routes'. Existing 3-2-1 and Greenline routes will remain, but no further investment will be made in the development of physical marked running routes in their current format'.

10.4 Stakeholder consultation

10.4.1 Running

Consultation with England Athletics established that there are affiliated and non-affiliated running groups in East Cambridgeshire in Ely and Wilburton, established through the 'Run Together' initiative with support and funding from England Athletics.

10.4.2 Walking

Consultation with the Rambler's Association highlighted the following issues:

- The Ramblers and Macmillan have hosted the national Walking for Health programme since 2012. Every week, local Walking for Health schemes run over 1,800 free, friendly, short group walks that reach approximately 20,200 individuals. A Walking for Health walk is organised in Ely every Tuesday afternoon. This is one of at least ten regular walking groups in the district, operating from eight different locations.
- The Ramblers place a high priority on enhancing, improving and protecting the paths, parks and other green spaces that millions of people rely upon for their regular dose of walking.
- The Parish Paths Partnership is a long-standing arrangement between Cambridgeshire County Council, District Councils and participating Parishes to work together to maintain, improve and promote the Public Rights of Way Network. Five parishes in the south of the district have (Ashley, Cheveley, Dullingham, Stetchworth and Woodditton) have publicised circular walks of various lengths which are not constrained by parish boundaries.

10.4.3 Cycling

Consultation with British Cycling highlighted the following issues:

- Dedicated cycling facilities provide safe, traffic-free environments for any cyclist of any ability to participate, train, compete and - most importantly - have fun whilst riding a bike. British Cycling is working closely with Sport England to develop a national network of new cycling facilities which meets local demand, making use of a £15 million investment programme called 'Places to Ride'.
- The funding is available to any organisation that is developing cycling activity in their community and can be used for anything from equipment packages to activate an existing local space, through to a brand new-cycling facility. The programme is open until January 2021.

10.5 Current supply

10.5.1 Walking

Designated walking routes in East Cambridgeshire are as follows:

<i>Route</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Distance</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Bishop's Way Walk	Ely to Little Downham	3 miles	45 minutes
Cawdle Fen Way	Ely to Little Thetford	6 miles	90 minutes
Earthworks Way	Reach to Newmarket	4 miles	60 minutes
Ely Country Park	Cresswells Lane, Ely CB7 4PU	Bullrush Walk 1.5 miles Kingfisher Walk 2 miles	20 minutes 30 minutes
Ely Eel Trail	Ely	2 miles	30 minutes
Fen Rivers Way	Kings Lynn to Cambridge via Ely	48 miles	90+ minutes
Five Parish Partnership	South of the district	1-6 miles	15 - 90 minutes
Hereward Way	Oakham to Brandon via Ely	55 miles	90+ minutes
Quy Fen walks	Quy to Lode	5 miles	75 minutes
Rothschild Way	Wicken Fen to Woodwalton Fen	20 miles	90+ minutes
Wicken walks	Wicken	6 miles	90 minutes
Witchford walks	10 walks around Witchford	1-6 miles	15 - 90 minutes

10.5.2 Cycling

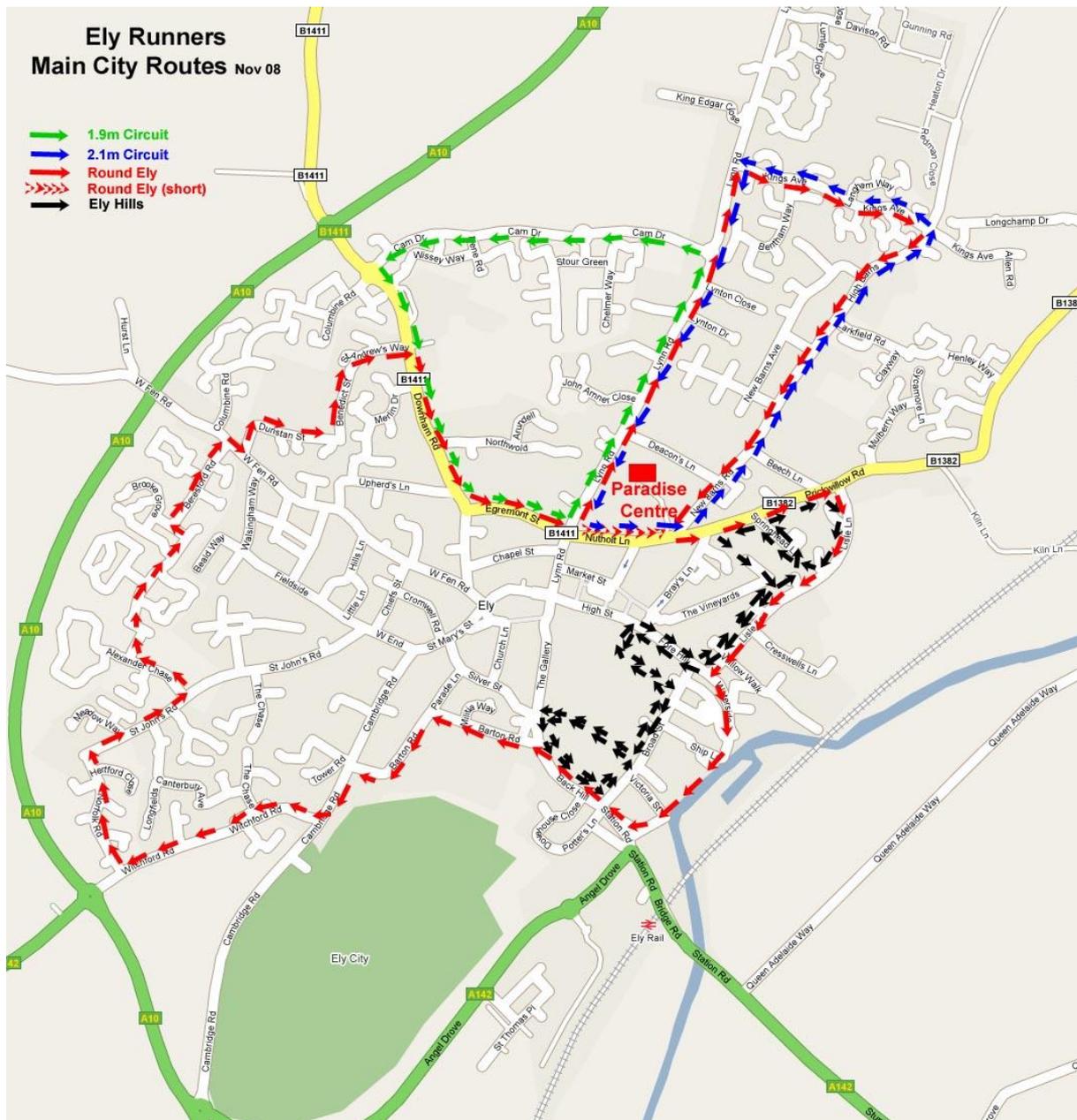
Designated cycling routes in East Cambridgeshire are as follows:

<i>Route</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Distance</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Ely to Wicken Fen	Ely station to Wicken Fen	9 miles	60 minutes
Lodes Way	Wicken to Bottisham	9 miles	60 minutes
National Cycle Route 11	Swaffham Bulbeck to Little Downham	18 miles	90+ minutes
National Cycle Route 51	Bottisham to Burwell	5 miles	30 minutes

10.5.3 Running

There are no formally designated running routes in East Cambridgeshire, although informal routes in Ely are shown in the map overleaf. The route distances and durations are as follows:

<i>Route</i>	<i>Distance</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Green circuit	1.9 miles	17 minutes
Blue circuit	2.1 miles	20 minutes
Round Ely (red)	5 miles	45 minutes
Round Ely Short (red-hatched)	3 miles	25 minutes
Ely Hills	2 miles	18 minutes



10.5.4 Open spaces

Recreation grounds and public open spaces of at least 2.0ha in size in each parish in East Cambridgeshire that accommodate exercise and physical activity are as follows. It is informed in part by a play and open space audit of the district, that was carried out in 2013-14, supplemented by a parish councils' survey conducted as part of the current study. The quality of recreation grounds and public open space for informal physical activity and exercise in terms of their attractiveness and ability to accommodate a range of activities was assessed. The ratings are based upon the presence/absence of the following elements:

- Outdoor gym equipment is installed.
- There are other formal sports facilities on the site.

- There are ancillary facilities like toilets and changing rooms.
- There is dedicated car parking.
- There are links to the wider public rights of way network.
- The site is well-located in relation to the population it serves.

<i>Rating</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Score</i>
High Quality	Complies with all five or six of the criteria	5
Above Average	Complies with four of the criteria	4
Average	Complies with three of the criteria	3
Below Average	Complies with two of the criteria	2
Poor quality	Complies with one or none of the criteria	1

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Quality</i>
Ashley	Ashley Recreation Ground	High Street, Ashley CB8 9DY	2.25ha	4
Bottisham	-	-	-	-
Brinkley	-	-	-	-
Burrough Green	Burrough Green	Bradley Road, Burrough Green CB8 9NG	3.5ha	4
Burwell	Burwell Recreation Ground Margaret Field	Hythe Lane, Burwell CB25 0EZ	6.0ha	5
		Heath Road, Burwell CB25 0BZ	2.2ha	2
Cheveley	Cheveley Recreation Ground	High Street, Cheveley CB8 9EP	3.0ha	3
Chippenham	-	-	-	-
Coveney and Wardy Hill	Coveney Village Green	School Lane, Coveney CB6 2DB	2.5ha	3
Dullingham	Dullingham Sports Field	Stetchworth Road, Dullingham CB8 9XD	2.25ha	3
Ely	Ely Country Park	Cresswell's Lane, Ely CB7 4PU	62.0ha	4
	Paradise Recreation Ground	Newnham Street, Ely CB7 4PQ	4.5ha	5

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Quality</i>
Fordham	Fordham Recreation Ground	Carter Street, Fordham CB7 5NG	4.5ha	5
Haddenham	Haddenham Recn. Ground	Hop Row, Haddenham CB6 3SR	4.0ha	5
Isleham	Isleham Recreation Ground	Mill Street, Isleham CB7 5RY	7.0ha	5
Kennett	Kennett Recreation Ground	Station Road, Kennett CB8 7QF	3.0ha	5
Kirtling and Upend	-	-	-	-
Little Downham and Pymoor	Little Downham Recn. Ground	School Lane, Little Downham CB6 2SY	4.5ha	4
	Pymoor Social Club	Pymoor Lane, Pymoor CB6 2EE	2.0ha	4
Little Thetford	Little Thetford Recn. Ground	The Wytches, Little Thetford CB6 3HG	2.7ha	5
Littleport and Blackhorse Drove	Littleport Leisure Centre	Camel Road, Littleport CB6 1EW	14.0ha	5
Lode	Lode Playing Field	Station Road, Lode CB25 9EH	2.25ha	4
Mepal	Mepal Recreation Ground	Witcham Road, Mepal CB6 2YP	5.0ha	4
Soham	Angle Common	Mill Drove, Soham CB7 5JN	2.75ha	2
	East Fen Common	East Fen Common, Soham CB7 5JH	14.5ha	2
	Qua Fen Common	Qua Fen Common, Soham CB7 5DF	10.0ha	2
	Soham Recreation Ground	Fountain Lane, Soham CB7 5ED	3.0ha	3
Stetchworth	The Ellesmere Centre	Ley Road, Stetchworth CB8 9TS	3.5ha	5
Stretham	Stretham Recreation Ground	Short Road, Stretham CB6 3LS	4.0ha	4
Sutton	Brooklands Pavilion	The Brook, Sutton CB6 2QQ	3.0ha	5

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Quality</i>
Swaffham Bulbeck	Swaffham Bulbeck Recn. Grd.	Station Rd., Swaffham Bulbeck CB25 0HP	2.2ha	4
	Swaffham Prior Recn. Ground	Station Rd., Swaffham Prior CB25 0LG	3.0ha	2
Westley Waterless			-	-
Wicken	Wicken Recreation Ground	Chapel Lane, Wicken CB7 5XZ	2.0ha	4
Wilburton	Wilburton Recreation Ground	Station Road, Wilburton CB6 3RP	8.0ha	3
Witcham	Witcham Recreation Ground	High Street, Witcham CB6 2LQ	2.0ha	4
Witchford	Witchford Playing Field	Bedwell Hay Lane, Witchford CB6 2JN	2.5ha	4
Woodditton and Saxon Street	-	-	-	-

10.6 Accessibility

10.6.1 Activity space per capita

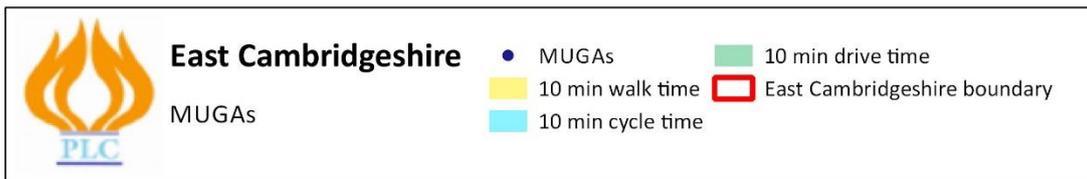
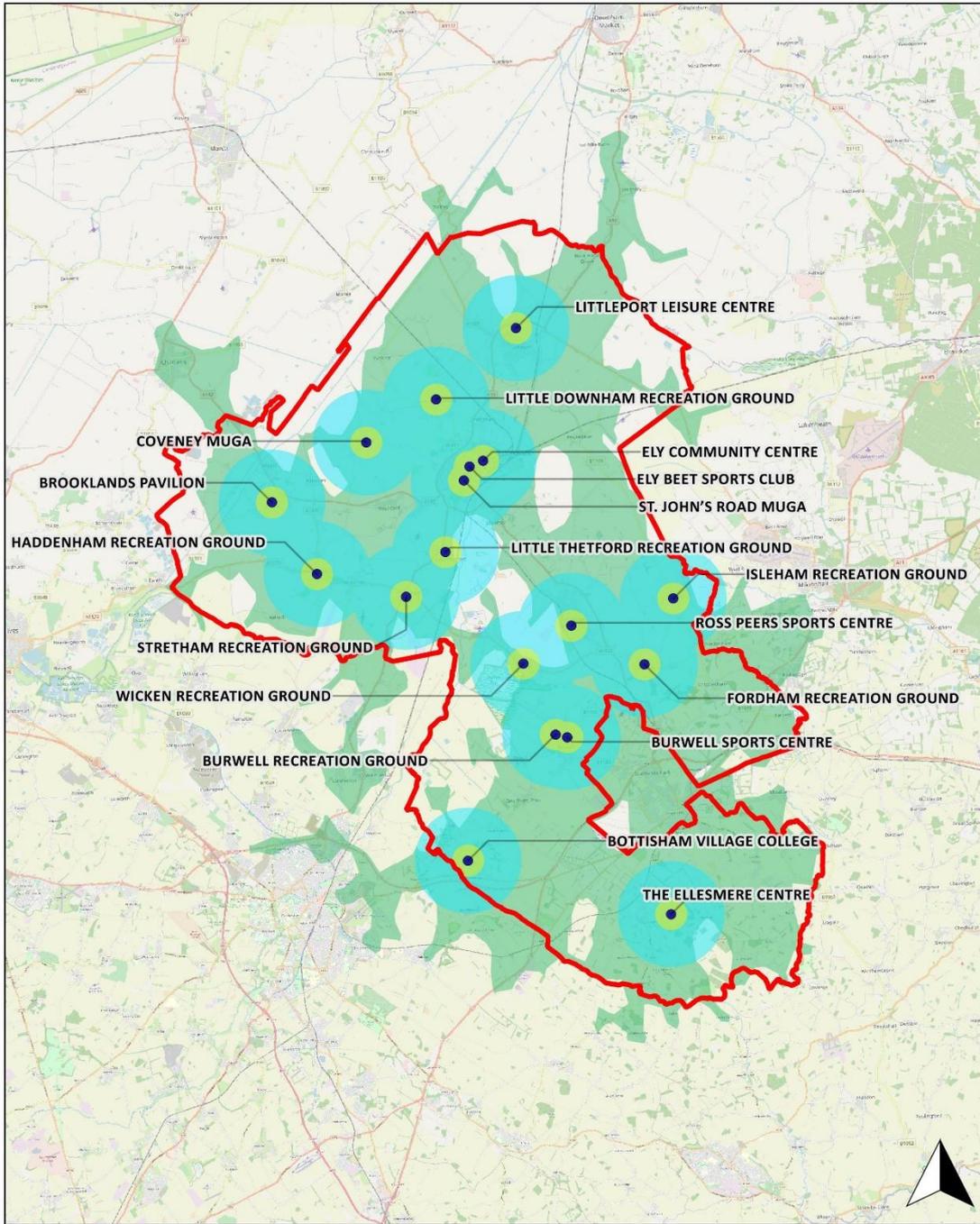
The activity space per capita in each parish is tabulated below, to highlight local variations and to compare with the Fields in Trust standard of 2.4ha of recreational greenspace per 1,000 people:

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Space</i>	<i>Ha/'000 people</i>	<i>FiT Standard</i>
Ashley	707	2.25ha	3.18ha/'000	+0.55ha
Bottisham	2,199	-	0	-5.28ha
Brinkley	383	-	0	-0.92ha
Burrough Green	378	3.5ha	9.26ha/'000	+2.59ha
Burwell	6,667	8.2ha	1.23ha/'000	-7.80ha
Cheveley	1,990	3.0ha	1.51ha/'000	-1.78ha
Chippenham	519	-	0	-1.25ha
Coveney and Wardy Hill	424	2.5ha	5.90ha/'000	+1.48ha
Dullingham	767	2.25ha	2.93ha/'000	+0.41ha
Ely	20,312	66.5ha	3.25ha/'000	+17.75ha

Fordham	2,712	4.5ha	1.66ha/'000	-2.01ha
Haddenham	3,604	4.0ha	1.11ha/'000	-4.65ha
Isleham	2,378	7.0ha	2.94ha/'000	+1.29ha
Kennett	353	3.0ha	8.50ha/'000	+7.65ha
Kirtling and Upend	440	-	0	-1.06ha
Little Downham and Pymoor	3,050	6.5ha	2.13ha/'000	-0.82ha
Little Thetford	782	2.7ha	3.45ha/'000	+1.57ha
Littleport and Blackhorse Drove	8,738	14.0ha	1.60ha/'000	-6.97ha
Lode	913	2.25ha	2.46ha/'000	+0.06ha
Mepal	982	5.0ha	5.09ha/'000	+2.64ha
Soham	10,860	30.25ha	2.79ha/'000	+4.19ha
Stetchworth	681	3.5ha	5.12ha/'000	+1.97ha
Stretham	1,831	4.0ha	2.18ha/'000	-0.39ha
Sutton	3,952	3.0ha	0.76ha/'000	-6.48ha
Swaffham Bulbeck	1,667	5.2ha	3.12ha/'000	+1.2ha
Westley Waterless	132	-	0	-0.32ha
Wicken	839	2.0ha	2.38ha/'000	-0.02ha
Wilburton	1,348	8.0ha	5.93ha/'000	+4.76ha
Witcham	429	2.0ha	4.66ha/'000	+0.97ha
Witchford	2,385	2.5ha	1.05ha/'000	-3.22ha
Woodditton and Saxon Street	1,818	-	0	-4.36ha
TOTALS	85,240	197.6ha	2.32ha/'000	-6.98ha

10.7.2 Geographical distribution

The 'effective catchment' for recreation grounds and public open space for informal physical activity and exercise is 10 minutes driving time. The map overleaf shows that whilst most of the population of the district is within the catchment of at least one recreation ground or public open space, there are some gaps in some of the sparsely populated rural areas.



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10.7 Key findings on supply

The key findings are as follows:

- In addition to the public rights of way network, there are 12 designated walking routes and four designated cycling routes in East Cambridgeshire.
- The whole population of the district is within easy reach of a designated route.
- There are 31 public open spaces of 2.0 hectares or larger, that can accommodate exercise and informal physical activity. Most sites are at least ‘average’ quality.
- The amount of exercise space per settlement varies widely and whilst Ely has more space per capita than the average for the district, a number of the other main settlements such as Burwell, Haddenham, Littleport, Sutton and Witchford have less space per capita than the districtwide figure, whilst Bottisham has no provision at all.
- When the amount of recreational open space in each parish and the district as a whole are compared with the Fields in Trust 2.4ha per 1,000 people standard, Ely and 14 parishes have levels of provision in excess of the standard, whilst 16 parishes and the district as a whole show a shortfall in relation to the standard. Burwell, Littleport and Bottisham have the largest deficits in provision on this basis.
- Whilst most of the population of the district is within the catchment of at least one recreation ground or public open space, there are some gaps in some of the sparsely populated rural areas.

10.8 Current demand

Because most informal physical activity in East Cambridgeshire is free of charge and therefore ‘unmetered’, assessments of local demand are based upon a combination of national participation figures and trends and local data from Sport England’s ‘Active Lives’ survey.

10.9.1 Running

England Athletics’ *Strategic Plan* (2017) contains the following national participation statistics:

- 1,000,000 people were active in track and field in 2017 (at least once a month).
- More than 7,000,000 people went for a run at least once a year.
- Sport England’s ‘Active Lives’ survey (2018) shows that 15% of the adult population runs at least once a month. If this is translated into the context of East Cambridgeshire, there would be around 8,200 adults running at least monthly.

10.9.2 Cycling

The number of adults aged 16 and over cycling at least twice a month for leisure and sport nationally is around 6,170,000 people (16.3% of the population), and around 3,116,000 cycled for travel. Over 60% of the cycling for leisure and sport and about 70% of cycling for travel was by men. The rates of participation have fallen slightly since 2015. If this is translated into the context of East Cambridgeshire, there would be around 8,900 adults cycling at least monthly.

10.9.3 Walking

The number of adults walking for leisure at least twice a month in the period up to November 2018 was around 19,069,000 (61.9%) and the walking for travel figure was 14,914,500. Both have seen an increase since 2015. Slightly more women than men walk for both leisure and travel. If this is translated into the context of East Cambridgeshire, there would be around 33,850 people walking at least monthly. The Ramblers Association has published the following figures on walking for leisure:

- Around 63% of English adults walk for leisure at least once a year, and around 20 million people say they walk for leisure at least once a month (National Transport Survey (NTS), 2017).
- 38% of English adults have used a ‘strategic recreational route’ such as a National Trail or long-distance path in the past year (NTS 2017).
- Walking is the joint most popular activity (along with eating out) for people taking days out in England, and the most important reason for 18% of the 3.6 billion trips per year. It is the main activity on 36% of countryside and 33% of seaside visits (Natural England, 2016).
- Of 386.1million trips on the National Cycle Network per year, 191.4million, or around half, are on foot (Sustrans, 2018).
- A third of adults in Britain say walking for more than 10 minutes is their only form of exercise in a typical month (Office of National Statistics, 2016).

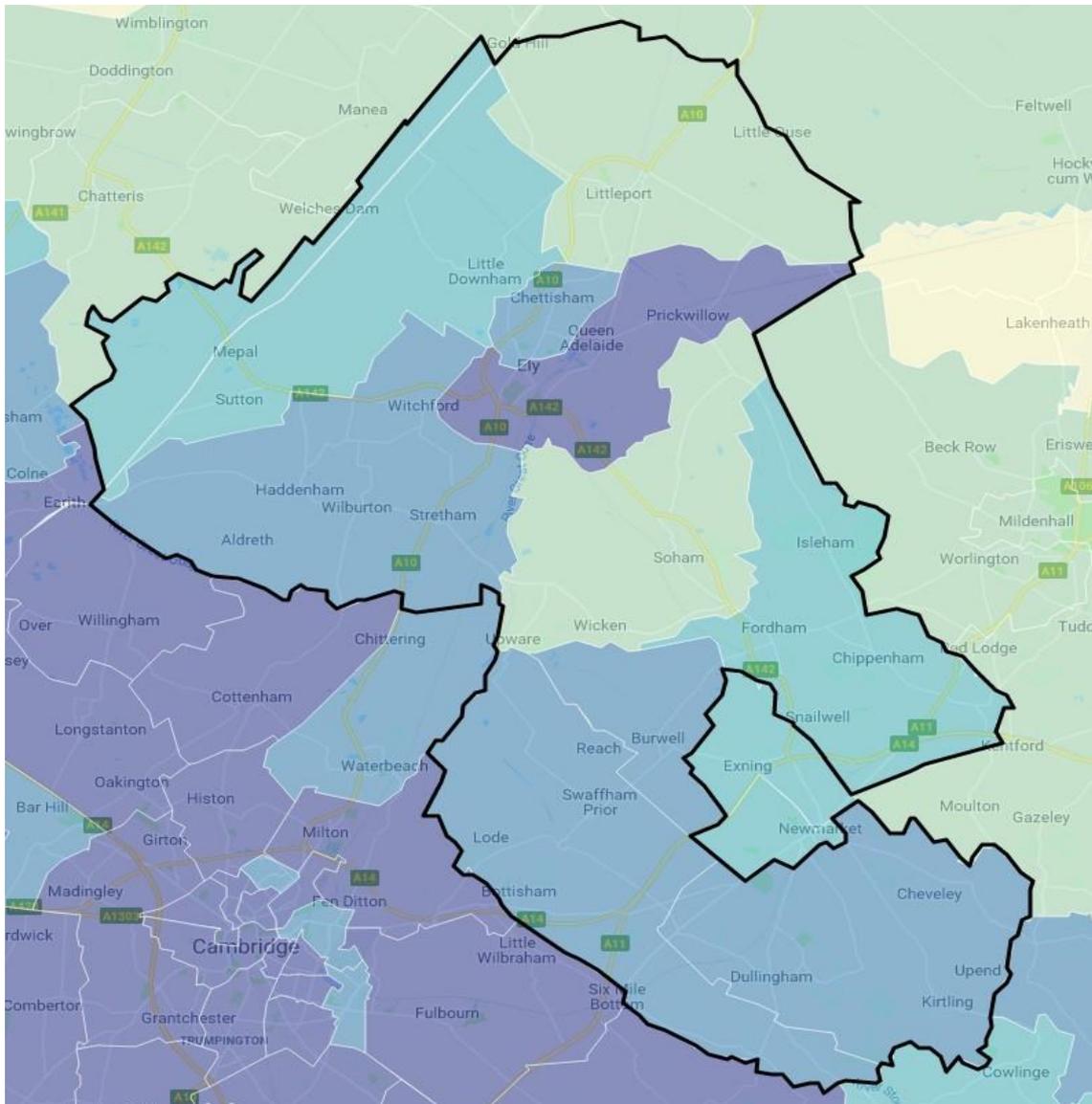
10.9.4 Physical activity

The key data for East Cambridgeshire, with county, regional and national comparators from the 2019 ‘Active People’ survey is set out below. The results show activity levels below the county average, but above the regional and national averages:

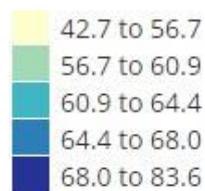
<i>Area</i>	<i>Active</i>	<i>Fairly active</i>	<i>Inactive</i>
East Cambs	63.3%	13.0%	23.7%
Cambs	64.7%	11.8%	23.5%
East	61.1%	13.3%	25.6%
England	62.6%	12.3%	25.1%

10.9.5 Geographical variations

Notwithstanding the district average figures, the ‘Active Lives’ survey data shows significant variations at Middle Super Output Area (MSOA), with the figures for those from Ely in the ‘Active’ category being relatively high and those in Littleport and Soham being relatively low.



Key: Percentage of the population who are physically active for 150+ minutes per week



10.9 Local sports participation priorities

The *East Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy* (2015) contains an action to ‘support development of informal everyday activities, such as local walks groups’. Running, walking and cycling trails and public open spaces provide a range of opportunities for informal and formal exercise and can have a major impact on supporting efforts to increase rates of physical activity.

10.10 Future demand

10.10.1 Population growth

East Cambridgeshire District Council’s planners are currently basing population projections on the ONS mid-2014 estimates, which indicate that there will be 104,000 residents in the district by 2036. This represents a 16.1% increase (an additional 14,400 people) from the mid-2018 population estimate. The *East Cambridgeshire Growth Study* (2017), recognises the need for 11,400 new homes in the district by 2036, equivalent to 570 additional dwellings per annum.

10.10.2 Participation rates

Notwithstanding some year-on-year fluctuations, participation rates in running, walking, cycling and informal physical activity have shown sustained growth over the past decade.

10.10.3 Future projections

Given the recent trends in participation, it would be reasonable to assume that growth in demand for informal physical activity of 1% per annum will be achievable to 2036. In addition, population growth of 16.1% will increase demand for informal exercise and physical activity by a comparable amount.

10.11 Key findings on demand

The key findings are as follows:

- National demand levels for informal exercise and physical activity are buoyant and local trends are likely to be consistent with this.
- Participation growth of 1% per annum and overall population growth of 16.1% in East Cambridgeshire by 2036 will increase demand by a similar amount.

10.12 Assessment of current provision

Two criteria have been assessed to evaluate the supply and demand balance for exercise and informal physical activity in East Cambridgeshire:

- **Quantity:** Is there enough provision with sufficient capacity to meet needs now and in the future?
- **Accessibility:** Is there sufficient provision in each area for the users now and in the future?

10.13 Quantity

10.13.1 Current needs

Current provision of running, walking and cycling trails in East Cambridgeshire are assessed to be adequate to meet current needs, given that there is sufficient existing capacity to accommodate all demand.

However, the amount of publicly accessible exercise space per settlement varies widely and whilst Ely has more space per capita than the average for the district, a number of the other main settlements such as Burwell, Haddenham, Littleport, Sutton and Witchford have less space per capita than the districtwide figure, whilst Bottisham has no provision at all.

10.13.2 Future needs

Additional capacity will need to be provided to accommodate all additional future demand, based upon the following evaluation:

- **Demand increases:** The district's population is projected to increase by 14,400 by 2036. This will represent an increase of 16.1% over the 2014 mid-year estimate figure.
- **Participation trends:** Local participation rates are projected to increase by 1% per annum until 2036, equivalent to a further 16% increase.

Based upon the benchmark of the Fields in Trust standard of 2.4ha of exercise space per 1,000 people in East Cambridgeshire, with a multiplier to reflect a 16% increase in participation, a standard of 2.78ha of exercise space per 1,000 people can be applied to model future demand at parish level. It shows a shortfall in 22 out of 31 parishes.

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Future population</i>	<i>Future space needs</i>	<i>Current space</i>	<i>Future surplus/deficit</i>
Ashley	821	2.28ha	2.25ha	+0.03ha
Bottisham	2,553	7.09ha	-	-7.09ha
Brinkley	445	1.24ha	-	-1.24ha
Burrough Green	439	1.22ha	3.5ha	+2.28ha
Burwell	7,740	21.52ha	8.2ha	-13.32ha
Cheveley	2,310	6.42ha	3.0ha	-3.42ha
Chippenham	603	1.68ha	-	-1.68ha
Coveney and Wardy Hill	492	1.37ha	2.5ha	+1.13ha
Dullingham	890	2.48ha	2.25ha	-0.23ha
Ely	23,582	65.56ha	66.5ha	+0.94ha
Fordham	3,151	8.76ha	4.5ha	-4.26ha
Haddenham	4,184	11.63ha	4.0ha	-7.63ha

Parish	Future population	<i>Future space needs</i>	<i>Current space</i>	<i>Future surplus/deficit</i>
Isleham	2,761	7.68ha	7.0ha	-0.68ha
Kennett	410	1.14ha	3.0ha	+1.86ha
Kirtling and Upend	511	1.42ha	-	-1.42ha
Little Downham and Pymoor	3,541	9.84ha	6.5ha	-3.34ha
Little Thetford	908	2.52ha	2.7ha	+0.18ha
Littleport and Blackhorse Drove	8,738	28.20ha	14.0ha	-14.20ha
Lode	1,060	2.95ha	2.25ha	-0.70ha
Mepal	1,140	3.17ha	5.0ha	+1.83ha
Soham	12,608	35.05ha	30.25ha	-4.80ha
Stetchworth	790	2.20ha	3.5ha	+1.30ha
Stretham	2,126	5.91ha	4.0ha	-1.91ha
Sutton	4,588	12.75ha	3.0ha	-9.75ha
Swaffham Bulbeck	1,935	5.38ha	5.2ha	-0.18ha
Westley Waterless	153	0.43ha	-	-0.43ha
Wicken	974	2.71ha	2.0ha	-0.71ha
Wilburton	1,565	4.35ha	8.0ha	+3.65ha
Witcham	498	1.38ha	2.0ha	+0.62ha
Witchford	2,768	7.70ha	2.5ha	-5.20ha
Woodditton and Saxon Street	2,111	5.87ha	-	-5.87ha
TOTALS	85,240	271.9ha	197.6ha	-74.3ha

10.14 Accessibility

10.14.1 Current accessibility

The geographical spread of running, walking and cycling route opportunities in East Cambridgeshire is such that routes should be accessible to all users and potential users. Whilst Ely has more publicly accessible exercise space per capita than the average for the district, a number of the other main settlements such as Burwell, Haddenham, Littleport, Sutton and Witchford have less space per capita than the districtwide figure, whilst Bottisham has no provision at all. Most of the population of the district is within the catchment of at least one recreation ground or public open space, but there are some gaps in some of the sparsely populated rural areas.

10.14.2 Future accessibility

Ensuring connectivity and capacity increases to running, walking and cycling trails from new housing developments would be consistent with meeting health and well-being objectives in the new developments.

Ensuring that there is sufficient accessible exercise space in each settlement in the district to meet the needs of the population of new housing developments will also be essential.

10.15 The options for securing additional capacity

The options for securing existing and additional provision of publicly accessible exercise space to meet current and future needs are as follows:

10.15.1 Protect

Protecting existing running, walking and cycling trails and exercise space capacity through the Local Plan will be key both to securing local provision by ensuring that planning policy supports the retention of existing routes, unless the loss of part of a route would involve its replacement with a route of at least the equivalent capacity, quality and accessibility.

10.15.2 Provide

There is a case for making locally-accessible provision in any major new housing developments. Opportunities to create or access additional areas of publicly accessible space for exercise should also be explored in those settlements with levels of provision that fall below the Fields in Trust standard of 2.6ha per 1,000 people.

10.15.3 Enhance

Enhancing existing provision for physical activity by:

- Ensuring that the routes and sites receive regular maintenance and improvements, funded by developer contributions where appropriate.
- Ensuring that the routes and sites are available to people with disabilities.
- Installing features like outdoor gym equipment.

10.16 Action Plan

The table below sets out the action plan for informal activity and exercise space to guide the implementation of the strategy.

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Protection of existing informal activity and exercise space.	Include a policy in the Local Plan to protect all existing informal activity and exercise space.	ECDC	-	-	High
Funding for future informal activity and exercise space.	Ensure that S106 contributions are collected from developers.	ECDC	Developers	-	High
Creation of locally-accessible provision in any major new housing developments	Ensure that planning consent is contingent upon the provision of publicly accessible space for exercise	ECDC	Developers	-	High
Route and site maintenance	Ensure that all routes and exercise spaces are maintained to appropriate standards to ensure their continued use.	Route and site owners	-	-	Medium
Disabled access	Review disabled access on all routes and exercise spaces and implement improvements where appropriate.	Route and site owners	-	-	Medium
Outdoor gym equipment	Consider the installation of outdoor gym equipment on at least one site per parish.	ECDC	Parish Councils	£5,000 per site	Medium

11 IMPLEMENTING AND REVIEWING THE STRATEGY

11.1 Introduction

This section identifies the applications of the East Cambridgeshire Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy (OSFS) and the mechanisms for reviewing it to ensure that it remains robust and up-to-date.

11.2 Strategy implementation

The success of the OSFS will be determined by how it is used. While the use of the strategy should be led by East Cambridgeshire District Council, its application and delivery will also be the responsibility of the other key local stakeholders including:

- **Town and parish councils:** Town and parish councils are the main providers of outdoor sports facilities in the district.
- **Sports clubs:** Voluntary sector sports clubs provide and run a range of facilities, in particular tennis courts and bowls greens.
- **Village Colleges:** The village colleges are major sports facilities providers in the district, although not all provision is community accessible.

11.3 Strategy applications

The OSFS has a number of applications:

11.3.1 Sports development planning

The OSFS can be applied to help:

- Highlight, justify and make the case for sports development activities with particular sports, groups and clubs and in particular areas.
- Identify current and future trends and changes in the demand for individual sports and how they are played.
- Inform the work, strategies and plans of sporting organisations active in the area.
- Advocate the need to work with specific educational establishments to secure community use of their site(s).
- Develop and/or enhance school club links by making the best use of school sites where they have spare capacity and are well located to meet demand.

11.3.2 Planning policy

The OSFS can be applied to help:

- Develop new, and review the effectiveness of existing, local planning policy (e.g. Local and Neighbourhood Plans) in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- The implementation of local planning policy to meet the needs of the community.

11.3.3 Planning applications

The OSFS can be applied to help:

- Inform the development of planning applications which affect existing and/or proposed new sports facilities provision.
- Inform pre-application discussions to ensure any subsequent planning applications maximise their benefit to sport and are developed in line with national and local planning policy.
- Sports clubs and other organisations provide the strategic need for development proposals thereby potentially adding support to their application(s) and saving them resources in developing such evidence.
- East Cambridgeshire District Council to assess planning applications affecting existing and/or proposed new playing sports facilities provision in line with national and local planning policy.
- Sport England and other parties respond to relevant planning application consultations.

The OSFS can also be applied to help East Cambridgeshire District Council to meet other relevant requirements of the NPPF including:

- Taking account of and supporting local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.
- Delivering the social, recreational, cultural facilities and services the community needs.
- Planning positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives, principles and policies of the framework.
- Working with public health leads and health organisations to understand and take account of the health status and needs of the local population, including expected future changes, and any information about relevant barriers to improving health and well-being.

11.3.4 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The OSFS can be applied to help:

- Advocate the need for sports facilities provision to be taken into account when the local authority is developing and/or reviewing an approach to the CIL (Charging Schedule and Infrastructure Delivery Plan) and the wider benefits of doing so (e.g. improving health and wellbeing).
- Provide prioritised infrastructure requirements for sports facilities provision including deliverable sport, area and site-specific projects with costings (where known).

11.3.5 Funding bids

The OSFS can be applied to help:

- Provide the evidence base and strategic need to support funding bids by a range of parties to a variety of potential funding sources.
- Inform potential bidders of the likely strategic need for their project.

11.3.6 Facility and asset management

The OSFS can be applied to help:

- Ensure a strategic approach is taken to the provision and management of sports facilities.
- Inform the current management, strategies and plans of sports facility providers e.g. local authorities (within the study area and neighbouring areas), leisure trusts and educational establishments.
- Share knowledge of how sites are managed and maintained, the lessons learnt and good practice.
- Highlight the potential of asset transfers and ensure any proposed are beneficial to all parties.
- Provide additional protection for particular sites over and above planning policy, for example through deeds of dedication.
- Resolve issues around security of tenure.

11.3.7 Public health

The OSFS can be applied to help:

- Understand how the community currently participates in sport, the need for sports facilities and how this may evolve.
- Raise awareness of and tackle any barriers to people maintaining and increasing their participation.
- Highlight and address any inequalities of access to provision within the study area.
- Provide evidence to help support wider health and well-being initiatives.

11.3.8 Co-ordinating resources and investment

The OSFS can be applied to help:

- Raise awareness of the current resources and investment (revenue and capital) going into the management, maintenance and improvement of sports facilities provision.
- Co-ordinate the current and any future resources and investment to ensure the maximum benefit to sport and that value for money is secured.
- Ensure the current and any future resources and investment are complimentary and do not result in their inefficient use.

11.3.9 Capital programmes

The OSFS can be applied to help:

- Provide the evidence base to justify the protection and investment in sports facilities provision.
- Influence the development and implementation of relevant capital programmes (e.g. school refurbishment and new build programmes).

11.4 Monitoring delivery

A process should be put in place to ensure regular monitoring of how the recommendations and action plan are being delivered. This monitoring should be led by East Cambridgeshire District Council and supported by all members of, and reported back to, the steering group. Understanding and learning lessons from how the OSFS has been applied should also form a key component of monitoring its delivery.

11.5 Keeping the strategy robust and up-to-date

Along with ensuring that the OSFS is used and applied, a process should be put in place to keep it robust and up to date. This will expand the life of the OSFS providing people with the confidence to continue to both use it and attach significant value and weight to its key findings and issues, along with its recommendations and actions.

Sport England advocates that the OSFS should be reviewed on an annual basis from the date it is formally signed off by the steering group. This will help to maintain the momentum and commitment built up when developing the OSFS. Taking into account the time to develop the OSFS this should also help to ensure that the original supply and demand information is no more than two years old without being reviewed.

The annual review should highlight:

- How the delivery of the recommendations and action plan has progressed and any changes required to the priority afforded to each action (e.g. the priority of some may increase following the delivery of others).
- How the OSFS has been applied and the lessons learnt.
- Any changes to particularly important facilities and/or sites in the area (e.g. the most used or high-quality sites for a particular sport) and other supply and demand information, what this may mean for the overall assessment work and the key findings and issues.
- Any development of a specific sport or particular format of a sport.
- Any new or emerging issues and opportunities.

11.6 Strategy implementation

To support the delivery of the actions in all the facility-specific chapters East Cambridgeshire District Council in consultation with stakeholders should prepare a short-term action plan identifying priorities and actions for year one of the strategy delivery. The action plans in the OSFS provide a long list of prioritised actions, but many will not be applicable, appropriate or manageable to deliver initially. This is the first stage of delivering the OSFS and essential that this is undertaken as this initiates the delivery and provides momentum following completion of the work.